



# COORDINATION OUTLINE

## INTRODUCTION

*Perhaps the most important function of the Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council is its role as a forum and facilitator for coordination on growth management, planning, and other regional issues between local governments, interested parties, and other stakeholders throughout the region.*

The Council itself is comprised of local government elected officials designated to represent their localities, gubernatorial appointees who represent specific interests, and ex-officio representatives from regional and state agencies. This diverse representation guarantees opportunities for coordination on any issue which may arise in northeast Florida.

The opportunities for coordination which are provided by the Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council are both formal and informal. Through its formal role and participation in ongoing state programs (such as the Development Of Regional Impact, Local Government Comprehensive Plan Review, Local Emergency Planning,

and Regional Clearing House), the Council brings together local governments; state, local and federal agencies; private parties; and other stakeholders in a collaborative forum to address regional issues and concerns.

## DRI Process

The role of the Council in the DRI process is to coordinate the review of large scale projects. In implementing this coordination function, the Council brings together state and regional agencies, local government, and other interests to identify and resolve impacts and issues associated with specific large-scale



## COORDINATION OUTLINE

---

development projects. The coordination effort allows for the identification and resolution of impacts and issues early in the development approval process which provides certainty to all parties on regional concerns. This is the only process which provides an opportunity for adjacent local governments to be involved in the review and approval process so that cross jurisdictional impacts are adequately addressed. At the option of the local government, the Council also coordinates the resolution of local issues.

### Local Emergency Planning

The Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council serves as staff to the District IV Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) encompassing Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns counties. The primary responsibility of the LEPC is the implementation of the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act as Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986.

The LEPC, with financial assistance from the state, provides education and training for emergency fire and rescue and other individuals whose job is to respond to accidents which may involve hazardous materials. This has included a survey of public and private training needs and the coordination of appropriate training to meet those identified needs.

### Intergovernmental Coordination and Review

The NEFRPC is designated as the areawide clearinghouse for federally funded projects that affect local governments in northeast Florida. **Applications for funding and programs are reviewed to ensure coordination and consistency with local government and comprehensive regional plans.** Proposals are reviewed to avoid and/or mitigate potential diverse impacts to other entities and in an effort to **reduce duplication and conflict with other area programs.** When conflicts arise or are otherwise identified, the services of the NEFRPC through its voluntary dispute resolution program are offered to resolve the conflicts.

### Transportation Disadvantaged Program

The Council serves as the **Designated Official Planning Agency** for six of the counties in the northeast Florida region. As DOPA the Council performs planning studies with the goal to coordinate and increase transportation services to low-income individuals, elderly individuals, and persons with disabilities. Part of the Council's function is also to coordinate the resolution of complaints between the service providers and consumers of service. In addition, the Council assists the Community Transportation Coordinators in the coordination of inter-county trip scheduling.



### Local Government Comprehensive Plan

The NEFRPC has responsibilities, through its contract with the Department of Community Affairs and through Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, to review local government comprehensive plans and plan amendments. The review is based on whether the proposed plan or plan amendment has an effect on regional resources or facilities, or results in extra-jurisdictional impacts which may be inconsistent with the comprehensive plan of the affected local government or applicable regional policy plan.

### Informal Coordination

The Council provides many informal functions which provide the opportunity for coordination in northeast Florida. The Council has implemented, by rule, the **Regional Dispute Resolution Process** which sets forth a voluntary procedure for parties to sit down face-to-face in an attempt to reach a mutually beneficial resolution to particular growth management issues. This process exists to provide a neutral setting where conflicting parties can resolve differences on an informal basis. The core of the process is a settlement meeting(s) at which disagreeing parties explain their interests, explore options, and seek a mutually beneficial agreement. The significant benefits of the **Regional Dispute Resolution Process** are it saves time, staff, and money for local governments and parties involved by avoiding lengthy litigation; it encourages direct communication; it improves the quality of agreements; and it allows for control of outcomes.

### Cross Acceptance

State Legislation provides the Regional Planning Council with the authority to establish **Cross Acceptance negotiation process**. Cross Acceptance is an informal voluntary process with the goal of realizing consistency between local government comprehensive plans and the regional plan. The mechanism utilized by the NEFRPC for obtaining consistency is as follows:

Through the participation of local government elected officials and staffs in the development of the SRPP, potential issues of consistency were identified early. Utilizing a collaborative process in the drafting of the SRPP, issues which could result in consistency concerns with local plans were identified and hopefully resolved to the mutual agreement of all parties. Staff from local governments within the region served on each of the five technical groups which assisted in the development of each strategic subject area addressed in the SRPP. The technical groups assisted in the development of trends and conditions, identification of regional issues and opportunities, and the formulation of goals and policies within the Plan. The involvement of elected officials on the NEFRPC Board and participation by local government staff in the development process of the SRPP allowed for the early identification and resolution of consistency issues between the regional plan and local plans.

The Council has implemented a program of assistance for local governments in the development of their Evaluation and Appraisal Reports (EAR) for local Comprehensive Plans. This is a voluntary process offered to local governments in which RPC staff, and the staff



## COORDINATION OUTLINE

---

from other state and regional agencies, will meet with local government staffs early into the process of developing the EAR for their Comprehensive Plan. During this meeting(s), information regarding the Strategic Regional Policy Plan, and the five strategic subject areas addressed in the plan, is presented and discussed with the local staff. Issues, and questions regarding consistency between the local plan and the regional plan can be raised and addressed at this time. Council staff will provide assistance to local government staffs, upon request, to resolve any consistency issues which are identified during these assistance meetings.

Local governments can also request a non-binding consistency determination prior to submittal of any plan amendment or amendment due to an EAR. This request will result in a staff review which will identify inconsistencies between the proposed plan amendment and the SRPP. This staff review will include suggestions for bringing the local plan amendment into consistency with the SRPP.

### Public Participation Process

The Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council is dedicated to broad-based public participation in all its functions. **This commitment to meaningful public participation is recognized by the Council as mandatory in the development and implementation of the Strategic Regional Policy Plan for the northeast Florida region.** To facilitate participation from the regional community, the Council implemented a multi-prong strategy, which included the utilization of workgroups consisting of local government officials, state and

regional agency personnel, and most importantly, interested individuals from the private sector and citizens from the regional community, which provided direction and input into each of the five strategic subject areas addressed in the Plan.

The affordable housing working group met several times during 1995 to identify strategic issues and develop goals and policies. This working group consisted of county coordinators, directors of local housing authorities, local government representatives and State Housing Initiatives Partnership coordinators.

The Economic Development Element of the SRPP was a result of two groups. A working group consisting of private practitioners, leaders of local Chambers of Commerce, Committees of 100, local economic development agencies, local government elected officials and industry representatives met to develop strategic issues and goals and policies using a collaborative process. The results of the working group were also reviewed by the Economic Development Committee of the RPC for additional comments and direction.

The working group for the Emergency Preparedness Element included all of the county emergency management directors, representatives of private industry, media representatives, local government representatives and local emergency responders. This element was also reviewed on numerous occasions by the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). A ranking process was utilized to develop goals and policies from the strategic issues identified by the working group and the LEPC.

Representatives of local governments, the Department of Environmental Protection, the St. Johns River Water Management District, the



## COORDINATION OUTLINE

---

Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, large land owners, developers, local environmental groups, industry, private citizens and planning consultants comprised the working group for the Natural Resources of Regional Significance Element. This working group tried to reach consensus on strategic issues, goals and policies, and maps of Natural Resources of Regional Significance. Many areas of agreement were found, although positions on some issues remained divided.

The regional transportation work group met numerous times during 1995 to identify the strategic issues facing the region regarding transportation. This work group included local government planners, transportation planning and engineering consultants, representatives from the Florida Department of Transportation, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Jacksonville Port Authority. Once the group identified strategic issues, a ranking process was utilized to develop goals and policies to address those issues.

After each working group had prepared a draft document, the SRPP was brought before the Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council Board in March 1996 for review and transmittal to the Governor's Office for comments. Notice of this public hearing and copies of the draft SRPP were mailed to all of the working groups' participants, state agencies, all local governments within the region, and to anyone who requested a copy of the draft document. During April and May of 1996, eight public workshops were held, at least one in each county, to receive further public input on the proposed SRPP. On May 23, 1996, the Governor's Office completed its review of the proposed SRPP and forwarded findings

and recommendations — along with all recommendations and comments it had received concerning the proposed SRPP — to the NEFRPC.

Once the comments were received, each of the working groups reviewed the comments and proposed changes to try and address the comments. The Regional Planning Council Board approved the SRPP for rule making on April 3, 1997, during a public hearing. Pursuant to Ch. 120, Florida Statutes, seven public hearings regarding the proposed rule were held throughout the region. Public comments received during the public hearing comment period for the proposed rule were considered by the NEFRPC. The NEFRPC approved the final version of the Northeast Florida SRPP at the regularly scheduled Board meeting on July 10, 1997.

The Strategic Plan for northeast Florida is not static. It is meant to be a “living and breathing” document, always evolving as trends and conditions change and as identified issues are addressed and new strategic issues are identified in northeast Florida. Therefore constant evaluation and updating of the Plan is required. Recognizing this, the five strategic subject areas contain policies calling for the continued evaluation of regional issues and resources. The regional workgroups for the various strategic subject areas will be involved in this evaluation and update. A formal evaluation of the Northeast Florida Strategic Plan assessing the successes and/or failures of the plan shall be completed at least every five years as set forth in Section 27E-5.008, Florida Administrative Code.

