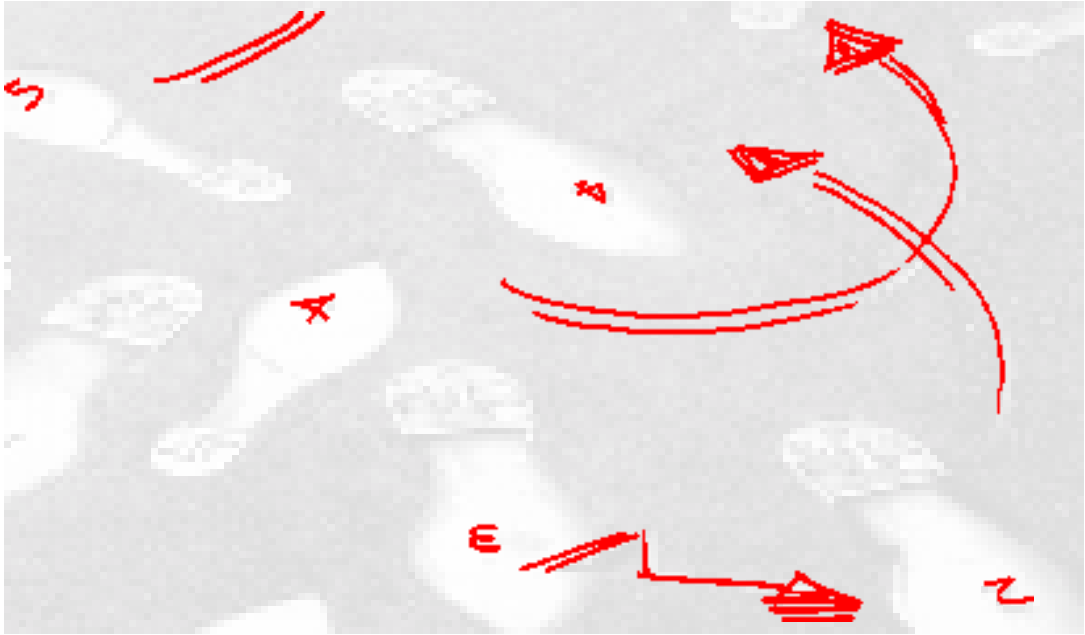
East Central Florida Regional Planning Council



Taking the Next Step

Goals and Policies for Effective Regional Coordination in East Central Florida

part of the **S**trategic **R**egional **P**lanning *series*

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Goals and Policies for
Effective Regional Coordination
in East Central Florida

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Preface

FOR THE PAST TWO years, the Regional Planning Council has been compiling data and information, holding workshops, and talking individually and in groups with people around the region, discussing how our strategic planning effort can best serve the region's needs. We've released several publications along the way, beginning with *At This Point in Time*, a profile of existing conditions in the region as well as state and national trends affecting the region's future. After hosting a series of discussions on how existing trends will shape the region's future, a synopsis of comments from those discussions was published in a document entitled *What the Future Holds*. The third publication in the Strategic Plan Series, *Water, Plants and Concrete*, fulfills part of the requirements of 27E-5, F.A.C. that the Regional Planning Council, as part of its strategic planning effort, identify and map resources and facilities of regional significance. This document identifies and describes those facilities and resources that will affect the region's development patterns on a metropolitan or regional scale.

These three documents provided the input and insights needed to develop this document, the fourth in the Strategic Plan series. This document is built around a need expressed throughout the region for a way to coordinate planning and development activities at a metropolitan level — a way that can address the issues enumerated in the previous documents. The title, *Taking the Next Step*, refers to taking the existing planning processes in Florida and this region one step further in order to meet this need.

The 1985 Growth Management Act put the planning process in place, and since that time remarkable strides in planning have taken place in Florida. The state developed a comprehensive plan, the 11 regional planning councils

followed suit, and local governments have adopted comprehensive development plans and land development regulations to manage Florida's rapid growth. Local issues are now addressed according to principles laid out in state, regional and local plans and implemented through a set of consistent land development regulations.

The next step in this process, using those plans and programs as a starting point, is to improve the level of coordination efforts in the region. The means by which we propose to implement a process for achieving the goal of coordinated planning is the subject of this document.

Introduction

Background

THE ELMS III LEGISLATION introduced significant changes to Florida's growth management process, including the role of regional planning councils (RPCs). The legislation directed RPCs away from a perceived quasi-regulatory role to what is believed to be a more effective role of planning and coordination. This role emphasizes the unique ability of RPCs to help governmental and private sector agencies address conflicting interests and advance shared ones.

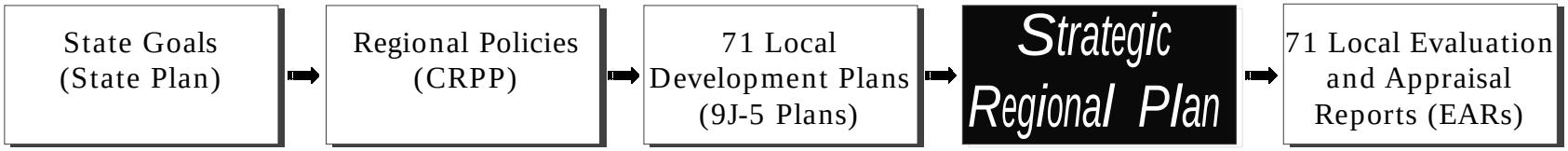
The shift away from regulatory review functions, which had long overshadowed other RPC functions, signaled the beginning of a new approach to regional planning efforts. While the legislature did not go as far as perhaps it needed to in identifying the nature of this approach, it nonetheless clearly articulated the idea that RPCs should focus on the critical issues facing the region, help devise solutions to them and move beyond the static mode of maintaining a set of directive policies on various growth management topics. It is in this light that the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council approached the development of goals and policies.

Previous Planning Efforts

In 1985 Florida adopted its comprehensive plan, which included goals for seventy-two issue areas. In 1987 the RPC adopted its comprehensive regional policy plan (CRPP). This plan was designed to implement the state plan within east central Florida. It replicated the state plan issue areas and devised policies that would further state goals. The CRPP served two specific purposes. First, it provided local governments with guidance on how specific problems and concerns related to these state issue areas could be addressed in east central Florida. Second, the plan contained a number of detailed policies geared specifically to assisting the Regional Planning Council in its review of development proposals, principally Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs).

Starting in 1988 and extending through the early 1990s, the region's 72 local governments prepared their comprehensive plans. These plans were required by statute to be consistent with and further the CRPP. This meant that local governments were to incorporate regional policy direction into their plans, providing a set of consistent region-

Florida's Ongoing Planning Process



wide development principles for dealing with regional issues.

As a policy document the CRPP worked well. By establishing a core group of development principles that local governments could fold into their plans, the CRPP allowed state and regional considerations to filter down into the activities of local governments, the agencies best able to represent them. These considerations were eventually carried forth by local governments from their plans into their land development regulations.

The usefulness of the type of regional plan adopted in 1987, however, is perishable. Once local governments adopted their plans, the CRPP's primary purpose — to provide policy guidance on achieving state goals — had been accomplished. Local government plans and development regulations now embody regional development principles, and little purpose is served by having the RPC continue to maintain such a document. Unlike a governmental agency having specific operational responsibilities and authority, the RPC, as a service agency, does not need a standing set of development policies.

Like other service agencies, the RPC is always asking how it can better provide services. Continuously re-examining what is needed and how to deliver it are the keys to keeping those services relevant. Now that the RPC has assisted in helping the region complete the first step of the growth management process, it is time to move to the next — that of helping to coordinate implementation of these local plans.

The Next Step

The difficulty with working on regional issues is that by their nature they require a group effort. In an environment fragmented by a multitude of governmental agencies and private sector interests, even the simplest task can be extraordinarily difficult to accomplish. This is particularly true in the area of growth management. The agencies and organizations that are key players in the region's growth and development do not exist in a neat hierarchical relationship. Rather, they are their own independent entities with their own set of powers. This becomes apparent when one looks at transportation. Within a large urban area there can be twenty or more local governments, one or two MPOs, expressway authorities, transit authorities, aviation authorities, railways, state and federal DOT — all involved in providing transportation services. Authority is distributed such that any one entity can stop an action, but no one entity can force action.

The effectiveness of top-down coordination is severely limited in this type of environment. The unsuccessful attempt to construct a limited-access highway in the Orlando Metropolitan Area demonstrates this limitation. Proposed as a direct link between the Orlando International Airport and downtown Orlando, this highway crossed through several jurisdictions. In addition to providing the airport-downtown link, the roadway was designed to address a number of long-standing regional transportation issues related to the ability of area roadways to handle existing and projected traffic. However, one of the jurisdictions through which the roadway was proposed to run found the route to be unacceptable, as it would bisect their small community. Following several years of effort to build the project, it eventually was abandoned due to the resistance of this community. This in spite of the strong support for the highway by the City of Orlando, Orange County and state and regional transportation agencies.

It is clear that consistent sets of local growth policies do not ensure that communities will automatically work in sync with one another. Nor do they guarantee that activities important to the overall success of a region will be undertaken. What is needed is *a means for thinking about and dealing with the common interests of the region*.

The key issue facing the region, then, is how to develop the capacity to successfully address regional issues. Studies of

areas that have a record of doing so suggest that the answer lies in having what has variously been described as a strong "civic culture," a sense of "regional community" and a "machinery for teamwork." Each of these terms refers to having strong connections among communities and agencies, and between the public and private sectors within a metropolitan area. These connections have been identified (Wallis, 1994) as consisting of norms, networks, and trust, and are defined as follows:

- **Norms** consist of shared values and beliefs. Norms include a shared sense of identity with the region as a place and shared expectations regarding its future.

- **Networks** consist of the formal and informal lines of communication among stakeholders within a sector as well as across sectors. Networks allow decision-makers and opinion shapers to meet without great effort.

- **Trust** is what binds a region together. It is a prerequisite for genuine cooperation, and without it people in different sectors tend to erect barriers often under the guise of accountability.

The challenge for east central Florida is to develop the mechanisms that can foster shared norms, expanded networks, and greater trust in the region. This will require going beyond the existing regional policy base to developing processes that can strengthen existing connections in the region.

Contents of the Plan

Three processes, or approaches, are discussed in this document. Goals and policies are developed for each process, outlining programs to forge new relationships so agencies can effectively coordinate on regional growth and development issues. The basic premise is that until this capacity for coordination is achieved, there is little chance for the growth issues identified In Chapters 186 and 163, FS to be successfully addressed.

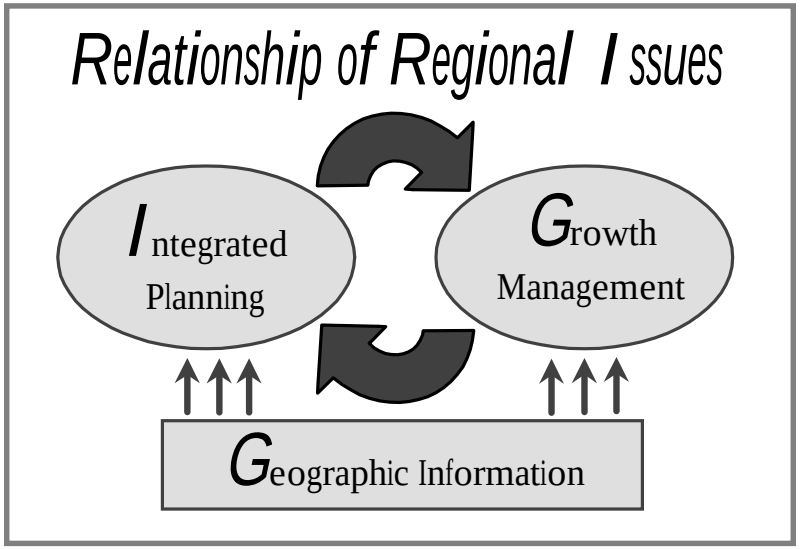
The first chapter, *Integrating Local, Regional and State Programs*, examines the potential for using Florida's planning process as the basis for fashioning regional consensus. Such a consensus would involve not only governmental agencies but the private and nonprofit sectors as well. Goals and policies are developed that call for a sequence of activities that can increase the region's ability to function at a metropolitan level. Effort is focused at this level because the major growth issues within east central Florida are greater than local but less than six-county in scope. Persistent problems such as increasing levels of traffic congestion, decreasing amounts of large open space, destruction of natural resources and an expanding need for affordable housing result from economic and social forces operating at a metropolitan level.

The second chapter examines the role of the RPC in *Growth Management* as outlined in several state statutes. These functions have been a mainstay of Florida's planning process for two decades, and the RPC has continuing responsibilities for them.

Regional reviews are an important part of Florida's growth management process. Goals and policies presented in this chapter outline approaches that would make reviews more meaningful. Reviews should help structure regional strategies and monitor progress in their implementation. The thrust of this section's policies is to ensure that the review process functions as a communication device rather than an additional regulatory layer, while still providing a certain level of regional guidance. Goals and policies also were developed for guiding planning programs undertaken in the region.

The third chapter examines *Geographic Information* and how, in the Information Age, it has become a critical regional

resource for both the public and private sectors. Success of the planning and growth management functions discussed above is dependent on accurate, accessible and timely geographic information. Goals and policies outline a number of coordination steps designed to increase the efficiencies of systems already in place to ensure the availability of this information.



Definitions

Throughout this plan several terms are used that merit explanation. The first term is *planning*. For many, planning has become synonymous with advocating a predetermined set of values and strategies for managing a community's growth. This is apparent in the often heard expressions, "That project should not be approved; it's not *good planning*," or "We need *good planning* to keep things from getting worse." In both instances planning seems to be perceived as a fixed idea of what should be, particularly as it relates to urban form. Lost in this perception is the notion of planning as a tool.

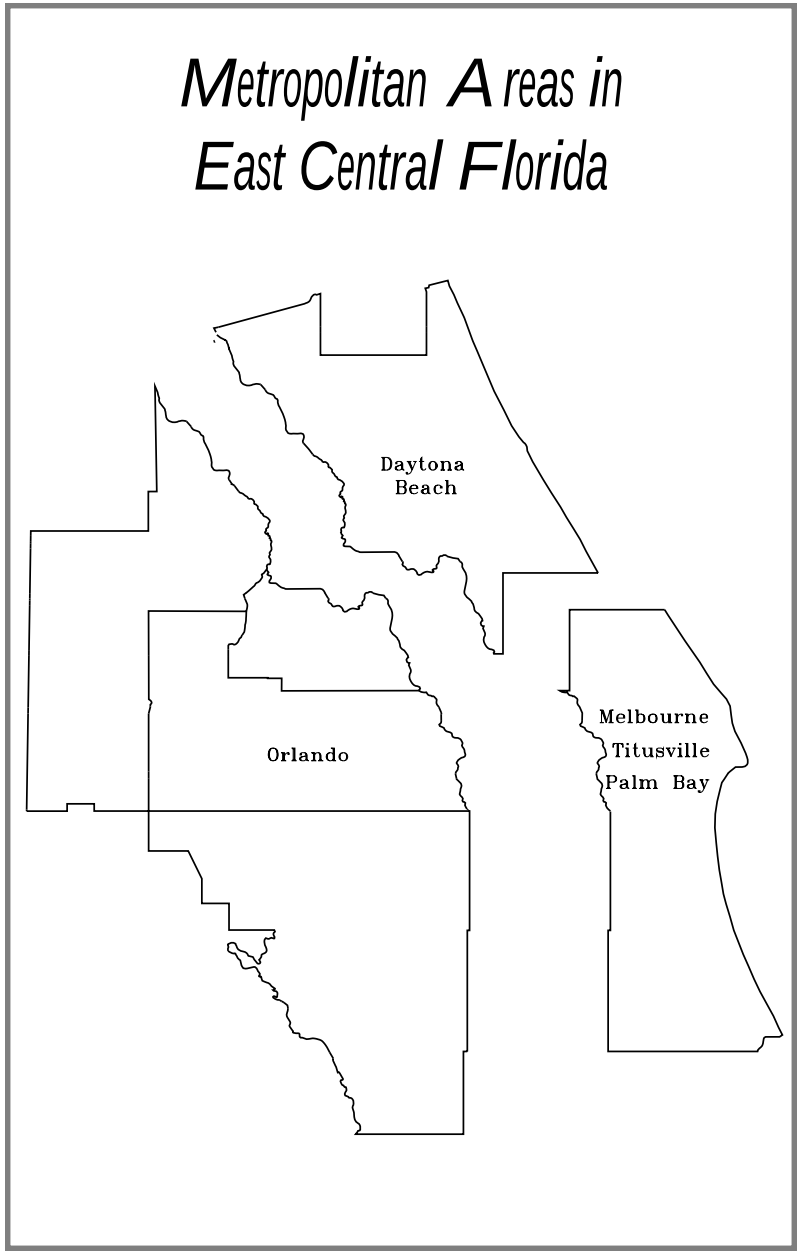
As a tool, planning's purpose is to improve the ability of a community to make informed decisions about its future. It does this by providing a method to rationally and objectively identify choices, such as the amount of open space to preserve or the service standard to maintain. Knowing up front the choices that may be available, along with their costs, allows a community to consider different ways in which varied and oftentimes competing goals may be balanced. For example, balancing economic development with environmental protection involves choosing between allocating areas either for development or conservation. Choices made (i.e., various ratios of developed land to conservation land) will reflect differing ways a community might go about balancing these two. It is this capability that gives planning its value, and it is this capability the term planning is meant to convey when used in this document.

Another term that could benefit from clarification is *regional planning*. Discussions about regional planning often degenerate into a debate on the pros and cons of regional government. They should not, because the two are not the same. Regional government is a way to represent regional interests once they have been identified and agreed upon. Ideally, the people making the decisions with regard to these interests have been elected to do so. On the other hand, regional planning, like other types of planning, does not represent the public's interest but rather seeks to *identify* it so it may be represented. By broadening the viewpoint from which available choices and their costs are examined, regional planning allows for more informed decisions to be made regarding these interests.

Defining *regional issues* has been a bewildering and difficult task over the years. This is understandable and perhaps unavoidable, given the absence of a "bottom-up" planning process that would allow them to become apparent. For

purposes of this plan, a regional issue is defined as one that can profit from an organized response on the part of more than one governmental entity. That is, an issue is regional if it can benefit from a regional planning process. This is different and, it is hoped, more productive than past approaches that attempted to categorize issues at the start of the planning process as being of state, regional or local concern.

Lastly, the term *metropolitan* needs to be defined. This term is used throughout this document, often interchangeably with *regional* to convey the level at which coordination efforts are focused. As noted previously, the east central Florida region comprises three metropolitan areas. For purposes of discussion, their boundaries are those recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau as Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The region's three metropolitan areas are shown at right.



Metropolitan Planning Process/ Integrating Local, Regional and State Programs

Background

IN THE 10 YEARS since the 1985 Growth Management Act (the Act) put into place a complex and lengthy "top-down" planning process, there has been an explosion of planning programs in Florida. These include the state comprehensive plan, state agency functional plans, comprehensive regional policy plans, and local government comprehensive plans plus the development regulations that implement them. Numerous private sector planning initiatives have been undertaken, sometimes in partnership — and at other times in direct response — to public programs. Various other planning programs including the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) long-range plans, Water Management District (WMD) water plans, transit and expressway authority plans, school board plans, campus master plans and economic development plans are ongoing and also have become part of the state's overall planning process.

Statewide, local government expenditures to meet the Act's intent of providing "long-range policy guidance for ... orderly social, economic and physical growth..." are estimated at $909 million since 1985. In East Central Florida, combined expenditures of the region's 71 local governments have been in excess of $150 million. Recurring expenditures are estimated to be $20 million annually. The private sector also has contributed to these expenditures, although the extent of that contribution — while clearly substantial — is difficult to measure. Expenses include not only items such as private planning initiatives, but also routine items such as amending a future land use element and map.

During this 10-year period, considerable progress has been made toward incorporating planning into local, regional and state decision-making. This is evident in the way that community improvements are coordinated more often through local plans. In many instances there have been substantial strides toward providing adequate facilities and efficiently using resources.

Notwithstanding these accomplishments, there is widespread feeling in the region that the potential offered by Florida's planning process has not yet been realized, despite the sizable expenditure of time, money and resources. Discussions with citizens reveal disappointment with the lack of progress made in adequately managing the area's growth. Recurring concern was expressed with regard to the inability of the process to portray an achievable future for the region.

Similar views were expressed at a series of regional roundtables attended by public and private sector planners, as well as technical staff from various state and regional agencies. The roundtables were held to explore trends in land use, transportation, natural resources and housing in the region. Conclusions reached at these roundtable discussions are contained in the *What the Future Holds*, the second document in the Strategic Plan series.

In examining past trends, roundtable participants concluded that the existing planning process has not been as effective as hoped. Further, participants felt there was little likelihood that the existing process, given its present fragmented form,

could make a significant contribution toward resolving the region's critical growth issues.

Participants noted that there will be a continuation of significant issues concerning public facilities and services, natural resources, housing, economic development and emergency preparedness. The continuing conversion of land for urban uses will increase the pressure on natural systems, which are already under stress. Wetlands and uplands alike are diminishing, and this situation is threatening wildlife and other resources. Land development in certain areas raises issues regarding protection of surface and ground waters. Water use is projected to increase steadily — even though some coastal areas are under water restrictions, must import water from inland areas, and eventually will have to rely on expensive technology to make the available water drinkable.

The region's physical infrastructure, particularly its transportation facilities, faces serious challenges as well. Participants noted that MPO plans have documented a staggering need for roads and bridge improvements. Other plans have documented an existing need for stormwater systems, solid waste facilities and other public facilities. These needs will increase as the region continues to grow.

Affordability of housing will continue to be a critical issue, especially for low and very low income residents. Accommodating the region's growing population over the next 20 years will require the addition of approximately one-half million housing units to the region's housing stock. The challenge to the region will be to match the costs of these units with the types of jobs generated by the area's economy. Finally, continued development in coastal areas presents disaster planning issues in this era of increased storm activity.

It was pointed out at the roundtables and during subsequent interviews that the region's continued ability to develop economically is tied directly to its ability to respond to these challenges. Service work is now the dominant form of production, with firms having greater flexibility than ever before in deciding where to locate. Increasingly, firms are moving to locations where workers want to live or have already chosen to live. The historic attachment of firms to particular places appears to be over, replaced by a new attachment of skilled workers to certain places. As a means of attracting economic development, attracting skilled workers to the region will become a vital component of the area's development strategy. Quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, becomes critically important when competing with other areas for skilled workers.

Problems with the Current Planning Structure

During the roundtables a number of specific problems within the state's existing planning process were identified as handicapping the metropolitan areas' abilities to address some of their long-standing growth issues. These problems, considered systemic to the planning process, include the following.

Problem 1: Local Orientation

The focus of the planning process is on local comprehensive plans. Local plans are important and necessary, and there are a number of excellent plans in the region. By themselves, however, they are not sufficient to plan effectively for a metropolitan area's growth. Their local orientation precludes them from effectively addressing area-wide issues, developing a metropolitan vision, or forging a consensus among the diverse groups, organizations and governments that make up a metropolitan area.

Problem 2: No Point of Reference

In the absence of an overall framework to which they can connect, it is virtually impossible for the myriad of state, regional and local agencies functioning within a metropolitan area to coordinate meaningfully with one another. Given the inter-relatedness of issues addressed by these plans, it is often pointless for agencies to coordinate on an ad-hoc basis. Agreement on one issue is likely to be nullified by lack of agreement on related issues, or rendered moot by the actions of another agency. New Intergovernmental Coordination Element requirements in Chapter 163, F.S., while having the potential to address project-related issues, fall well short of providing meaningful community or regional coordination.

Problem 3: Compliance Instead of Consensus

Coordination through the top-down exercise of authority has not been successful, as Florida's planning process cannot force cooperation. Greater emphasis must be placed on consensus building, which can identify, through structured discussions, common ground on the region's complex planning issues. Such a bottom-up process offers greater potential for resolving issues of state and regional significance than does formalized consistency requirements.

Problem 4: Ineffectual Land Use Maps

Future land use maps have limited usefulness for metropolitan/regional planning applications. It is nearly impossible to prioritize improvements to metropolitan-serving facilities based upon the types and intensities of land uses identified in local comprehensive plans.

Problem 5: Policy Decisions Without Understanding

Existing planning efforts often are unable to convey information in a way that is understandable or meaningful to the public. In particular, conflicts between competing goals are not presented in a manner that allows informed choices to be made. Because of this, the ability to reach an informed consensus on the area's future is seriously impaired. Such a situation most likely will lead to a continuation of current development problems, with only an after-the-fact understanding of the long-term consequences of daily permitting and development decisions.

Problem 6: Reactive Planning for Public Facilities and Services

Few existing utilities and infrastructure plans take a proactive approach to growth management planning. Water, stormwater, wastewater, energy, transportation and education plans take the perspective that their role is to provide infrastructure to support the levels, locations and forms of growth projected by others. The need for — and costs of — major infrastructure should be a variable in determining how the region grows. The change to integrated planning is starting to occur with issues of transportation and water supply, but meaningful change remains absent from other utility and infrastructure planning efforts.

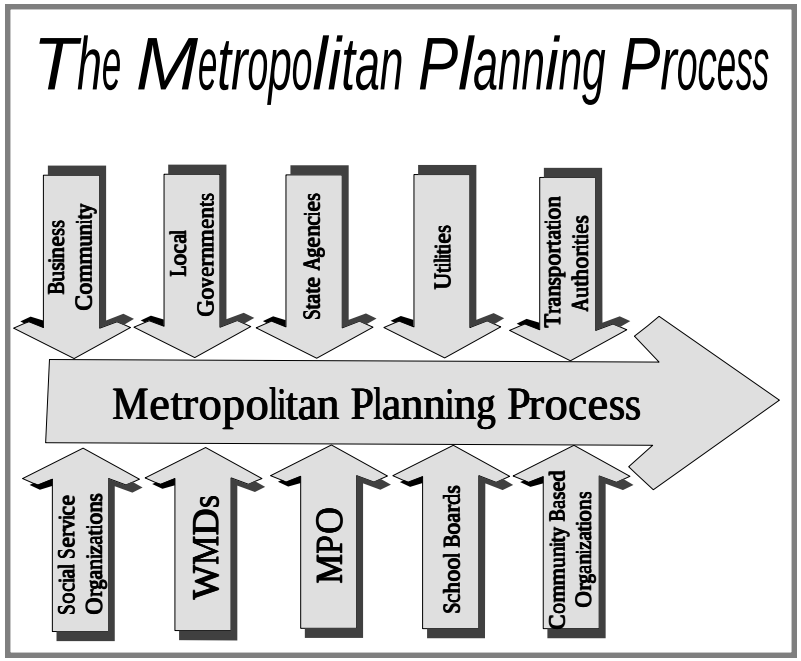
Problem 7: Limited Topics

Little emphasis has been placed on "quality of life" issues in Florida's planning process. Given that security, sense of place, schools, and other "quality of life" issues are important to the public, they pose a potential barrier to

developing a true public consensus on growth. These types of issues must be considered if the process is to stand any real chance of succeeding.

Problem 8: Ineffective Metropolitan/Regional Planning

To date, metropolitan and regional planning programs have been state-funded, and therefore strongly shaped by guidelines created outside of the region and intended to be applied uniformly throughout the state. In addition, state interests have focused on regional review functions at the expense of up-front planning. These limitations are apparent in the absence of an ongoing, community-supported planning effort that can frame metropolitan issues and provide a vehicle for their resolution.



Taking The Next Step

In 1997 local governments will begin submitting their Evaluation and Appraisal Reports (EARs), in which they are required to assess the success or failure of their plans and identify necessary plan improvements. The Florida Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) identifies the anticipated cost for preparing EARs at approximately $11 million. Given that any major failings identified by local governments in their EARs are likely a result of limitations in the existing planning process, there is little likelihood this $11 million expenditure will actually result in any significant improvements.

To be of value, EARs need to be conducted within the framework of a larger effort, a metropolitan planning process that can address the shortcomings of the existing process. This larger effort should be capable of improving a local government's ability to address area-wide issues, and hence improve the quality of life within their own jurisdictions.

The following outline identifies seven key features of such a process. They represent significant changes in the way planning is currently performed, and offer a remedy to the problems identified earlier.

Feature 1: Expanded Focus

Planning needs to shift from primarily a local focus, supported by single-function, area-wide planning programs, to a holistic metropolitan-level planning effort. Such an approach would recognize that growth is a metropolitan phenomenon, and effective planning for this growth requires a coordinated metropolitan-wide effort.

Feature 2: Predictive

The process needs to be rigorous and open, and must emphasize prediction rather than prescription. Prior to adopting public policy, it is crucial that the consequences be known so there is some assurance that desired objectives will in fact result. A process emphasizing prediction will satisfy the critical need to provide a rational way of making choices that allows competing goals and interests to be balanced at a metropolitan level.

Feature 3: Integrated

The process needs to offer an opportunity to integrate the planning occurring in various jurisdictions, at various levels of government and for various functions into a cohesive process that can provide a single source of direction for a metropolitan area. All entities with responsibility for implementing portions of the plan should be involved from the beginning to the end of the process.

Feature 4: Visionary

The process needs to operate from a metropolitan vision, or "desired future," that articulates public values and allows comparison of alternative actions and strategies. When dealing with metropolitan-level issues, coordination — in the traditional sense of sharing information and reports — is not sufficient. A unification of purpose is needed, not only to drive the metropolitan planning activities but also to provide the basis for individual agency actions. Visioning offers a means of providing this unification.

Feature 5: Consensus-Based

Management of growth is fragmented among many levels of government, many agencies within each level, and among environmental groups, citizens, the business sector and nonprofit groups. In this setting, top-down planning has only limited potential for achieving coordination. To be effective, a planning process needs to be grounded in consensus-building, which will allow maximum participation and agreement by stakeholders and citizens alike, and will ensure broad-based support of selected strategies.

Feature 6: Facilitative

The process should be designed to result in a consensual document, representative of the opinions of a metropolitan area's residents. The principal role of all agencies involved should be one of facilitating preparation of such a document, rather than simply developing an agency plan.

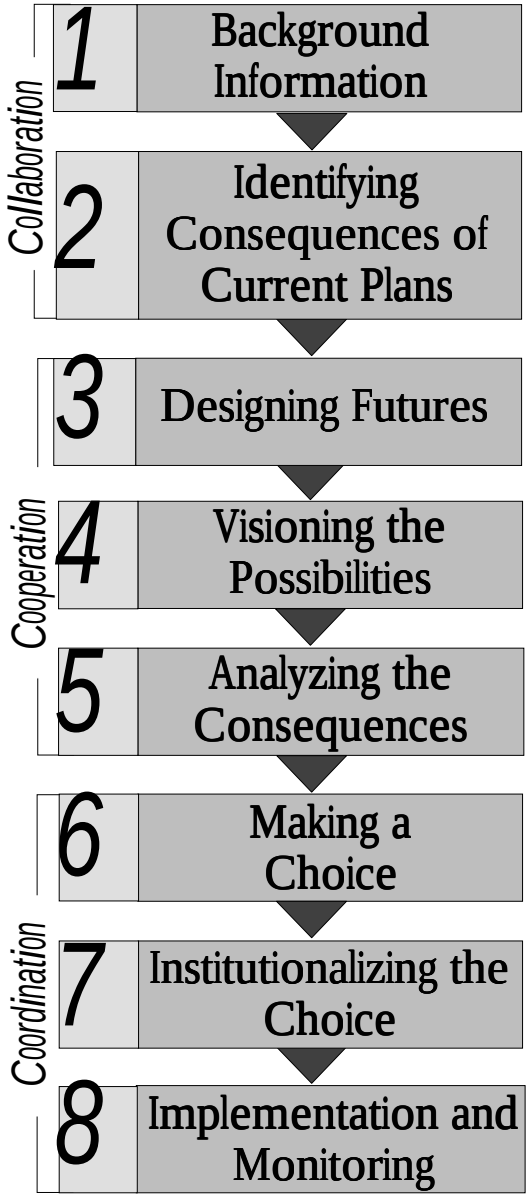
In addition, the process should take steps to ensure that public policy choices and their consequences are presented in a relevant and understandable manner to a metropolitan area's residents.

Feature 7: Action-Oriented

The orientation of the process, from the very beginning, needs to be one of action. A detailed course of action should be set out that will establish a basis for setting priorities in state, regional and local activities.

A Planning Model

On the following pages is a description of how a process incorporating the key features described above could be implemented. It is designed to be a rigorous, multi-disciplinary process geared toward arriving at consensus on a metropolitan area's future. There are eight phases to this process, shown in the diagram at right. The sequence is designed to build an increasing sense of metropolitan identity — moving the participants from collaboration to cooperation to coordination.



Collaboration

1 Background Information

- **Identify stakeholders.** The following agencies, organizations, groups and interests will be included in the process:

  Local government
  State agencies
  Federal agencies
  MPOs
  Water Management Districts
  Business community
  School boards
  Social service agencies
  Transportation authorities
  Housing agencies
  Utilities
  Community-based organizations

- **Inventory and evaluate major planning activities.** Identify elements in existing planning studies and initiatives which can be built upon, so as to avoid duplication.

- **Identify planning topics to be addressed in the process.** The following topics will be addressed in the process:

  Transportation
  Natural Resources
  Affordable Housing
  Emergency Management
  Economic Development

Land Use Design
Public Facilities
Education
Public Safety
Social Services
Energy
Communications

- **Identify community values related to the planning topics.** These values will be identified through a variety of means, relying heavily on past planning programs and processes. If needed, a visioning program will be used to supplement and expand upon past efforts.

- **Identify how the consequences of planning scenarios will be measured.** Identify up-front how the actual impact on a particular topic will be measured. Units of measurement will be selected that are understandable and meaningful to the lay public as well as technical staff. They will also be clear and objective concepts that are quantifiable.

- **Assign a range of objective measurement standards (high, medium and low) for each topic.** Develop a range of impacts for each topic as a way of relating public values to the objective units of measurement. For the sake of simplicity, impacts can be identified as low, medium, and high. It is not necessary to determine which end of the range the final plan should strive to achieve — it is only important that the range bracket the interests of all key parties and that it drive the analytical work of the project.

  Use of these ranges replaces the goal-setting step that traditionally occurs at the beginning of a planning process. The usefulness of goals in setting direction is questionable as they are usually so general that it is difficult to determine when they have been achieved. In addition, when written at the outset of a planning process they often are so vague that all participating parties can see in them what they want to see. Identifying a range forces people to specify what they mean, in measurable terms — this ensures that the planning process will include their interests.

2 Identifying the Consequences of Current Plans

- **Develop Future Growth Scenario.** A full build-out scenario will be developed based upon an extension of existing trends and conditions as identified by local governments. (Note: the intent of this exercise is to consider the future urban area in its entirety so that larger development patterns can emerge. It is not intended to replace local governments' existing future land use plans, which are based upon fixed planning horizons.)

- **Identify the consequences of build-out for each topic to be addressed.** Once the future growth scenario is established, its consequences will be quantified using the range and unit of measurement for each topic. For example, will the growth model create a low, medium or high impact on air quality? The impacts should be described at both the metropolitan and community level, since ultimately residents will want to know what kind of change they can expect in their immediate area. This would entail the use of an abundance of high quality visual material, as graphic information is usually more accessible to people than written plans and reports. This also underscores the need for maximum participation by local planning departments, so these impacts can be identified and conveyed to their respective jurisdictions.

- **Prepare materials that demonstrate current plan consequences.** A determination will be made at this point as to whether substantial change is desired in the

existing plans and programs, and to what extent the metropolitan plan will recommend policies aimed at creating this change.

Cooperation

3 Designing Futures

- **Develop high, medium and low impact actions for each planning topic.** The purpose of this task is to the respond to the question: "If you could design the area to make high, medium and low impacts in your particular area of interest, how would you do it?" The actions can include physical planning concepts as well as programs.

- **Analyze the relationship between public values and actions to determine similarities and differences.** This information will establish a sense of which issues — and their components — are particularly important to the public, and which are less important. This information will be helpful in creating planning options that are technically useful as well as relevant to the public.

- **Identify how the metropolitan area would change if the actions in a single topic were used as the primary principle for guiding planning decisions.** Consequences of actions will be described for each planning topic. These consequences will be set forth in an easily-understood format with attention to graphic and visual representations. The description of consequences will help people begin to identify and understand areas of commonality and conflict between planning topics (i.e., natural resource protection and economic development; transportation and urban design).

4 Visioning the Possibilities

- **Organize preferred actions from each of the planning topics into a series of planning scenarios.** Each planning scenario will be a composite of certain elements from Phase 3. The planning scenarios, taken together, should demonstrate a range of change, from modest to substantial.

- **Describe the planning scenarios.** Information will be presented for public consumption, with a heavy emphasis on graphic materials.

5 Analyzing the Consequences

- **Identify consequences of the scenarios for all planning topics.** The methodologies for identifying consequences will consist of computer modeling for some topics, while others will rely more heavily on professional judgment and opinion.

- **Describe whether each planning scenario makes a high, medium or low impact on the planning topics.** By describing the consequences of each scenario in terms of whether it makes a high, medium or low impact on each planning topic, the process provides a means to tie this phase of the analytical work to earlier phases (such as Phase 4). For each scenario, the end product is a summary of impacts for each planning topic as presented within that scenario. This facilitates comparison of the relative merits of each scenario. In addition, this method provides assurance that selection of the preferred scenario is based on reliable, credible information about all of the impacts it will create.

Coordination

6 Making a Choice

- **Provide comparative evaluation of the planning scenarios for all planning topics.** The planning scenarios will probably create similar impacts for some planning topics and different impacts for others. This analysis will articulate the reasons for these similarities and differences.

- **Select the features of each scenario that best satisfy public values and create the most beneficial consequences, then combine these features into a new, preferred scenario.** The most likely occurrence is that a new planning scenario will be created based on the best aspects of the original planing scenarios. The analysis of consequences for all planning topics — completed in Phase 5 — makes it possible to focus the debate on issues rather than politics. Choices and the consequences of those choices have been presented in an analytical rather than political manner.

- **Evaluate the consequences of the preferred scenario.** Once consensus is reached and a preferred scenario is selected or created, then the consequences of that scenario will be analyzed as for the planning scenarios in Phase 5. This is to ensure that the presumed beneficial effects of this new planning scenario will, in fact, occur.

7 Institutionalizing the Choice

- **Refine the preferred scenario.** Fine-tuning of the preferred scenario would take place at this point, if it is deemed necessary after analysis of consequences for this scenario.

- **Prepare a plan document, with a vision and implementation strategies.**

- **Incorporate the plan document, with its vision and strategies, into the plans of the agencies and organizations having implementation responsibilities.** This would include local government comprehensive plans, MPO long-range planning updates, and other plans that establish a basis for a stakeholder's actions.

8 Implementation and Monitoring

- **Implement high priority items, short-term actions.** Agencies should begin immediately to undertake those high-priority items that can be achieved quickly. It is critical that momentum built from the planning process not be allowed to dissipate. Actions producing short-term results help to maintain interest and credibility while other more difficult or longer range activities are undertaken.

- **Establish a review process for monitoring plan implementation.** As implementation of the plan is carried out, it is valuable to monitor progress toward achieving the region's vision. A number of review processes currently in place can serve this purpose. These are discussed in detail in the next chapter, but include items such as DRI reviews, local plan amendment reviews, Intergovernmental and Coordination Reviews (ICR), high speed rail and many others. As with all reviews, their primary purpose is one of communication. As plans, programs and projects are proposed, their review serves as something of a reality check, both on what is being proposed as well as on the vision itself.

  An example of the how such a review might work is instructive. Several years ago a DRI application was submitted for a high-rise office building in downtown

Orlando. It was approved, but due to market conditions did not go forward. Early last year a substantial deviation was submitted for a change in the make-up of the building's use. During project review, the adequacy of the proposed number of parking spaces was called into question. The concern was that the number was insufficient to meet perceived demand, although it was consistent with the city's required parking standards, which had been developed for the express purpose of limiting space availability in order to promote downtown transit use. However, access to downtown is a critical regional issue, as Orlando's downtown is the area's premier activity center. Limiting the number of parking spaces appeared to be counter-productive.

While parking is an important consideration in the success of any downtown development effort, it should not be the focus of the regional review. Rather than second-guessing a local government's parking strategy, review should focus on whether a high intensity regional activity center, like that envisioned for downtown Orlando, can be served by a regional transportation system almost totally reliant upon automobiles and highways. Cars, with their physical requirements, place limits on the intensity of development that can be achieved.

The review process should allow for discussion of this type of issue. It not only can help ensure the consistency of a particular project with a regional vision, but can allow for early warning signs of problems with the soundness of a vision, or with activities needed to make the vision a reality.

- **Update plan on a periodic basis.** As with all planning efforts, the vision and strategies need to be reviewed periodically. Unlike the intermittent reviews discussed above, this review is similar to the Evaluation and Appraisal Reports (EARs) required of local comprehensive plans by S.163, FS. It would involve a wholesale revisiting of the assumptions, projections, values and decisions that went into development of the original plan. As with local plans, this needs to occur at a minimum of every five years.

Goals and Policies: Setting up the Process

A vision of the future for each metropolitan area, and a means to implement these visions, is critical to this region's success. Effective planning partnerships with the full participation and understanding of the public should be in place to create these visions and develop consensus on how they will be realized. The following goals and policies expresses the region's commitment to this ideal and outline a structure for achieving it.

Goal

Implement an effective regional planning process that can provide a platform from which the region's metropolitan areas can successfully compete and prosper into the 21st century.

Policies

1. **Establish a planning process in each of the three metropolitan areas.**

   This process will provide for a metropolitan vision and a substantive framework that incorporates goals and policies for environmental protection, coordination of jobs, housing and public services, and the interrelation of benefits and impacts of growth in different parts of a metropolitan area.

   Key characteristics of the process will include the ability to predict consequences of various public policy choices, provide a vision, develop consensus among interests and groups within a metropolitan area, integrate activities of existing planning programs, and identify specific actions that need to occur in order to implement the adopted vision.

2. **Use the following objectives to guide the regional planning process within each metropolitan area.**

   - Take advantage of available economies of scale;
   - Maintain the functional integrity of natural and man-made systems;
   - Equitably share opportunities and responsibilities.

3. **Secure a Resolution from each local government expressing their intent to participate fully in the planning process.**

   A metropolitan area comprises a number of local governments, as well as numerous other public entities that play an important role in influencing the area's growth. Ultimately, however, it is the local governments that assume the principal role of directing and guiding growth. It is critical to the success of this process that the majority of these jurisdictions choose to participate. Resolutions indicating their support and willingness to participate will be requested from each local government.

4. **Secure sufficient funding to ensure completion of each planning process.**

   The planning process needs to be supported by adequate staff and financial resources to explore creative ideas, develop credible and reliable information about the consequences of various planning options, and graphically illustrate the plan's implications for a wide variety of

conditions.

A well-financed process will allow information to be presented in ways that are relevant and clear to the broad-based population of a metropolitan area. This means an abundance of high quality visual materials should be available, so people can visualize the future.

5. Develop a management structure.

It is important that a process of this magnitude and potential effect have across-the-board participation in its development. This includes local elected officials — who will eventually be asked to vote on the outcome of the process — funding agencies, technical staff, and other interested persons who may play a significant role in plan implementation. To facilitate this involvement, the following groups will be established.

Management Group - The Management Group would consist of individuals from the primary funding agencies. The group's responsibility would be to ensure that the project's work plan and budget are followed. Representation could include some or all of the following:

Regional Planning/Management Agencies
Transportation Authorities
Businesses
Local Government
Utilities
Federal Government
State Government
Private Foundations
Community Based Organizations

Technical Group - The Technical Group would consist of project staff. Project staff should include staff from the funding agencies as well as technical consultants. Consultants would be used for various technical disciplines — need for consultants will depend to a great extent on the level of staff commitment made by the participating agencies to the project.

Political Group - A Policy Advisory Committee for each metropolitan area should be formed to provide input from elected officials throughout the planning process. The role of this group would be:

- Approve the proposed planning process
- Determine specific topics to be addressed
- Approve the plan recommendations

The primary involvement of elected officials will be at key points during the beginning, middle and end of the process. By not requiring elected officials to vote at each point in the process, project participants have the room to explore a wide variety of ideas without placing elected officials in the position of having to take a stand on every one of them.

This group will also have ongoing responsibilities related to implementation and monitoring of the metropolitan plans. Additionally, the group would serve as a forum for identification and discussion of areas and activities of metropolitan influence.

6. Establish a broad-based public participation process.

Meaningful public involvement is essential during each phase of the planning process. For any resulting plan to be successful, the public must not merely accept it, but demand that it be implemented. This will require a broad base of public support resulting from a process that provides a legitimate opportunity to become

knowledgeable on the issues and to make an informed choice about the future.

Several purposes are served by a well-developed public participation program. These include:

- Providing means and opportunities for the public to have real influence in all phases of the planning program.
- Identifying issues that are of concern to the public.
- Educating people about the future implications of choices to be made about their future.
- Affording an opportunity to understand the unique and common challenges that face different jurisdictions in the metropolitan area.
- Promoting consensus by establishing a sense of metropolitan identity.

7. **The timelines on the next page indicate the schedule for implementation of a strategic planning process for each metropolitan area.**

8. **The Regional Planning Council will establish a Cross-Acceptance Process to determine the level of compatibility between and among the metroplitan visions and policy framework.**

   The intent of the regional planning process is to allow issues which cannot be addressed at one level to surface so they can be addressed at another. This is one of the values of a "bottom-up" process. Upon completion of the metropolitan area plans, the results will be compared to identify potential conflicts and opportunities for cooperation.

9. **The Regional Planning Council will adopt a Regional Plan incorporating a compatible vision and policy framework for the east central Florida area from the three metropolitan area plans.**

   The intent in consolidating the three plans is to reconcile conflicts that may impede implementation of the plans, as well as to identify those areas where closer coordination can help achieve common goals. Where such conditions exist, strategies for coordinating inter-metropolitan activities will be developed.

Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure the progress resulting from the metropolitan planning programs.

1. Number of local governments adopting the appropriate *Metropolitan Vision and Strategies* as part of their Local Government Comprehensive Plan.

2. Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Florida Department of Community Affairs (FDCA) and East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC) on how the *Metropolitan Visions and Strategies* will be used in the review of local plans and plan amendments for consistency and compliance.

3. Number of adjacent Regional Planning Councils (RPC) adopting strategies related to the coordination of efforts between RPCs consistent with the *Metropolitan Visions and Strategies*.

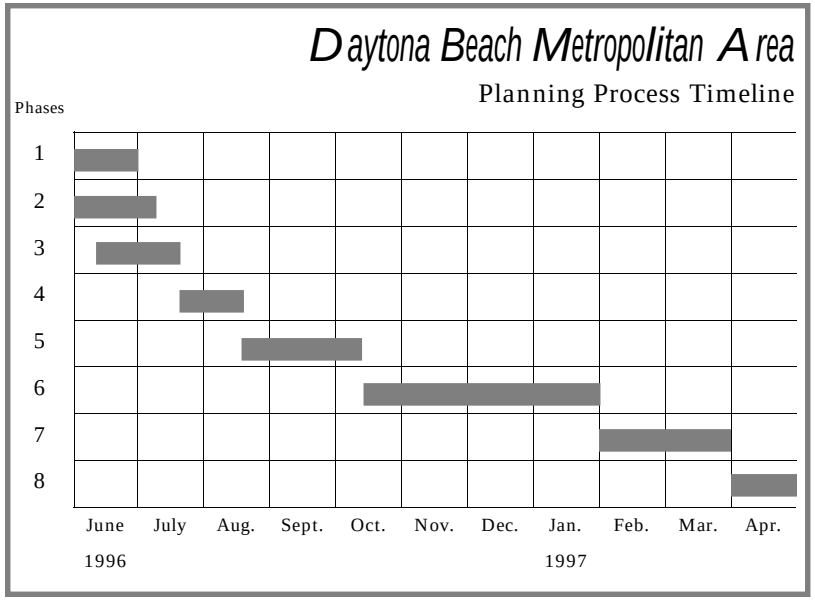
4. Adoption of the *Metropolitan Visions and Strategies* as part of the future updates of Orlando, Brevard and Daytona Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) plans.

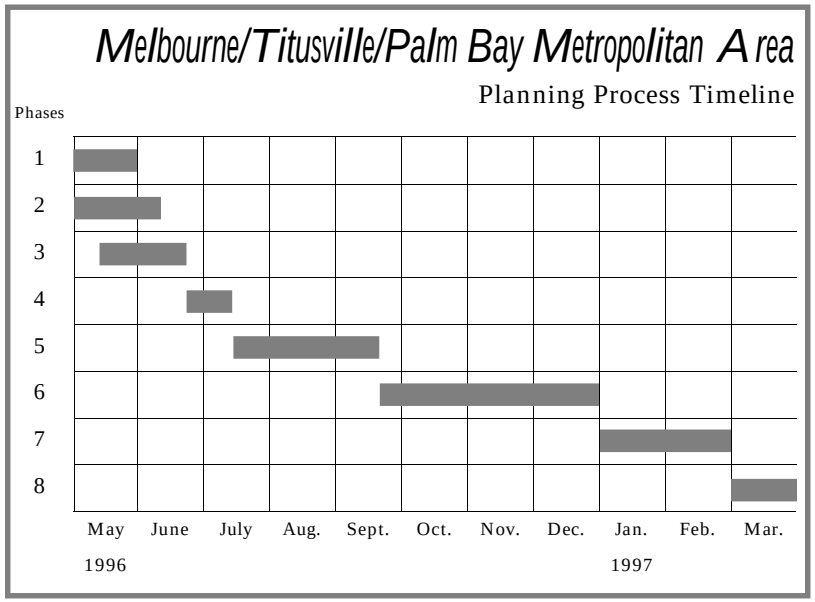
5. Number of nonprofit agencies and organiziations using the *Metropolitan Vision and Strategies* to guide their plans and programs.

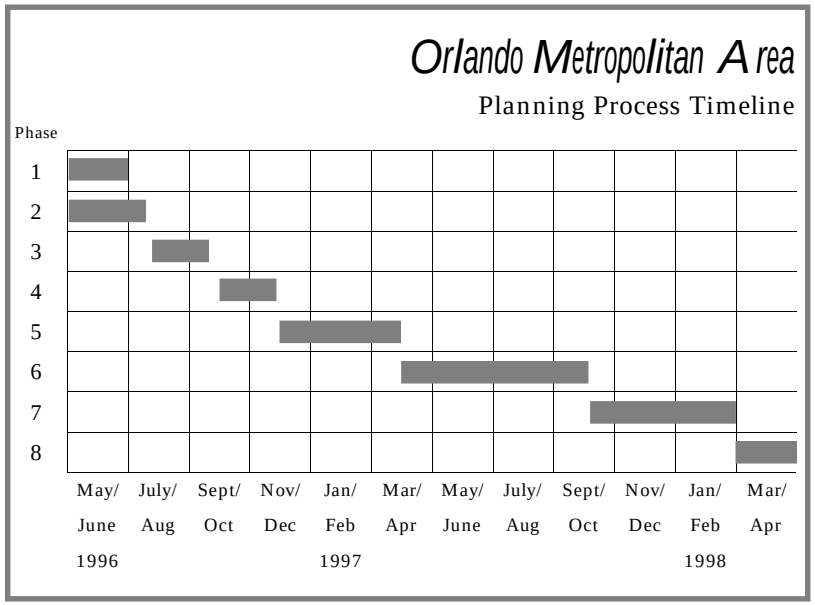
6. Adoption of the *Metropolitan Visions and Strategies* by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

7. Number of resolutions of support from community based organizations for the *Metropolitan Vision and Strategies*.

8. Consistency of the State Legislative Delegations annual legislative agenda with the *Metropolitan Visions and Strategies*.







Goals and Policies: Implementing the Process

Goals and policies have been developed that describe the processes to be followed in implementing metropolitan-level planning. Goals and policies for five topic areas are presented below.

Transportation Goal

Achieve a unity of purpose among public and private interests capable of initiating and sustaining a coordinated program of regional transportation improvements that will support and further each metropolitan area's vision of its future.

Policies

1. **The following transportation and transportation related agencies will be invited to actively participate in a regional planning process designed to enhance interagency relationships and allow linkages to be recognized and considered between transportation and other physical, economic and social factors influencing the quality of the region's growth:**

FDOT	Port Authorities
Local Governments	Airport Authorities
MPOs	Railroads
Turnpike Authority	Private Commercial Carriers
Expressway Authorities	National Rail Passenger Trans. Corp. (Amtrak)
Transit Authorities	

2. **The aforementioned agencies, groups and interests shall form a planning team or teams to jointly develop alternative transportation strategies based upon a range of efficiencies and costs.**

3. **The fiscal, social, economic and physical implications of alternative transportation strategies shall be illustrated by the Planning Team to demonstrate the strength of the connections between these strategies and other functional activities.**

4. **Through planning activities designed to enhance interdisciplinary coordination, the Transportation Planning Team will participate with teams from other functional areas in the selection of a preferred development scenario (i.e., vision) based upon a balancing of benefits and public values.**

5. **Agencies represented on the planning team will be encouraged to support the preferred scenario by incorporating it into their respective plans to serve as a guide to the development of agency programs and activities.**

Natural Resources Goal

Achieve a unity of purpose among public and private interests capable of initiating and sustaining a coordinated program of natural resource protection that will support and further each metropolitan area's vision of its future.

Policies:

1. **The following environmental agencies and organizations will be invited to actively participate in a regional planning process designed to enhance**

interagency relationships and allow linkages to be recognized and considered between natural resource protection and other physical, economic and social factors influencing the quality of the region's growth:

FDEP	US Army Corps of Engineers
FDACS - Division of Forestry	Utilities and PSCs
FHRS	FDCA
FEMA	Private/Nonprofit Environmental Groups
WMDs	Local Governments
USDA - USFS/SCS	FNAI
Game and Freshwater Fish Commission	EPA
US Fish and Wildlife Service	National Park Service
Mosquito Control Districts	Water Control Districts
The Nature Conservancy/ Trust for Public Lands	Water Authorities
	Local Land Trusts
	USGS
	IRL-NEP

2. **The aforementioned agencies and organizations shall form a planning team or teams to jointly develop alternative natural resource protection strategies based upon a range of efficiencies and costs.**

3. **The fiscal, social, economic and physical implications of alternative natural resource protection strategies shall be illustrated by the Planning Team (s) to demonstrate the strength of the connections between these strategies and other functional activities.**

4. **Through planning activities designed to enhance interdisciplinary coordination, the Natural Resource Planning Team will participate with teams from other functional areas in the selection of a preferred development scenario (i.e., vision) based upon a balancing of benefits and public values.**

5. **Agencies represented on the planning team will be encouraged to support the preferred scenario by incorporating it into their respective plans to serve as a guide to the development of agency programs and activities.**

Housing Goal

Achieve a unity of purpose among public and private interests capable of initiating and sustaining a coordinated program for affordable housing that will support and further each metropolitan area's vision of its future.

Policies:

1. **The following housing and housing related agencies will be invited to actively participate in a regional planning process designed to enhance interagency relationships and allow linkages to be recognized and considered between housing and other physical, economic and social factors influencing the quality of the region's growth:**

HUD	Local Governments
FDCA	FHFA
Housing Authorities	Financial Institutions
Private/Nonprofit Housing Organizations	Related Social Service Agencies

2. **The aforementioned agencies shall form a planning team or teams to jointly develop alternative**

strategies for affordable housing based upon a range of efficiencies and costs.

3. **The fiscal, social, economic and physical implications of alternative affordable housing strategies shall be illustrated by the Planning Team to demonstrate the strength of the connections between these strategies and other functional activities.**

4. **Through planning activities designed to enhance interdisciplinary coordination, the Affordable Housing Planning Team will participate with teams from other functional areas in the selection of a preferred development scenario (i.e., vision) based upon a balancing of benefits and public values.**

5. **Agencies represented on the planning team will be encouraged to support the preferred scenario by incorporating it into their respective plans to serve as a guide to the development of agency programs and activities.**

Healthy Economy Goal

Achieve a unity of purpose among public and private interests capable of initiating and sustaining a coordinated program of economic development that will support and further each metropolitan area's vision of its future.

Policies:

1. **The following economic development and economic development related agencies will be invited to actively participate in a regional planning process designed to enhance interagency relationships and allow linkages to be recognized and considered between economic development and those physical and social factors influencing the quality of the region's growth:**

   FDOC
   Local Governments
   Private/Nonprofit Economic Development Organizations
   Business Groups
   Chambers of Commerce

2. **The aforementioned agencies shall form a planning team to jointly develop alternative economic development strategies based upon a range of efficiencies and costs.**

3. **The fiscal, social, and physical implications of alternative economic development strategies shall be illustrated by the Planning Team to demonstrate the strength of the connections between these strategies and other functional activities.**

4. **Through planning activities designed to enhance interdisciplinary coordination, the Economic Development Planning Team will participate with teams from other functional areas in the selection of a preferred development scenario (i.e., vision) based upon a balancing of benefits and public values.**

5. **Agencies represented on the planning team will be encouraged to support the preferred scenario by incorporating it into their respective plans to serve as a guide to the development of agency programs and activities.**

Emergency Management Goal

Achieve a unity of purpose among public and private interests capable of initiating and sustaining a coordinated program of emergency management that will support and further each metropolitan area's vision of its future.

Policies:

1. **The following emergency management and related agencies will be invited to actively participate in a regional planning process designed to enhance interagency relationships and allow linkages to be recognized and considered between emergency management and those physical, economic and social factors influencing the quality of the region's growth:**

FEMA	FDCA
Local Governments	LEPC
National Weather Service	FDEP
National Hurricane Center	EPA
WMDs	US Coast Guard

2. **The aforementioned agencies shall form a planning team to jointly develop alternative emergency management strategies based upon a range of efficiencies and costs.**

3. **The fiscal, social, economic and physical implications of alternative emergency management strategies shall be illustrated by the Planning Team to demonstrate the strength of the connections between these strategies and other functional activities.**

4. **Through planning activities designed to enhance interdisciplinary coordination, the Emergency Management Planning Team will participate with teams from other functional areas in the selection of a preferred development scenario (i.e., vision) based upon a balancing of benefits and public values.**

5. **Agencies represented on the planning team will be encouraged to support the preferred scenario by incorporating it into their respective plans to serve as a guide to the development of agency programs and activities.**

Background

IN DISCUSSING THE FUTURE of the regional role in planning and growth management, the Environmental Land Management Study (ELMS) Committee wrote in their 1992 report:

> *After the Legislature has eliminated the regional planning council's authority to appeal a DRI development order and altered the relationship between the regional plan and local plans, regional planning councils should be able to serve more often as a neutral party in helping to resolve growth management disputes.* (Building Successful Communities, 1992, pg. 27)

The recommendations offered by the ELMS Committee, and incorporated into the statutes in 1993, reflect a changing perception of how RPCs can be most useful. Both emphasize planning and coordination as the primary mission of RPCs, replacing the quasi-regulatory role that has often overshadowed it. In amending the DRI and local comprehensive plan review requirements, the Legislature chose to eliminate the RPCs' ability to **directly** influence how development occurs. These changes, more than any others, were designed to allow RPCs to function effectively as consensus builders in the resolution of regional issues.

Within this context, RPCs will continue to play an important role in Florida's growth management program. As noted in the ELMS report, this role is crucial to the success of the program, as RPCs are the only entities in a position to plan for and coordinate responses to significant greater-than-local issues. This role continues to be most visible through the RPC's statutorily assigned review responsibilities. Less visible, but increasingly important, is the RPC's role in facilitating a regional planning process. How the RPC will perform both of these roles is the subject of this chapter.

Regional Reviews

Mandatory referral of plans and projects to regional planning councils has been an important and at times controversial part of Florida's planning process for many years. This mandatory referral was begun in order to give regional agencies more influence over how things occur. RPCs have been given the authority to review certain classes of proposed projects and types of proposed plans to identify their impacts and determine consistency with regional plans. If a proposal is found to be inconsistent, the RPC usually makes recommendations that would bring the proposal in line with the regional plan.

Although ELMS III legislation changed the focus of RPCs, the RPCs still have a number of continuing review responsibilities. These are outlined below.

Developments of Regional Impact

Large developments are required to be reviewed through this process prior to being considered by the local government of jurisdiction. The RPC advises the local government.

"In preparing its report and recommendations, the regional planning agency shall prepare and submit to the local government a report and recommendations on the regional impact of the proposed development. In preparing its report and recommendations, the regional planning agency shall identify regional issues based upon the following review criteria and make recommendations to the local government on these regional issues, specifically considering whether, and the extent to which:

> The development will have a favorable or unfavorable impact on state or regional resources or facilities identified in the applicable state or regional plans...For the purposes of this subsection, "applicable regional plan" means ... an adopted strategic regional policy plan." [380.06(12)(a), FS]

Ten-Year Site Plans

Electric utilities are required to submit 10-year plans annually that describe their projected need for generating facility expansions. The RPC advises the Department of Community Affairs pursuant to the DCA/RPC annual contract. No review guidelines specific to RPCs are provided. [186.508, FS.]

Regional Clearinghouse Review

Prior to receiving federal approval, applications for federal funding or permit authorization are required to receive state clearinghouse and/or regional clearinghouse review to determine consistency with adopted regional and local plans and duplication or conflict with existing public programs. No further guidance for these reviews is provided by the executive orders. [Gubernatorial Executive Order 93-194 and Presidential Executive Order 12372.]

Florida Electrical Power Plant Siting Act

New or expanded electrical power plants must be certified by the State Siting Board prior to construction. The RPC advises the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, which serves as staff to the Siting Board.

"The regional planning council shall prepare a report containing recommendations that address the impact upon the public of the proposed electrical power plant, based on the degree to which the electrical power plant is consistent with the applicable provisions of the strategic regional policy plan adopted pursuant to chapter 186 and other matters within its jurisdiction." [403.507(2)(a)7, FS.]

Transmission Line Siting Act

New or expanded electrical transmission lines must be certified by the State Siting Board prior to construction. The RPC advises the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, which serves as staff to the Siting Board.
"Each regional planning council shall present a report containing recommendations that address the impact upon the public of the proposed transmission line or corridor based on the degree to which the transmission line or corridor is consistent with the applicable provisions of the strategic regional policy plan adopted pursuant to chapter 186 and other impacts of each proposed transmission line or corridor on matters within its jurisdiction." [403.526(2)(a)7., FS.]

Florida High-Speed Rail Transportation Act

Any proposal to construct a high speed rail transportation system in Florida must first receive a franchise from the Florida Department of Transportation. The RPC serves as an advisor to the department.

"In assessing the application for franchise, the department shall consider, but is not limited to, the following:

> The extent to which the proposed high-speed rail line, guideway, or transit station is consistent with the goals and policies of the state comprehensive plan, affected strategic regional policy plans, and affected local government comprehensive plans; and, if not consistent, how the applicant proposes that the high-speed rail line, guideway, or transit stations and such plans will be made consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with each other and how any inconsistency with a proposed associated development will be resolved." [341.3334(1), FS.]

Magnetic Levitation Demonstration Project Act

Emerging transit technology is promoted, and related development proposals are considered by the Governor and Cabinet using the recommendations of the Florida High Speed Rail Commission. The RPC is an advisor to the Commission.

"Each regional planning council in the jurisdiction within which the project is proposed to be located shall prepare a report as to the effects of the proposed project on matters within its jurisdiction." [341.407(10), FS.]

Transportation Plans

Urbanized area transportation plans and other plans stipulated in s.339.175, FS are to be reviewed by the RPC. The RPC provides to the Florida Department of Transportation and the appropriate metropolitan planning organization its recommendations on these plans.

"The regional planning council shall review urbanized area transportation plans and any other planning products stipulated in s.339.175 and provide the department and respective metropolitan planning organizations with written recommendations which the department and the metropolitan planning organizations shall take under advisement." [339.155(4)(b), FS.]

The Jobs Siting Act

Certain private and governmental projects judged to be significant to the public, and which could benefit from expedited permitting, may be certified for construction by the Governor and Cabinet, acting as the siting board. The RPC advises the Florida Department of Commerce, which compiles a report of comments for the siting board's consideration.

"2) Each of the following agencies shall prepare a report as to matters within its jurisdiction expected to be affected by the proposed project, which report shall be submitted to the applicant, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Environmental Regulation, the affected local governments, and all other affected agencies, no later than 65 days after the application is determined to be sufficient: ...

(f) Each regional planning council having jurisdiction over any proposed site or installation...

4) Each agency report shall contain all information on matters relating to the need for variances, exceptions, exemptions, or other relief which may be necessary to facilitate the location of the proposed project. The report shall also contain any proposed conditions of certification which the agency believes are necessary to meet agency non-procedural standards." [403.961, FS.]

Florida Recreational Trails Act

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is empowered to establish and expand the Florida Recreational Trails System.

"All agencies of the state, regional planning councils through their comprehensive plans, and local governments through their local comprehensive planning process pursuant to chapter 163 shall recognize the special character of the lands and waters designated by the state as recreational trails and shall not take any action which will impair their use as designated." [260.018, FS.]

Campus Master Plans

The Board of Regents is required to develop a master plan that considers the impacts of each of its campuses on the host communities. The RPC is an advisor to the Board of Regents on proposed master plans.

"(5)...a campus master plan must not be in conflict with the comprehensive plan of the host local government and the comprehensive plan of any affected local governments. A campus master plan must be consistent with the state comprehensive plan.

(6) Before a campus master plan is adopted, a copy of the draft master plan must be sent for review to the... applicable water management district and regional planning council. These agencies must be given 90 days after receipt of the campus master plans in which to conduct their review and provide comments to the Board of Regents." [240.155, FS.]

Local Government Comprehensive Plans

Comprehensive plans adopted by local governments, and

their subsequent amendments, must be reviewed by the Florida Department of Community Affairs. The RPC advises the department on related regional concerns.

"The review of the regional planning council pursuant to subsection (4) shall be limited to effects on regional resources or facilities identified in the strategic regional policy plan and extrajurisdictional impacts which would be inconsistent with the comprehensive plan of the local government. However, any inconsistency between a local plan or plan amendment and a strategic regional policy plan must not be the sole basis for a notice of intent to find a local plan or plan amendment not in compliance with this act." [163.3184(5), FS.]

Wekiva River Protection Act

Local governments having lands under their jurisdiction within the designated Wekiva River Protection Area are required to recognize this resource in their comprehensive plans. The RPC cooperates with the Florida Department of Community Affairs in their review of amendments to these plans.

"(3)...The council shall also cooperate with the department in the department's implementation of the provisions of s.369.305." [369.307, FS.]

Proposed Regional Review Processes

The positive message received from the ELMS III legislation is that RPCs are to serve as promoters and facilitators of cooperative reviews and problem-solving on issues of interjurisdictional or regional significance. That is, RPCs are to serve as forums where regional issues can be aired and considered from all viewpoints.

If this role as a regional forum for objective debate and problem-solving is to be accepted, then the traditional processes for conducting DRI and other reviews the RPC is obliged to perform must be adjusted as well. This can be accomplished through the following:

1. **Framing Issues:** A proposal to be reviewed by the RPC may be of interest to only one local government, or it may be of multi-jurisdictional or regional significance. If it is of strictly local significance, the RPC and other local governments would have little interest in it, except to be kept aware of it. If it is of multi-jurisdictional significance, such as a local land use change bordering a neighboring jurisdiction, it may be of major interest only to the localities involved. The RPC's role would be to make the parties aware of one anothers' concerns and bring them together to resolve their differences.

   If a proposal is of regional significance — important to the region as a whole or a significant portion of it — the RPC's role can vary, depending upon the program under which review is conducted. For DRIs, the DCA's Uniform Standards Rules mentioned above govern how the review will be conducted. Issues for other projects or plans would be identified through:

   a. Identifying impacts to regional resources and facilities; or

   b. Examining the effects of a proposal on existing plans within the region, to the extent that a cohesive regional strategy for growth and development can be discerned and a judgment made as to how the proposal might or might not fit into it.

2. **Evaluation of Issues:** In its roles as facilitator of collaborative reviews and problem-solver, the RPC will seek the full participation of public agencies and draw upon their expertise. A Planning Team concept will be implemented within each metropolitan area involving local, regional and state agencies. The purpose of this team will be to review the proposal and develop recommendations for submittal to the RPC. This should involve, where practicable, memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between the RPC and state and regional agencies, identifying how reviews will be conducted and each party's role in the review.

   Regional evaluation reports should reflect that all issues have been fairly and objectively considered. As a generalist agency, the RPC should be able to understand the significance of all evaluations and recommendations received.

3. **Resolution of Issues:** As a facilitator of issue resolution, the RPC will not have authority to determine how issues will be resolved. Therefore, more than ever, recommendations on how issues should be resolved must be based on sound technical considerations and the promotion of adopted public policy. To the greatest extent possible, recommendations should also reflect consensus of all parties having an interest in the issue. Where consensus cannot be achieved or there is insufficient input from others, the RPC will have to offer its recommendations based on its independent interpretation of technical information and public policy.

Application of Regional Policies

The East Central Florida CRPP contained numerous policy statements intended to guide RPC reviews. The large number of policies was driven by state requirements to cover a broad range of topics, and also by a desire for the plan to be truly comprehensive in its scope. A question remains regarding which policies — if any — should be carried forward to the new plan, and what additional policies — if any — are needed to consistently guide this agency as it conducts its reviews.

The review process, through the metropolitan planning team concept, will draw together the main players for each issue, devising a strategy for resolving the issue and promoting implementation of the strategy by the key players. Goals and policies carried forth from the CRPP as well as new policies establishing baseline regional planning principles will guide this effort.

Goals and Policies

1. Role of the RPC

The following goal and policies identify the role of the RPC in Florida's growth managment program. They are designed to guide the RPC in the performance of its planning and review functions.

Goal

A strategic planning program that provides for leadership in representing identified regional resources and interests, development and maintenance of a common and coordinated regional data system, coordination and assistance to governments at all levels, development of a shared vision of the future of the region, and coordination of the region's resources and energies to achieve common goals.

Policies

1. **Emphasize the RPC's coordinative, educational, and technical assistance role in Florida's planning and growth management system.**

2. **Build consensus among the public, private and nonprofit sectors on which issues can benefit from a high degree of regional coordination and on how coordination may be achieved, given existing governmental structures and authorities.**

3. **Provide opportunities for discussion of needs, issues and problems that affect a segment or all of East Central Florida, particularly items related to the strategic regional issues identified in Chapter 186, FS.**

4. **Actively support and promote initiatives that are of benefit to the region.**

5. **Provide meaningful coordinative services among and between jurisdictions and agencies at all levels of government.**

6. **Establish partnerships with public, private and nonprofit entities in developing plans or providing planning services and assistance.**

7. **Build upon existing internal and external capabilities to create a regional database and information service system in response to identified needs.**

Indicators

1. The extent to which the RPC has successfully performed its role as a planning agency, as evidenced by the number of regional issues addressed during any given year.

2. Number of lawsuits.

2. Regional Review

Regional review functions performed by the RPC are to be guided by the following goal and policies.

Goal

Establish ongoing communication on the relationships among various plans and projects so that opportunities can be identified and differences resolved.

Policies

1. **A metropolitan planning team concept will be used as the principal means of developing comments and recommendations on projects and plans submitted for review to the RPC.**

2. **Consistent with the requirement in Chapter 380.06 (23), FS, the RPC will apply DCA's Rule 9J-2, Part III, DRI Uniform Standard Rules, to review of all applications submitted as DRIs and will base its comments and recommendations on the state planning standards adopted for the following topics:**

   - Listed plant and wildlife resources
   - Archaeological and historical resources
   - Hazardous material usage, potable water, wastewater and solid waste facilities
   - Transportation
   - Air quality
   - Affordable housing
   - Hurricane preparedness

   The RPC may propose different standards pursuant to paragraph s.380.06(23)(b), FS, if it finds that the statewide standards inadequately address the regional interests at issue.

3. **For DRI topics not covered by DCA's Uniform Standard Rules, and for other review efforts, standards adopted in local government comprehensive plans within the applicable metropolitan area, District Water Management Plans and other state or regional agency plans shall be the basis for developing the RPC's comments and recommendations.**

4. **DRI thresholds for office and hotel developments in the International Drive Activity Centers, as adopted in the Orange County and Orlando Comprehensive Plans and addressed through Regional Policy 57.19 of the RPC's Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan (CRPP, February 1992), are incorporated into this plan by reference. As provided in s.380.06(2)(e), FS, these thresholds shall be the criteria for determining whether a project within these activity centers must undergo review.**

5. **In furtherance of Chapter 369.307(3), FS, the Wekiva River Protection Act, Regional Policies 43.11 and 43.12 of the CRPP are incorporated into this plan by reference. These policies will provide additional guidance to the review of all projects impacting the Wekiva River Protection Area.**

6. **Regional Policy 43.14 of the CRPP, relating to the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, is incorporated into this plan by reference and shall be considered in the review of all projects in or around this area.**

Indicator

1. The number of opportunities identified and differences resolved through the various review functions performed by the RPC.

3. Regional Planning

The following goals and policies are presented as baseline guidance for development of plans and projects in east central Florida. Five functional areas are addressed. They encompass topics recognized by s. 186.507, F.S. as having a regional quality, and are generally thought to have the potential to benefit from a high level of coordination. These goals and policies will serve as the basis for development of the metropolitan plans discussed in the preceding chapter.

Transportation Goal

Provide a balanced, safe and interconnected regional transportation system ensuring mobility of goods and people, while enhancing economic prosperity and sustaining environmental quality.

Policies

1. **Provide for the efficient intra- and interregional movement of goods and people through well-developed connections between seaports, airports, railroads and the highway system.**

2. **Provide for effective intermodal accessibility and compatibility through coordination of local, regional and state planning efforts.**

3. **Reduce reliance on a single mode of transportation through development of a balanced system employing highways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, as well as system and demand management.**

4. **Encourage energy efficiency in development of transportation systems through increased emphasis on transit use, carpools, vanpools, bicycles.**

5. **Minimize environmental impacts of system development, operations, and maintenance by forging links between transportation, land use and natural resource planning activities.**

6. **Consider and address in the design, siting, construction and operation of transportation improvements the negative impacts on parks, public open space, wildlife habitats, communities and neighborhoods arising from noise, visual impacts and physical segmentation.**

7. **Minimize the need for long-term capital and operating costs through the appropriate design and layout of regional transportation facilities.**

Natural Resources Goal

Maintain and enhance the quality of the region's natural resources.

Policies

1. **Ensure availability of an adequate, affordable and environmentally responsible supply of water for all reasonable and beneficial uses by coordinating land and water resource planning activities.**

2. **Protect and restore natural water storage and conveyance functions of floodprone areas by identifying their value and reflecting it in the design of local and regional land use plans.**

3. **Protect surface and groundwater quality from degradation by coordinating land use and water resources planning efforts.**

4. **Restore the quality of waters not currently meeting water quality standards through coordinated efforts among local, regional and state agencies.**

5. **Maintain native biological diversity and productivity through protection of ecosystems and restoration of altered systems to a naturally functioning condition.**

6. **Support efforts toward restoration of the South Florida ecosystem consistent with recommendations of *The Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida* through their incorporation in applicable planning and design activities.**

7. **Protect the function and viability of identified Natural Resources of Regional Significance through adherence to applicable federal and state statutes and administrative requirements.**

8. **Faciiltate development of an interconnected greenway/open space system by identifying and promoting land acquisition, easements, dedications and other means capable of sustaining native wildlife and plant populations.**

9. **Sufficient open space in the region should be acquired, or otherwise protected, and managed to provide reasonable and convenient access to sites for passive and active recreation.**

10. **Maintain air quality standards through a coordinated land use and transportation planning program.**

Healthy Economy Goal

Achieve a diverse and sufficient supply of jobs in appropriate locations throughout the region.

Policies

1. **Coordinate efforts of the region's economic development organizations to enhance the region's role and competitiveness in the global economy.**

2. **Enhance coordination and cooperation among governments and the business community in economic-oriented marketing of the region.**

3. Examine the long-term opportunities and benefits of ecotourism in the region.

Housing Goal

Make available to all residents of the region decent and affordable housing in stable communities.

Policies

1. **Achieve a match between cost of housing and income levels of existing and future residents through incentives that can stimulate private sector investment in affordable housing.**

2. **The spatial pattern of housing should strive to maximize accessibility to employment centers and services, and minimize travel costs.**

3. **Stabilize and revitalize existing neighborhoods as a means of preserving the region's housing stock.**

4. **Support the private market's ability to meet existing and future housing for special needs groups, including low and very low income households, through incentives and assistance.**

Emergency Preparedness Goal

Reduce the susceptibility of lives and property to natural and man-made disasters.

Policies

1. **Develop strategies that reduce population densities in coastal high hazard and floodprone areas.**

2. **Limit transportation and other infrastructure improvements in coastal high hazard areas to those deemed necessary to correct existing deficiencies, repair facilities or provide preventive maintenance.**

3. **Ensure availability of adequate shelter space for residents of areas recommended for evacuation.**

4. **Maintain or reduce hurricane evacuation clearance times.**

Indicators

Transportation

1. Number of automobiles per capita.
2. Mode splits.
3. Vehicles miles traveled.
4. Transit usage.

Natural Resources

1. Acreage of regionally significant habitat.
2. Water quality of regionally significant water bodies.
3. Water quantity of groundwater and surface water.

Healthy Economy

1. Net increase in number of businesses established or locating in the region.
2. Number of business failures occurring in the region.
3. Household income.
4. Number of high-value jobs created.

Housing

1. Number of households incurring housing costs in excess of 30% of their income.

Emergency Preparedness

1. Hurricane evacuation times for areas vulnerable to the effects of flooding and wind from Category 1-5 storms.

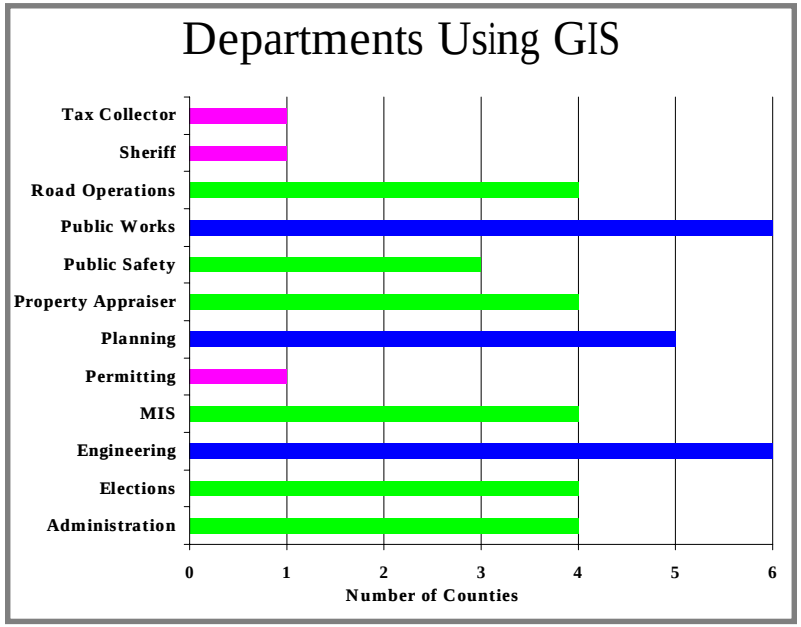
Geographic Information

Background

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) have become an indispensable tool for helping decision-makers understand the possible outcomes of alternative policies. During the last 10 years the technology has become affordable to government agencies, leading to a rapid increase in the number of systems in the region. In East Central Florida the number of systems expanded from 10 in 1985 to approximately 85 today. Almost every large and medium size government agency, utility and authority has some type of GIS. In many instances they are extremely sophisticated systems, representing the latest in GIS technology. The private sector also has invested heavily in the computerized processing of geographic information. Business activities ranging from marketing to site location decisions benefit from the ability of GIS to quickly analyze spatial information.

Although the technology has become relatively affordable, developing geographic information systems has not been inexpensive. The estimated cost of developing the current systems in East Central Florida exceeds $100 million. Estimated annual public expenditures to maintain and operate these systems are between $5 and $10 million. While it certainly can be argued that the benefits accruing from these systems far outweigh their costs, it also can be argued that those benefits are less than what would have been possible with better coordination.

Development of GIS has been largely an agency-specific activity. That is, agencies elected to buy these systems based upon their own needs and the expectation that these needs could be satisfied by such a system. Hardware and software choices were made given the current technology at the time of purchase and what the agency could afford. Data was collected and entered to provide information to an agency for a unique and specific purpose. Opportunities were lost for creating spatial databases that could be used by many different agencies for many different purposes. The ability to share databases would have eliminated much of the duplication that currently pervades GIS activities throughout the region.

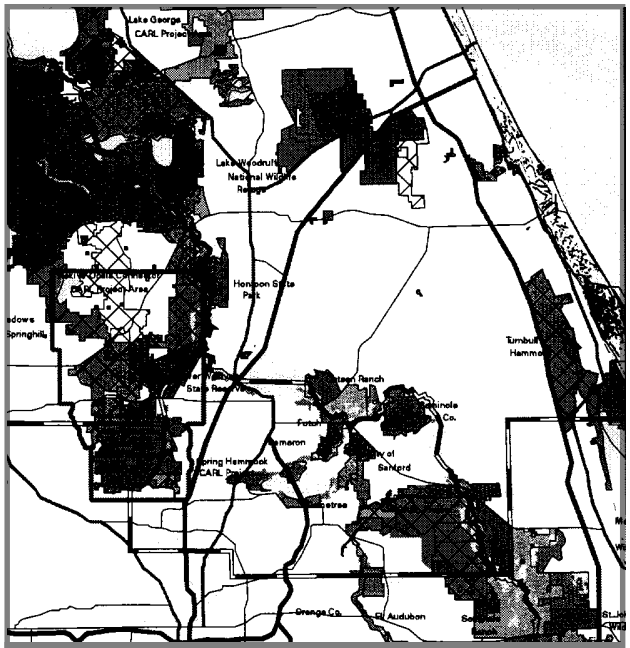


Problems With Existing Systems

Geographic information systems are powerful tools, combining the analytical capability of a database management system with high-resolution computer graphics. Simply put, you can map your information. Database management operations — such as selecting a set of land parcels meeting specific criteria — can be performed and illustrated graphically. Likewise, GIS can provide spatial analysis based on factors like proximity and, by combining information from different layers of data, can create new information.

The hardware and software costs often are perceived as the major expense in establishing a GIS. These costs, however, prove to be only a fraction of the actual costs. Approximately 70 to 85 percent of a typical GIS budget is spent on data acquisition and preparation. Costs for an item as elementary as a base map may include acquisition of current aerial photogrammetry, digitizing planimetric features and land-parcel boundaries, and the staff time for map preparation, groundtruthing and updating.

There are a number of steps to developing information. These include designing the database, establishing standards for naming geographical objects, attributing definitions to specific objects, and collecting, displaying and storing information. It is during these steps in the process that fragmentation of systems begins to cause problems for the eventual sharing of information among different databases by different agencies.



A portion of the ECFRPC Public Lands Map, which was compiled from several sources including the St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Natural Areas Inventory and the region's six counties.

Data standards refer to items such as projection systems to be used for maps, accuracy levels for base maps, conventions about what mapped elements will be contained on each map "layer" or "coverage," and defined categories and measurement units for attribute data. There are also standards, referred to as metastandards, that describe how information was put together so that another user can access it. Coordinating these standards is essential if geographic information is to be shared between agencies.

Another essential ingredient for the successful sharing of geographic information is a standardized land use/land cover classification scheme. All agencies involved in Florida's planning process utilize land use information, yet a number of classification systems are used. This is true not only for existing land use, but for future land use classification schemes adopted by local governments in comprehensive plans. Significant problems and expense result as area-wide agencies like water management districts or MPOs attempt to base their modelling and impact assessment on future land uses for their area. Adjacent local governments also have difficulty understanding the impacts that neighboring jurisdictions' land use may have, because the land use classifications often are not the same.

Goals and Policies

Goals

Geographic information is a regional resource of vital importance to both public and private interests in the region. It consists of large amounts of geographic and geographically-referenced data produced at great cost by federal, state and substate agencies, local governments, utilities and others. Given the magnitude of public investment, and the strategic significance of geographic information in the Information Age, it is critical that efficiencies be sought via developmant of spatial data partnerships among public agencies, and between these agencies and the private sector.

The following goal statements articulate this region's needs and desires:

1. Expand the content and availability, and improve the accuracy and quality of this region's geographic information resources beyond the ability of individual entities working on their own.

2. Reduce duplication of effort and minimize costs of collecting and maintaining data.

3. Maximize the use, sharing, and reciprocal exchange of geographic information.

4. Provide an institutional framework for formal, regular participation in GIS coordination efforts among federal, state, substate and local entities, utility companies and other interested parties.

5. Improve the quality of public and private decisionmaking by helping decisionmakers visualize the geographic realities of issues they are addressing.

Policies

A collaborative process that includes federal, state, substate and local partnerships, and also involves the private sector, is necessary to begin the task of coordinating geographic information development. Policies to achieve regional goals are as follows:

1. Establish a Geographic Information Coordinating Council

The RPC will facilitate cooperative efforts with user agencies in east central Florida to identify common needs for geographic information, support coordinated efforts for finding and accessing existing geographic information, and explore opportunities for joint funding programs to produce geographic information. As part of this effort, a clearinghouse will be developed to provide the means to document, query, search, and access geographic information.

2. Establish a regional research agenda.

Many unanswered questions remain regarding geographic information, standards, institutional structures, and technology that need to be examined in order to develop an efficient network of geographic information systems.

a. Identify needed areas of research and establish research priorities.

b. Investigate public and private sector options for funding research.

3. **Identify opportunities for fostering partnerships among all sectors for creation and coordination of geographic information.**

   Identify constituencies and parties interested in and affected by public sector geographic information. Develop approaches for their involvement.

4. **Facilitate development of thematic data sets that meet the region's most critical needs.**

   Certain geographic information is essential to the planning and growth management activities of both the public and private sector. Examples include land cover and existing and future land use.

   a. Identify priorities for specific themes of data by geographic area.

   b. Establish standards for collection, production and maintenance of thematic data.

   c. Identify mechanisms for funding thematic data development based on cooperative partnerships and incentives.

   d. Produce thematic data layers.

5. **Develop a framework of digital geospatial data based on agreed-upon standards that will support the majority of geographic information users in the region.**

   Certain data sets form an underlying framework from which other data sets may be derived, or to which many other data sets can be referenced. This framework would include geodetic control for accurate registration and geographic features such as transportation and hydrologic networks, terrain, land surveys, and a variety of socio-political points and boundaries. The availability of this data at a variety of resolutions will greatly reduce current redundancy in data production efforts.

   a. Working with the community of data users and producers, define basic framework data sets and appropriate resolutions for state, regional and local needs. Establish priorities for collection.

   b. Establish standards for producing geospatial data sets.

   c. Identify and begin to address impediments to cooperation.

   d. Identify responsibilities for and contributions from various sectors for development of framework data sets, based on requirements for resolution and age.

   e. Use latest technology (for example the Internet) to enhance data availability.

6. **Develop and publicize case studies demonstrating the benefits of geographic information use by public officials.**

   Case studies documenting the ability of geographic information to assist in making more effective, efficient, and timely decisions about critical public policy issues would be prepared. These public policy issues could include targeting human resource service delivery, assessing environmental impacts, planning infrastructure and transportation improvements, making land acquisition and management decisions, and allocating fiscal resources.

Indicators

1. Number of Geographic Information Systems using compatible hardware, software and data.

2. Number of collaborative efforts to collect and maintain area-wide geographic information.

3. Establishment of a Geographic Information Coordinating Council.

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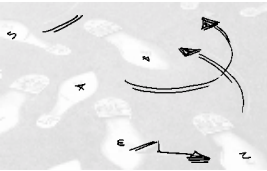

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