



City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan achieves Planning Excellence Award

The City of Fernandina Beach adopted its Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR) report in late 2009. Since then, the City's Planning Department with tremendous support of its Planning Advisory Board (PAB) has been researching and drafting the recommended amendments to the Comprehensive Plan based on its EAR report. In early September, following an extensive public involvement campaign providing nearly five months of an open comment period, the City Commission endorsed the *2030 Comprehensive Plan* to be transmitted to the State Land Planning Agency for its required review and comment period.

On November 29, 2011 the City received the State's Objections, Recommendations, and Comment (ORC) report. The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) report was extremely favorable offering only two (2) minor objections and praised the City for proposing amendments which were "thoughtfully approached, and exemplify sound planning principles and strategies appropriate for an environmentally sensitive urban coastal community." In addition to receiving kind remarks from the State Land Planning Agency, the City's Planning Department and its PAB are being recognized at the regional level. The City's *2030 Comprehensive Plan* will be presented with a 2011 Regional Leadership Award for Excellence in Planning and Growth Management from the Northeast Florida Regional Council.

The City Commission will consider final adoption of the Comprehensive Plan amendments at its regular meeting on Tuesday, December 6th, 2011.

The *2030 Comprehensive Plan* (EAR based revisions) focuses on four (4) community identified "major issues" including: Neighborhood Preservation, Sustainability, Wetlands Protection, and Annexation Planning. In order to fully address these "major issues" staff considered revisions within almost every element, which meant some degree of change to roughly 80% of the existing Comprehensive Plan. To undertake such sweeping changes, staff devised a strategy to enhance coordination by separating each element and assigning a key staff person along with one member from the PAB to serve as the "element champion." This approach empowered planning board members and provided a community resource for the public to more openly discuss any issues or concerns they had with a particular change.

Revisions prepared as part of the EAR process afforded planning staff with an opportunity to create a long- term growth management document which is truly representative of the goals and vision of the City. The document provides a delicate balance to maintain and enhance the City's existing character and charm with its growth goals. One of the greatest successes from this process was the ability to restructure and relate the Comprehensive Plan in a more meaningful manner to the community it serves by integrating formatting measures and executive summaries that will ultimately make the Plan more user- friendly. Staff along with members of the PAB prepared an introductory vision statement for the City's long term growth to summarize the Plan's core principles.

Vision Statement:

Fernandina Beach strives to achieve a safe, livable and sustainable community for our present and future citizens by partnering with the community to plan and promote a vibrant and balanced City; by managing the movement of people, goods, and services in an integrated multimodal approach; by maintaining a healthy and diverse economy while improving its social and natural environment; by improving the affordable housing stock and revitalizing older neighborhoods; by encouraging community outreach while promoting excellence in citywide urban design; and by preserving or enhancing its natural, historic, and cultural resources so that they may be enjoyed by future generations.

For more information about the process involved with the EAR based amendments/ *2030 Comprehensive Plan* please visit www.fbfl.us/EAR. If you have specific questions contact Kelly Gibson, Senior Planner at (904)277-7325 or Kgibson@fbfl.org.

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