

3. WHERE ARE WE NOW? (*Continued*)

Key Transportation Facilities: The Port of Fernandina, a key facility on the SIS along with the Fernandina Beach Airport, which is not part of the SIS, both play a significant role in the economy of both Nassau County and the state of Florida as described below.



- 1. Port of Fernandina:** Operated by the Nassau County Ocean, Highway, and Port Authority, an independent, non-taxing, governing body created by the Florida Legislature – with a public mission to encourage economic development in Nassau County.
 - Both the Port of Fernandina and Port of Jacksonville are ports with rapid growth and diversification and the most extensive road and rail service of any ports in the state.
 - Port of Fernandina recognized for expanding its cargo of wood products to include containerized cargo and renovating its facilities which strengthens the competitive position of the forest products industry in North Florida.

- 2. Fernandina Beach Airport:** On 602 acres in the center of Amelia Island, is operated by the City of Fernandina Beach, is like a Main Street for the community, and helps support existing economic development.

- Provides private air service to business, tourism, and leisure activities.
- Serves as a “reliever” airport for Jacksonville International Airport as do Craig and Herlong Airports outside of Nassau County.
- Exceptional aviation facilities including airport transport facilities and infrastructure to support aviation.
- Owns sufficient land to provide for future growth and expansion needs for both the airport operations and commercial businesses.
- First airport manager has been hired by the city to oversee and help expand airport operations.
- Generates revenue as city leases some of the airport-owned land for a golf course and some aeronautical-related commercial use.
- Airport has a small commerce park that serves mainly aviation uses but also provides for limited commercial space for development.⁹



⁹ Telephone interview, December 31, 2007, with Richard Johnson, Airport Manager.

3. WHERE ARE WE NOW? (*Continued*)

Post-Secondary Education and Job Training Programs

- Continuing education opportunities are provided at Florida Community College-Nassau Center and the joint-use Florida Community College/Nassau County Technical Training Facility.
- The Betty Cook Center, established and run by Florida Community College at Jacksonville, offers classes for a variety of post-secondary degrees.
- Workforce development through education and training is a critical need for economic development. For a community to attract higher paying industries to the area, skilled employees must be trained and available for work.
- The Nassau County Economic Development Board is strategically located at the Betty Cook Center of Continuing Education at the Florida Community College of Jacksonville in Yulee. This allows the economic development board to work closely with the center to ensure job training and education programs to meet the needs for highly skilled employees by the businesses targeted by economic development efforts.

School Planning and Concurrency

- Under Florida law all local governments (incorporated communities) in Florida must adopt a public school facilities element and school concurrency provisions to:
 1. Establish level of service standards for educational facilities and the concurrency service areas for schools.
 2. Establish school service areas.
 3. Demonstrate its public facilities element is financially feasible; amend the County's Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements to include these public facilities.
- Nassau County has an interlocal agreement that will ensure the same levels of service and concurrency are used throughout the County. The Nassau County Growth Management Department works with the school board and local municipal governments in the County to coordinate school planning efforts.
- In the summer of 2008, Fernandina Beach, Callahan, Hilliard, and Nassau County entered into an amended Interlocal Agreement with the Nassau County School Board and amended their comprehensive plans to comply with Florida law (Senate Bill 360) in a timely fashion. A system-wide level of service was established for the purpose of school concurrency implementation.

3. WHERE ARE WE NOW? (*Continued*)

These large-scale developments along with others, or similar character and scale, in Nassau County, adjacent Georgia and Baker and northern Duval counties are changing the nature and character of the region. The influx of new residents to the region, and the location of these projects throughout the region, results in consideration of economic, social, infrastructure, environmental, and other needs/costs from a regional perspective.

- **In Florida** - Northeast Florida is described as one region consisting of several counties surrounding the rapidly growing Jacksonville/Duval metropolitan area. In north and northwest Jacksonville, expansion of development activities and growth of outlying communities are pushing development further north and west into bordering Nassau and Baker counties. Baker County and adjacent western Nassau County, both with a lot of rural, undeveloped land, are attractive to Jacksonville residents seeking lower prices and less congestion. With the strategic location of these counties along the St. Mary's River and a short 30-minute drive from Jacksonville, the growth pressures and interest in creating large residential communities has increased.

- 1. **Port of Jacksonville Activities and Expansion Plans.** The Jacksonville Port Authority, known as JAXPORT, is an international trade seaport that owns and manages three public marine terminals, a passenger cruise terminal, and operates a local ferry service (the St. Johns River Ferry), connecting the north and south ends of State Road A1A in Duval County. JAXPORT is an economic development tool, as is the Port of Fernandina. JAXPORT develops, manages, and markets these publicly owned facilities to promote the growth of maritime and related industries in Jacksonville and elsewhere. The mission of the Jacksonville Port Authority is to be a major economic engine in Northeast Florida by continuing to be "...a premier diversified port in the Southeastern United States, with connections to major trade lanes throughout the world."¹⁰ JAXPORT expansion plans include improvements to the three marine terminals and the Jacksonville harbor. At one marine terminal, Dames Point, JAXPORT, in coordination with Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd. (MOL), a Tokyo-based ocean transportation company, is building a 158-acre container-handling facility to serve the Mitsui operations. It is estimated that, in the future, the Mitsui container facility will expand to cover 200 acres, all of it on land owned by JAXPORT. The Port of Jacksonville's expansion plans, its designation as a Foreign Trade Zone (along with the continuing growth and diversification of the Port of Fernandina), good access to road and rail service, and expansion of cargo operations and capabilities combined, have established this area as a good location for continued economic growth. The Port of Fernandina and Port of Jacksonville are described as ports with rapid growth and diversification and the most extensive road and rail service of any ports in the state.

¹⁰ <http://www.jaxport.com/>

3. WHERE ARE WE NOW? (*Continued*)

2. **Jacksonville International Airport** is a significant contributor to the economic well-being of Duval County and Nassau County by its location within a 30-mile drive of Nassau County.¹¹ The Jacksonville Aviation Authority owns and manages the Jacksonville Airport System consisting of Jacksonville International Airport (JIA), Craig Airport, Herlong Airport, and Cecil Field. These smaller airports, along with the Fernandina Beach Airport, serve as reliever airports for private air services in the northeast region. This system serves the commercial, business, and recreational aviation needs of the City of Jacksonville, Northeast Florida, and Southeast Georgia, and brings in tourists and business people. With the expansion of the Jacksonville airport and the improvement of the airport facilities and surrounding Commerce Park, it has created more attractive economic opportunities that benefit the entire northeast region.

3. **Large Scale Development in Adjacent Baker County, Florida.** Across the St. Mary's River in adjacent Baker County, large-scale developments called Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) and other smaller developments are changing the very nature and urbanizing this rural north Florida county on the Florida-Georgia border. It is estimated these new developments will triple the Baker County population. Currently planned are the 3,200+/-acre Cedar Creek project with 7,000 homes and 425,000 square feet of commercial use, and Navona Creek, a 3,654-acre development, with 8,300 homes, a 1.5 million square feet business park, and a 330,000 square feet village center. More than half of Baker County's workforce commutes to other counties to work. Impacts of development in adjacent counties create a demand on transportation facilities and increased traffic congestion. On the positive side, development of these communities in Baker County on the Nassau County line, as in adjacent Jacksonville/Duval County, is creating a market for Nassau County businesses as well as a labor pool for businesses located in Nassau County.

¹¹<http://www.jaa.aero/General/>

3. WHERE ARE WE NOW? (*Continued*)

Land Use Patterns: Considering land use patterns helps determine how future growth may be distributed across the community under a certain set of land-use and zoning policies and regulations.

If you look at Land Use Patterns, which are the distributions of various land uses, such as residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial uses throughout the community, it begins to create a picture of life in Nassau County.

Low-density, spread out, automobile dependent land uses are one example of a land use pattern occurring throughout Nassau County, the state, and the country. Lower density, spread-out, automobile dependent land use patterns of development have the following effects:

- Limited or no access between activities, particularly for the young, disabled, and elderly who do not drive, and/or the low-income residents who have limited or no access to an automobile when there is limited or no public transportation.
- Require more mobility to reach activities (jobs, shopping, recreation, etc.), and reduce transportation options (such as walking, cycling, public transit).
- Increase the cost of vehicle ownership; total transportation costs, including internal costs (costs paid directly by consumers); and external costs (costs borne by society as a whole, such as the cost to build and maintain roads and other transportation facilities).

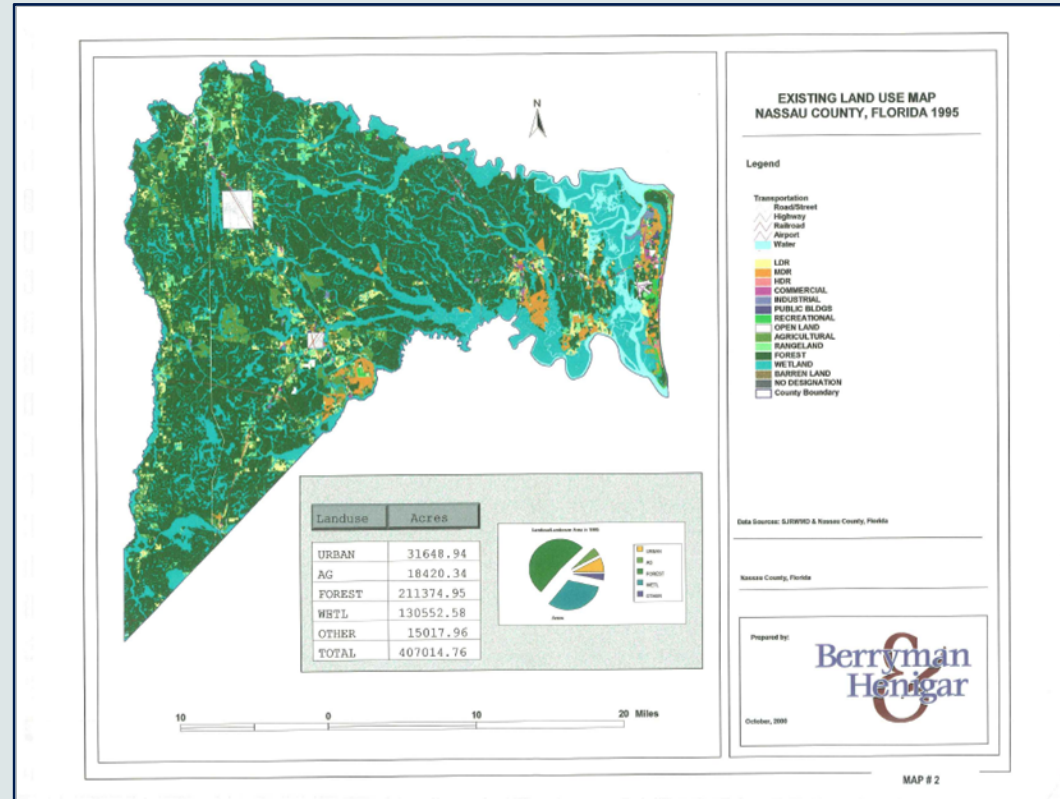


- More accessible and resource-efficient land use patterns can increase economic productivity and development. In resort communities and other tourist areas, land use patterns that preserve unique environmental and cultural resources support economic development. Excessive clearing of land and paving for roads and parking can destroy the amenities that attract visitors.
- Local government plans, policies, and regulations may dramatically affect future growth and land uses and have an impact on the costs of providing services. This includes the cost of providing services such as roads, street lighting, utilities, emergency services, and school transportation. The costs of providing these services increase with more spread out development because distribution costs increase (more infrastructure and travel is needed to provide a given level of service).

3. WHERE ARE WE NOW? (Continued)

What are the land use patterns in Nassau County?

- Traditional land use patterns in Nassau County consist of farms, woodlots, hamlets, villages, and towns that have shaped the way the communities look continue today.
- Land use patterns on Amelia Island have remained relatively the same with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, tourist, and government uses, including the Port of Fernandina.
- Land use patterns off the island have changed more due to changes in land use over the last 50 years, including:
 - A reduction in timber operations and the subdivision of land for small residential lots for housing.
 - Some highway development and suburban development (residential, commercial, and industrial).
 - A decline in farming.



3. WHERE ARE WE NOW? (*Continued*)

- The 2006 Research Study by 1000 Friends of Florida (growth management watchdog organization) and the University of Florida predicted rapid growth and population increases in the City of Jacksonville/Duval County metropolitan area would have a far-reaching influence on northeast Florida by 2060.
- The City of Jacksonville/Duval County is projected to be completely built out sometime after 2040, and by the year 2060, and it is expected to cause population growth to spill over into neighboring Nassau, Clay, St. Johns, and Baker counties, forever changing their predominantly rural characters.
- The current pattern of large scale, single-use residential developments occurring throughout Nassau County and in adjacent Baker County and Georgia counties, already reflects the current growth trend in neighboring Duval County and the expected pattern of spillover growth to accommodate the increasing population in northeast Florida.



- The Port of Fernandina will play a crucial role in the future economic development – the significance of this role is recognized by its inclusion in the Florida SIS Plan of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).
- The Port of Fernandina and the Port of Jacksonville are listed in the Northeast Florida Ports Region of the SIS Plan.
- The SIS Plan looks at how Florida’s seaports, in partnership with the FDOT, are pursuing funding for strategic intermodal connections and trade corridor improvements.

3. WHERE ARE WE NOW? (*Continued*)

NASSAU COUNTY PROJECTED PERMANENT POPULATION – 2000 TO 2030

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2030
Unincorporated	43,450	49,944	57,737	65,001	72,457	83,064
Callahan	962	1,274	1,658	1,976	2,322	2,600
City of Fernandina Beach	10,549	11,621	12,331	12,824	13,337	14,392
Hilliard	2,702	2,920	3,174	3,498	3,883	4,591
Nassau County	57,663	65,759	74,900	83,300	92,000	104,646

Sources: Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida, and Nassau County Growth Management Department.

- Population growth for the unincorporated areas peaked in 2005-06 and growth, in terms of percentage increase, is expected to decline to an annual growth rate of about 1.3 percent by 2030. An increase in absolute numbers is expected to continue.
- Estimated population growth in Callahan is expected to continue increasing until 2010, show a decrease through 2015, then level off at about 3.5 percent from 2015 to 2030.
- The growth rate for Hilliard has increased since 2000 and is expected to increase until it peaks around 2010 and then slowly level off by 2030. (*Source: Bureau of Economic Business.*)

4. WHAT DO WE WANT THE COMMUNITY TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

Vision 2032 will tell a story of how Nassau County may prepare for future growth, determine future and use patterns, and the type of growth wanted/needed, and not wanted or not needed.

Prioritization of Issues and Selection of Priorities

Eleven topics listed below were presented at the public meetings held throughout the County.

1. Economy and Workforce	7. Growth Management
2. Cultural Opportunities	8. Infrastructure
3. Education and School Facilities Plan	9. Tourism
4. Environment	10. Recreation and Open Space
5. Governance	11. Public Safety
6. Healthcare and Social Services	

These 11 topics were grouped as follows during the meetings:

1. Recreation and Open Space, and Environment
2. Economy and Workforce, and Tourism
3. Cultural Opportunities and the Arts, and Education and School Facilities Plans
4. Infrastructure and Growth Management
5. Health Care and Social Services, and Public Safety
6. Governance

4. WHAT DO WE WANT THE COMMUNITY TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE? *(Continued)*

The 11 topics ranked most important to residents were:

- Growth Management.
- Recreation and Open Space .
- Infrastructure.

The two next most important issues were:

- Environmental.
- Education and School Facilities Plans.

Are there differences and similarities as you travel across the County?

Yes! During the public meetings, there were strong similarities in the top issues of concern, but key differences appeared, depending on the location of the public meeting as we traveled throughout the County. While all public meetings across the County were open to all residents and advertised countywide, the overall trend was for residents to attend the meeting closest to the community where they lived. It is important to note, however, that some residents attended several, and some all, of the public-involvement meetings.

In Yulee, Fernandina Beach, Bryceville, and Callahan, Growth Management was the # 1 ranked issue.



Hilliard: Recreation and Open Space was the # 1 ranked issue and was identified as priority by 44 percent of those at the public workshop. This was reflected in the discussions on maintaining the wide, open spaces in this area and the need for more outdoor recreation areas including boat ramps and fishing areas, and the nature of Hilliard, which is in the far-western county and a predominantly rural area. While Growth Management was # 2 here, it was an issue of concern for only 10.5 percent of the residents. This is likely reflective of the fact that the more typical concerns about “Growth Management,” such as traffic, congestion, environmental protection, etc., tend to be less important than maintaining the rural lifestyle and interest in preserving open space areas, increasing outdoor recreation areas, such as boat ramps, and providing places for recreational activities for young people, which are more limited in these rural areas.

Yulee, the fastest growing and urbanizing area of the County: Next to Growth Management, Infrastructure and the Economy and Workforce were identified as the most important issues with Recreation and Open Space following closely. This reflects the concerns of residents in rapidly urbanizing areas over road congestion, strip urban development, overcrowding of schools, and the difficulty of keeping up with the demands for facilities including recreation and open space. These are statewide concerns in areas such as Yulee that are feeling the effects of rapid growth and the challenges it brings to provide the services needed to accommodate growth.

4. WHAT DO WE WANT THE COMMUNITY TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE? *(Continued)*

Fernandina Beach: The top issues were **Growth Management, Infrastructure, and the Environment, followed by Recreation and Open Space.** As in Yulee, this area faces many of the issues of an urbanized area described for Yulee. The differences in Fernandina Beach, with regards to the Environment, are likely reflective of the residents concerns with protecting the many water resources on and adjacent to the island including beaches, rivers, and streams, and the issue surrounding the protection of the Egans Creek Greenway, a publicly-owned recreation and open space area that runs through the center of the community from north to south.

Bryceville: The top issues were **Growth Management, Education and School Facilities Plans, and the Environment.**

Callahan: **Growth Management** was also # 1 followed by **Education and School Facilities Plans and Infrastructure, which were ranked equally, followed closely by Public Safety.**

The chart that follows shows the prioritization of topics for the Nassau County Public Involvement meetings, the number of votes per topic, and voting percentages.



4. WHAT DO WE WANT THE COMMUNITY TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE? *(Continued)*

NASSAU VISION 2032 Prioritization of Topics and Public Meeting Attendance Record

Topic	Yulee February 18, 2008		Hilliard February 19, 2008		Fernandina Beach March 18, 2008		Bryceville April 21, 2008		Callahan April 22, 2008		TOTAL	
	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage
Cultural Opportunities & The Arts	7	4.0%	4	3.0%	31	8.4%	8	3.8%	11	5.7%	61	5.7%
Recreation & Open Space	19	11.0%	59	44.4%	43	11.7%	20	9.6%	21	10.8%	162	15.0%
Environment	14	8.1%	8	6.0%	56	15.2%	25	12.0%	15	7.7%	118	10.9%
Education & School Facilities Plan	16	9.2%	10	7.5%	21	5.7%	38	18.2%	27	13.9%	112	10.4%
Infrastructure	24	13.9%	9	6.8%	56	15.2%	18	8.6%	27	13.9%	134	12.4%
Growth Management	33	19.1%	14	10.5%	76	20.6%	59	28.2%	36	18.6%	218	20.2%
Economy & Workforce	20	11.6%	8	6.0%	24	6.5%	4	1.9%	15	7.7%	71	6.6%
Tourism	6	3.5%	0	0.0%	9	2.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	15	1.4%
Governance	11	6.4%	6	4.5%	29	7.9%	6	2.9%	9	4.6%	61	5.7%
Health Care & Social Services	12	6.9%	9	6.8%	16	4.3%	11	5.3%	11	5.7%	59	5.5%
Public Safety	11	6.4%	6	4.5%	8	2.2%	20	9.6%	22	11.3%	67	6.2%
Total Votes Cast:	173	100%	133	100%	369	100%	209	100%	194	100%	1,078	100%

Top 3

4. WHAT DO WE WANT THE COMMUNITY TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE? (*Continued*)

Tourism:

“The concept of sustainability as a resource development and management philosophy is permeating all levels of policy and practice relating to tourism, from local to global. More than ever before, sustainable tourism management of the natural and physical environments must coexist with economic, socio-cultural, health, safety and security objectives of localities and nations. Finding a balance between economic growth and protecting the natural and built resources is challenging governments and businesses alike to cooperate in sustainable tourism development. ...” from *Tourism Policy and Planning: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. David L. Edgell, Sr. et al Butterworth-Heinemann-2008. ISBN # 978-0-7506-8557-3)

While the Nassau County employment statistics incorporated into this Vision show the Leisure and Hospitality Industry is the largest single employment sector, at 21.4 percent of the workforce, and Nassau County is twice as dependent on tourism as the average Florida county, when taken as a whole, as shown in the table above, attendees at the various workshops held throughout the county simply did not rate tourism as a highly important issue.

Sustainable tourism has become a major factor in economic development of many communities in Florida and may be used to expand the economic development base of Nassau County in coordination with the expanded recreational activities identified as important to residents countywide. The need to support the existing tourism industry and ensure continued support for the importance of the social, economic, environmental, and structural issues associated with tourism, and the low level of importance assigned to it in the opinions of the local population, suggests the need for greater education and information flows on the part of both the public and private sectors in the County.

5. WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?

Vision 2032 Statement

- *Nassau County is committed to managing growth and creating sustainable economic development in a way that maintains and improves the quality of life and unique character of the communities by utilizing its strengths – the people, the abundance of unspoiled natural resources, and its strategic location as the “Eastern Gateway to Florida.”*

5. WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE IT HAPPEN? (*Continued*)

Nassau County residents will be able to say “Vision 2032 has allowed us to:”

1. Establish priorities which are those of the people of Nassau County.
2. Budget financial and human resources (police, fire, medical, government, teachers, etc.) based on accurate, financially feasible budgets using a variety of available sources of revenue.
3. Direct and plan for growth, in a financially feasible manner, to those areas that can sustain the growth as it occurs and is planned.
4. Identify the strengths and attributes of the County, including its people, physical location, the Port of Fernandina, the Fernandina Beach Airport, the schools, the tourist attractions, and the need to establish and support economic development priorities.
5. Coordinate educational programs and training to meet the needs of existing and future employers.
6. Develop and implement guidelines to ensure good, stable, and affordable workforce housing.
7. Provide recreational and cultural opportunities throughout the County to meet the needs and desires of rural and urban lifestyles and availability of resources.
8. Maintain the natural beauty of Nassau County, the beaches, the St. Mary’s River, publicly-owned forested areas, open space areas, and provide for public access to these resources.

Guiding Principles and Strategies

Guiding principles and strategies for future growth and development are constants that reflect the consensus of Nassau County Beliefs and Values. The objectives are “we will” statements and the strategies are tools and actions to implement the Vision.

Implementation

Implementation is not the culmination of the visioning process; rather, it is part of the continual cycle of public input, analysis, community development, implementation actions, evaluation, and updating. Implementation is both incremental and cumulative, and success requires participation from both public and private sectors. All segments of the community need to work together to protect the unique qualities and character of Nassau County in a proactive manner to achieve the desired vision for the future.

5. WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE IT HAPPEN? (*Continued*)

How do we implement Vision 2032?

Nassau County's Vision 2032 Plan presents a picture of what Nassau County will look like in the future. Long-range visioning such as this requires a policy basis to guide future actions, growth, and development, and help local officials make decisions consistent with the residents' vision for the future.

A vision is the heart of the planning process for the future; goals and strategies are the guides for implementation. After development of the vision, the next step is to identify the ways to secure what the community desires. These changes are expressed in Goal and Objective statement, which provide the basis for more detailed policies or strategies to be used by Nassau County to implement its Vision 2032 Plan.

- Established goals and strategies reflect common ideas from citizens in the public participation process. Goals are overall or general statements about the quality and character of the community.
- Goals are translated into measurable and specific objectives that may then be prioritized and pursued by undertaking specific strategies.
- Objectives are the more specific ends towards which community leaders should direct their efforts.
- Performance Standards/Quality of Life Benchmarks are established in the Objectives and are used to:
 - Monitor progress in achieving Vision 2032.
 - Measure change in community over 25 years.
 - Be fluid and revised every five to ten years.
 - Reflect statements of where the County is at a period in time.
- Strategies are specific actions taken in support of a goal or the act of mobilizing resources towards a goal.
- Implementing the strategies requires a balance between the public purpose to direct the long-range vision for the future with the rights of property owners to appropriately use their land and the financial resources available to Nassau County.
- The limits on financial resources, the sources and amount of revenue available, require choices and priorities be made as Nassau County works toward their vision for the future.

The 11 public involvement issue areas have been grouped under three main categories. Each issue area has established goals, specific and measurable objectives, and implementing strategies:

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Economy and Workforce
- Cultural Opportunities and the Arts
- Education and School Facility Plan
- Healthcare and Social Services
- Recreation and Open Space

INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

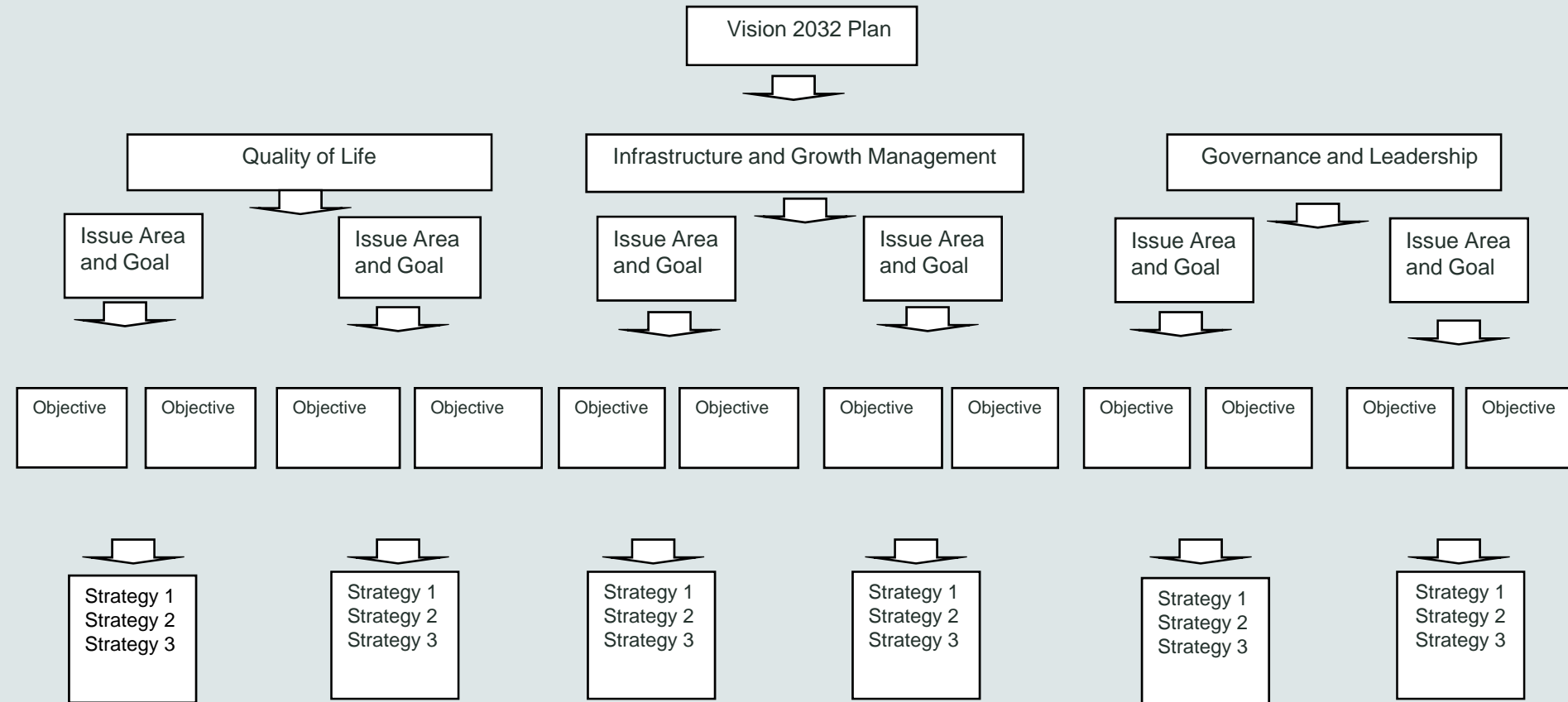
- Infrastructure
- Growth management
- Environment
- Tourism
- Public Safety

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

- Governance

5. WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE IT HAPPEN? (*Continued*)

This illustration is a graphic depiction of the relationship between the Vision 2032 Plan, the goals, objectives, and strategies. The goals, objectives, and strategies that follow this graph were developed using a mixture of the public comments during the eight Public Participation Sessions and discussions with the Steering Committee and stakeholder groups.



6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

A. QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

Conservation and preservation of the natural environment, education and workforce training, health care, recreation and cultural activities and the arts all relate to quality of life and the values of Nassau County residents. Eastern Nassau County is characterized by urban land use patterns, which facilitate the use of public transportation and other services within walking distance of residences. Western Nassau County with its more rural nature and small central communities with limited facilities requires careful planning and design to ensure access and minimizing of the costs to provide these facilities. Locating community medical, health care, educational, cultural, and arts facilities and services, in small compact centers in existing rural communities, supports the existing and desired patterns of development in these areas communicated by many residents. One-trip to drop the children off at school, buy groceries, gas, visit the doctor, browse the library, or attend a community event, is possible in rural areas if rural centers are planned and designed with this goal in mind.

Government land use decisions, patterns of development, and decisions of the development community, can encourage or discourage cohesiveness in both urban and rural communities. Careful planning, design and funding of education, culture, arts, and community health care facilities facilitates easier access to rural residents without personal transportation, such as the elderly, young, and disabled, and reduces the cost of transportation to meet these needs. The goals, objectives, and strategies established below recognize the need to be creative in meeting these needs during the difficult economic times and the limitations on revenue and sources of funds to pay for existing and future needs.

Issue Area 1: Conservation and Preservation of the Natural Environment

Goal 1: Conserve and/or preserve existing natural areas, including wetlands, floodplains, river corridors (such as, the St. Mary's River), streams, creeks, and wildlife habitats.

Objective 1: By the year 2032, the acreage of publicly-owned natural, open space areas, and natural areas set aside for voluntary conservation or preservation, shall be equal to or greater than the year 2008 acreage.

Strategies

1. Incorporate natural areas and features into development plans, parks and recreation areas, non-residential development, and infrastructure projects.
2. Promote increased "limited activity" setbacks from water bodies including rivers, lakes, streams, and creeks.
3. Promote the maintenance and development of wildlife corridors through adjoining residential and non-residential areas including infrastructure expansion or rebuilding projects.

6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

4. Protect trees by establishing a tree protection ordinance for all development activities and offer incentives to agriculture and silviculture operations that use best management practices to preserve and ensure the regeneration of forested areas.
5. Encourage resource preservation by establishing standards in the land development regulations that allow transfers of residential densities for residential developments and increased floor area ratios for non-residential developments in residential areas that meet established resource protection standards.
6. Identify the existing outdoor recreation, open space, and natural areas of local and regional significance and, using the Vision 2032 Plan and other data sources, develop a recreational and conservation Master Plan – a plan for an inter-connected network of these features – for incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Establish community meeting between local government agencies, landowners, and state and federal agricultural agencies to promote sustainable agriculture in Nassau County.
8. Coordinate efforts with communities countywide to establish a strategy for protecting and conserving the water supply and resources for competing uses.

Issue Area 2: Education and Workforce Training

Goal 1: Coordinate with the Nassau County Economic Development Board and the Florida Community College to continue the workforce development post-secondary education and job training programs and integrate youth and adult education.

Objective 1: Continue existing, and expand post-secondary education opportunities at Florida Community College-Nassau Center and the joint-use Florida Community College/Nassau County Technical Training Facility to meet the workforce training and post-secondary education needs of Nassau County residents.

Strategies:

1. By August 2009, establish a task force consisting of Nassau County School District staff and educators, the Nassau County Economic Development Board, and the Continuing Education Center of the Florida Community College of Jacksonville in Yulee to identify the workforce needs and training programs required to provide a skilled workforce to meet the employer needs of existing and targeted industries.
2. By June 2010, incorporate efforts such as dual enrollment, advanced placement, and virtual school courses into the Nassau County School District education planning to ensure students from the Nassau County area can compete for post-secondary school admission slots with students from across the state and the country.
3. By August 2011, identify a suitable location, or locations, for vocational training programs at area high schools in coordination with the Nassau County Economic Development Board and Community College to meet the workforce needs of the existing and targeted employment sectors.



6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

Issue Area 3: Health and Well-Being

Goal 1: Increase availability of health care services, providers, and facilities throughout Nassau County.

Objective 1: By the year 2032, residents in Nassau County will have community medical care facilities for health care not requiring hospitalization.

Strategies

1. Support efforts of health care providers to expand hospital capacity in Nassau County, particularly west of I-95 and provide community satellite medical treatment and care facilities.
2. Starting in July 2009, coordinate with developers on establishing land uses for medical clinics, doctor's offices, and other medical facilities within existing and new communities and large-scale development projects.
3. Beginning in August 2009, begin to establish cooperative ventures between businesses, residents, libraries, schools, and the Health Department to continue providing public health programs and information on health issues, using grant funds when available.
4. Beginning in September 2009, work with the Florida Community College-Nassau Center and the joint-use Florida Community College/Nassau County Technical Training Facility and Nassau County School District to establish a vocational track for health care training in high schools that will transition into programs in the post-secondary institutions in the County.



Issue Area 4: Recreation and Open Space

Goal 1: Preserve existing and expand outdoor recreation areas, publicly-owned natural and open space areas, recreational facilities and services throughout Nassau County.

Objective 1: By the year 2010, add additional level of service standards to the Comprehensive Plan for recreation and open space to include acreage for active outdoor recreation areas, numbers and standards for recreation facilities (including boat ramps, skate parks, and ball fields), and generalized locations based upon existing deficiencies and projected population growth.

6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

Strategies

1. In 2009, begin a review and, as necessary, update the land development regulations to require dedication of multi-use trails and walkways for all developments or strips of land for a corridor of space for linkages between developments and land use activities.
2. Improve access to waterways through acquisition of land and construction of additional boat ramp parks with a mix of outdoor recreational facilities using grant funding and impact fees.
3. In July 2009, establish a committee of community volunteers to coordinate with the Nassau County School Board on a mechanism and plans to provide evening and weekend access to recreation.
4. On an ongoing basis, seek grant funding to acquire land to build a facility with a skate park, off-road trails, Frisbee golf, and other active recreational facilities to serve the youth and families of Nassau County.
5. On an ongoing basis, coordinate with willing seller landowners, non-profit recreation, and conservation land groups to set aside land for conservation or public open space.



Issue Area 5: Culture and the Arts

Goal 1: Seek public and private funding to increase county residents' opportunities and exposure to the arts and cultural activities and continue existing cultural and arts programs.

Objective 1: By the year 2010, establish a plan of action to enhance and update library facilities, museums, school auditoriums, and other public facilities to provide space for art and cultural activities in these facilities to serve local communities.

Strategies

1. Establish a Teen Advisory Board to develop a list of needs and innovative methods of funding to provide art and cultural activities in schools, libraries, and other public facilities.
2. Using land development regulations encourage an effective mix of business and family entertainment uses in close proximity to residential areas, with buffers and other features, sufficient to ensure no impact to the peace and enjoyment of residents in their homes.
3. By the end of 2009, establish a Culture and Arts working group to develop plans and identify funding opportunities for community cultural, and civic centers.

6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

B. INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Managing growth to ensure the quality of life is a difficult task requiring often difficult and controversial choices to be made. All of the items in Section A, Quality of Life, are directly related to Growth Management in terms of where to locate and how to pay for services and facilities to ensure they are available to maintain the quality of life. Funding and construction of infrastructure includes roads, schools, libraries, police stations, emergency shelters, water, sewage, and electrical facilities to meet needs. As indicated in the Fiscal Sustainability section at the end of this report, land use decisions have fiscal impacts on operating and capital revenues and expenditures.

The current and future conditions and issues identified as Quality of Life issues in this report, are all affected by growth management decisions, where to locate land uses, what patterns of land use are desirable, and where to locate facilities to ensure maximum access and to minimize the cost. Many of the Quality of Life needs require infrastructure be built and/or renovation/redesign of existing infrastructure. Government land use decisions and patterns of development will significantly affect the ability to plan for and provide for existing and future infrastructure needs. The goals, objectives, and strategies established below recognize the need to be creative in meeting the growth management needs. With its vast vacant land inventory, Nassau County has the opportunity to learn from the development mistakes of other Florida counties; to adopt development patterns suited to changing transportation, telecommunications, and market conditions; and to maintain our “sense of place” while we grow.

Issue Area 1: Growth Management

Goal 1: Promote effective local planning processes at the County and incorporated community level that coordinate the funding and location of identified infrastructure needs, such as, recreation facilities, school sites, port landside and waterside facilities, and roads (including emergency evacuation routes), with associated land uses and available funds to pay for these facilities.

Objective 1: Incorporate the Vision 2032 Final Report as a component to the 2010 update of the local Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Sec. 163.3177, F.S.

Strategies

1. On an annual basis, develop a list of community infrastructure priorities for each year of a maximum ten-year Capital Budget, and include in the early years of each year’s budget, those facilities with an available revenue source .

5. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

Growth Management Strategies (continued)

2. Elected officials, advisory board members, stakeholders, and local residents from each of the four communities should consult the Vision 2032 Final Report when making community development decisions. Development decisions must consider financial feasibility, availability of infrastructure, and private property interests.
3. Use volunteer groups to hold community-wide meetings to identify places in each community that are historically, socially and ecologically significant and recommend a plan that will reflect the desires, needs, and character of these existing “communities.”
4. Provide density and intensity bonuses for new, mixed-use developments where facilities and services are available. Bonuses should be tied to the inclusion of workforce housing, the provision of connecting or alternative transportation corridors, and the clustering of development to reduce the impact of development and preservation of natural areas; or through the acquisition of off-site development rights through transfer of development rights from designated sending areas.

6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

Issue Area 2: Multi-Modal Transportation

Goal 1: Achieve a network of safe and efficient multi-modal transportation that is capable of meeting the transportation needs of residents and visitors at an acceptable level of service in a safe and efficient manner.

Objective 1: Work with the Nassau County Economic Development Board, Nassau County Public Works Department, and that of each incorporated community, to implement safety and capacity improvements in conjunction with the anticipated impacts of new developments and those of the airport, airport industrial park, and Port of Fernandina.

Strategies

1. Use the information collected from coordination with the entities listed in the above objective to develop a list of community infrastructure priorities for each year of a maximum ten-year Capital Budget, and include in the budget those facilities for which a currently available revenue source and funds are available to pay for these needs.
2. Designate a regional multi-modal transportation entity to be responsible for the coordination of all modes of regionally significant surface transportation planning activities.
3. When development impacts are shown to reduce safety or the level of service beyond acceptable standards, implement capacity and safety improvements as a condition of new development approval using the fiscal analyses methodology provided in the Fishkind Study.¹²
4. Promote the use of interconnected street networks or alternative routes that connect existing roads in order to distribute traffic and maintain the rural character of existing two-lane roads.
5. Designate transit corridors for future public transportation service. These corridors may be designated for greater land use density and intensity.
6. Maintain a database of unused street and railroad rights-of-way for possible utilization as pedestrian trails, bicycle routes, and shuttle service.



¹² Fishkind & Associates, August 2007, Proposal, "Fiscal Sustainability after Tax Reform," and "Nassau County Fiscal Sustainability Study," Fishkind & Associates, Inc., September 2, 2008.

5. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

Issue Area 3: Economic Development and Tourism

Goal 1: Expand the economic base and create a fiscal sustainable community by attracting high technology and high value industry, office, research, and educational facilities that provide new employment opportunities and support the existing major employment sectors.

Objective 1: Coordinate community and local government efforts with the Nassau County Economic Development Board to develop high-value, non-residential development and mixed use developments that generate additional professional and technical job opportunities.

Objective 2: Coordinate public and private efforts to ensure continuance of the vital tourism industry and identify opportunities to create a sustainable eco-tourism segment of the economy that takes advantage of the County's abundance of natural resource areas, such as the St. Mary's River.

Strategies

1. By 2012, work with Florida Community College-Nassau Center to create training programs with existing and new companies.
2. By 2011, use a combination of tax incentives and state grants to bring in high tech/bio tech businesses.
3. By 2010, review the land development regulations and zoning maps to identify revisions required to provide opportunities for high-value, non-residential developments, and mixed-use developments with employment centers for targeted industries.
4. The Chambers of Commerce should provide training and assistance to existing and prospective small businesses in such areas as business planning, government regulation, capital acquisition, and employee development.
5. Emphasize Nassau County's cultural and historical amenities in tourism promotion and business recruitment efforts.
6. Create a public-private partnership to prepare shovel ready industrial and business/office park sites having a minimum of 200 acres, backbone infrastructure including central water, wastewater and stormwater, road and rail transportation, and telecommunications.
7. Create a public-private partnership to educate residents, leaders, and business owners on the importance of the tourism industry to Nassau County's economic well-being and the opportunities for sustainable tourism as a component of economic development .

6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

Issue Area 4: Mixed Use Development

Goal 1: Encourage mixed-use developments designed to accommodate multiple community activities and services in close proximity. By reducing infrastructure demand, mixed-use developments can generate a positive fiscal impact on County's financial resources.

Objective 1: Coordinate community and local government efforts with the Nassau County Economic Development Board to develop high-value, non-residential and mixed-use developments that generate a positive cash flow for the County.

Strategies: Analyze or require an analysis of developments to:

1. Identify the fiscal impacts of development proposals in terms of revenue versus cost of providing services using the Fiscal Impact Assessment Model (FIAM).
2. Through the Local Planning Agency, establish design guidelines, dimensional criteria, and incentives to promote compact mixed-use development patterns. Characteristics of mixed-use zoning include multiple uses dispersed vertically, shared parking located behind buildings, public amenities such as schools and parks as community focal points, and extensive pedestrian connectivity.
3. Determine and implement incentives to development that will help balance the tax base, such as the high technology and high value mixed-use developments or industry, office, research, and education facilities that provide new employment opportunities and support the existing major employment sectors.

6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES (*Continued*)

C. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Today's times are changing, and so are boards and commissions across the country. Governance structures must serve the strategies and mission of the organization while enabling its leaders to exercise their responsibilities with transparency and integrity. Governance requires knowledge, leadership, vision, education, commitment, clarity, and strategy. Changes to government and its structures must be examined to ensure efficient and effective operations for all its constituents.



Issue Area 1: Government Structure

Goal 1: Determine if the existing form of government meets the needs of its residents.

Objective 1: By the year 2012, conduct a study to determine if a different form of government would better meet the needs of its residents.

Strategies :

1. Establish a blue ribbon committee to study the different types of governments that are available. That would include a review of County-commission, consolidated, and charter governments.
2. Determine the pros and cons of each type and compare to the existing form of government.
3. Determine if the current number of commissioners is sufficient representation for the number of County residents.
4. Submit a report by the end of 2010 containing findings and recommendations.
5. Implement recommendations, if feasible.

Introduction

As shown in the conclusions from the Fishkind Fiscal Sustainability Study incorporated in this Vision, the types of growth and development, which occur in Nassau County in the future, will have significant impacts on the financial abilities of the County to pay for current and future activities. Some very difficult choices will have to be made in order to ensure Nassau County maintains its current quality of life, pay for future growth, and ensures a continuation of the quality of life so important to residents.

Type of Growth Determines Fiscal Impact

- Not all land uses are created fiscally equal.
- Certain land uses yield a higher fiscal benefit to Nassau County.
- At current expenditure levels, typical residential land uses do not pay for themselves unless at very high price points.
- Office, retail, and industrial land uses have the ability to generate positive fiscal benefit.
- Mixed-use development also has the ability to generate a positive fiscal benefit for the County.

County Revenues

An analysis of existing County revenue sources in the Existing Conditions Report looked at a three-year summary of the operating budgets (2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08) showing revenue (income) and expenditures (expenses) for Nassau County (see **Appendix A**).

The detailed County budget showing revenues and expenditures as of October 1, 2007, may be found on the County Clerks Web site.¹³ The sources of revenue included in this budget are:

- County transportation fund.
- General fund.
- One-cent small county surtax.
- Special revenue funds.
- Debt service funds.
- Capital project funds.
- Enterprise funds.
- Municipal service taxing unit.
- Conservation and control district.
- Total revenues/balances from these funding sources in the approved budget equal approximately \$147 million. Total approved expenditures/expenses equal approximately \$126 million with the remaining revenues/fund balances of about \$21 million in reserve funds.

Nassau countywide ad valorem millage rates are 6.1821 for government operations, 7.6810 for schools, and 0.5005 for special assessments, for a total millage rate of 14.3636.

¹³ <http://www.nassauclerk.org/clerk/index.cfm?FuseAction=Financial.Home&CFID=893937&CFTOKEN=19499168>.