



City of Jacksonville | Office of Mayor Donna Deegan

# 2023 Transition Committee Report







## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

**DONNA DEEGAN**  
MAYOR

CITY HALL SUITE 400  
117 W. DUVAL STREET  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202

Dear Citizens,

It's a new day as we lift our city and bring Jacksonville's beautiful mosaic together for its greatest good. I'm honored to serve as your mayor, and I have relentless optimism for our future. Since day one, our administration has been guided by the principle that *every* person should have a voice in City Hall and a seat at the table. We are building an inclusive culture that encourages collaboration between leaders from all walks of life and who look like Jacksonville.

With that spirit in mind, I asked our transition team to form a series of policy and outreach committees charged with developing plans that move forward our vision of a healthy, safe, resilient, inclusive, and innovative city that works for all of us. These transition committees focused on infrastructure; health; economic development; public safety; arts, culture, and entertainment; constituency and community outreach; and military and veterans.

After a review of the opportunities and challenges facing Jacksonville, our transition committees identified policy solutions that give every person the opportunity to have a good quality of life. Their findings are in the pages that follow.

I want to thank our transition team leadership, committee chairs, subcommittee chairs and co-chairs who led this process. I'm also grateful for the hundreds of subcommittee members, subject matter experts, and citizens who gave input. The recommendations in this book have been a true community-wide effort.

The exciting news is that we are already putting many of these recommendations into practice. Our 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan includes infrastructure projects that make good on the broken promises of consolidation while ensuring smart, resilient development as Jacksonville grows. Our 2023-2024 General Fund Budget is moving the dial on literacy, affordable housing, homelessness, healthcare, small businesses, veterans, arts, culture, and so much more.

I look forward to working side-by-side with you to move our shared priorities forward for all of our citizens as we write the next chapter in Jacksonville's history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna Deegan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mayor Donna Deegan





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## MAYOR DONNA DEEGAN

Mayor Donna Deegan is a fifth-generation Jacksonville native with deep family roots that reach back to her great great grandfather, Jacob Hazouri, first immigrating to the U.S. and settling in Springfield. Her grandfather, Rufus, opened the beloved Roosevelt Grill on Ashley Street, frequented by the likes of Ray Charles and Hank Aaron.

After graduating from Florida State University, Mayor Deegan started a career in broadcast journalism, which culminated in a role as a lead anchor at First Coast News. Over her tenure, she listened to and shared the stories of people from all walks of life living in every corner of Jacksonville. She investigated many of the city's systemic problems and held people in power accountable. Over her 25 years reporting, she established herself as a trusted voice for the community.

Mayor Deegan's three bouts with breast cancer inspired her to bring her passion toward a new pursuit. After seeing fellow cancer patients and survivors saddled with debt and struggle to make ends meet, she was called to action and created the DONNA Foundation. In 2003, she founded the nonprofit to support the same community of patients, survivors, and health care providers who stepped up for her when she needed it most.

Under her leadership, the Foundation has provided financial assistance and support to more than 17,000 families living with breast cancer in addition to raising millions toward groundbreaking cancer research. Mayor Deegan also founded 26.2 with DONNA, The National Marathon to Finish Breast Cancer – an annual event that draws runners from all over the world and generates millions in economic impact for Jacksonville each year.

Mayor Deegan's effective leadership across industries hasn't gone without notice. She has received the Jacksonville Business Journal Women of Influence Award, Enterprising Women's Leadership Award, Florence Davis Lifetime Achievement Award, and Florida Times-Union's EVE Award for volunteer service.

On May 16, 2023, the people of Jacksonville elected Donna Deegan to serve as our next mayor and create a city that works for all of us. As our new mayor, she will bring her unique life experiences and longstanding commitment to this city to create a Jacksonville that works for all of us.







INTRODUCTION

Mayor Donna Deegan invited hundreds of diverse members from across the city to share their ideas and offer their recommendations on how to make Jacksonville stronger, safer, and better. These volunteers brought their vast and varied knowledge, perspectives, and experiences, culminating in a rich contribution of ideas to guide our incredible city.

The Mayor and the Transition Executive Team made every effort possible to maximize the number of people engaged in this process. What we got was a historic response from the people. After months of meetings, hundreds of hours of conversations, and bringing together more than 1,000 citizens from across Jacksonville for a fast-paced series of in-depth discussions and research, we are excited to share this massive undertaking with all of you.

On behalf of the staff of the City of Jacksonville, we are grateful for the effort, energy, and expertise the committee members have all shared. A better Jacksonville is not possible without all of us. We are proud of the incredible show of commitment and dedication throughout this process.

It is with a sense of awe and a love of Jacksonville that we extend deep appreciation for the work put forth by all in compiling and producing this document.

THE TRANSITION REPORT

The transition report highlights the Mayor’s values and provides an idea of what her administration will prioritize. With more than 200 subject matter experts, community leaders, and community members working together, we found shared values as well as moments to have difficult conversations. The report summarizes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the majority within each subcommittee.

While subcommittee reports propose items to help move the Mayor’s agenda forward, these recommendations should be considered a starting point to make us a city that works for

all of us, and is not the end state of our city. This process is only the beginning of conversations we hope will continue throughout Mayor Deegan’s Administration. This is by no means all the people, or all the ideas, needed to make Jacksonville a city that works for all of us. However, it marks the dawn of “A NEW DAY.”

Finally, this document reflects the multiple stages of the Subcommittees’ processes based on the charges they were given, initiatives taken, and the leadership from the Transition Committee Chairs.

THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE DATA  
JUNE 2023 - AUGUST 2023

Total number of Transition Teams: ..... 7

Total number of Transition Chairs: ..... 7

Number of Subcommittees:..... 29

Number of Subcommittee Chairs/Co-Chairs: ... 37

Total number of committee members  
attended Transition meetings: ..... 220

Total number of administrators assigned: ..... 7

Total number of legal representatives  
and compliance experts assigned: ..... 13

Total number of meetings held by  
Transition teams: ..... 318

Average number of meetings per  
Transition subcommittee team: ..... 11

Total number of public citizens  
attended Transition meetings: ..... 569

Total number of media attended  
Transition meetings: ..... 69

Total number of subject matter experts  
attended Transition meetings: ..... 262

Total number of consultants  
attended Transition meetings: ..... 4



TRANSITION COMMITTEE STAFF



**Pat McCollough currently serves as Chief of Staff.** She managed Mayor Deegan’s campaign. Pat is a retired U.S. Marine Sergeant Major. She has also led local, regional, state, and national, political, public health, economic development, and advocacy campaigns. She is a community organizer, strategist, and analyst.



**Phil Perry currently serves as Chief Communications Officer.** He led communications for Mayor Deegan’s campaign. Phil has provided strategic communications counsel to national nonprofits, Fortune 500 companies, and political campaigns at all levels.



**Joe Inderhees currently serves as Deputy Chief of Staff.** Over a 25-year career as a television newsroom leader and manager, he has given a voice to the voiceless, solved problems, and led a culture of innovation and inclusiveness for Scripps News, First Coast News, and NBC Bay Area News.



**Jovial Harper currently serves as the Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff.** She previously worked within the City’s Downtown Investment Authority. Therein, she obtained a wealth of experience regarding City Development and Legislative processes. She provides transferable knowledge from her career paths in

real estate, mortgage originations, entrepreneurship, and fashion design.

Scan code to see this report online, or visit [www.coj.net/TransitionReport](http://www.coj.net/TransitionReport)




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## TRANSITION COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

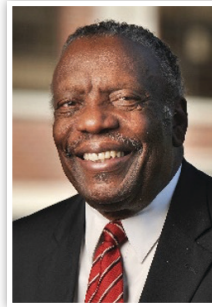
**On May 25, Deegan announced her six transition team co-chairs.** “Our administration will be guided by the principle that every person should have a voice in City Hall and a seat at the table,”

“Our culture will be an inclusive one where we encourage collaboration and bring in leaders from all walks of life who look like Jacksonville.”



### **Lakesha Burton**

Burton worked with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office for over 20 years, during which she served as the first female director of Jacksonville's Police Athletic League and became an assistant chief. She recently worked as the Channel 4 crime and safety analyst.



### **Nat Glover**

Glover served as Jacksonville sheriff from 1995 to 2003 during the Delaney administration and kept a key focus on community policing initiatives. He ran for mayor at the end of his term but lost to John Peyton. He went on to serve as the president of Edward Waters University, his alma mater, before retiring in 2017. He was inducted into Florida Law Enforcement Officers Hall of Fame in 2021.



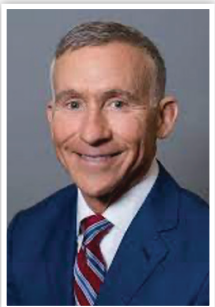
### **John Delaney**

Delaney served as Jacksonville mayor from 1995-2003, during which he spearheaded the Better Jacksonville Plan and the Preservation Project. He then went on to work as the president of University of North Florida and currently works as president of Flagler College in St. Augustine.



### **David Miller**

Miller co-founded Brightway Insurance with his brother in 2008 and has since worked with Groundwork Jacksonville, Lift Jax, United Way and One Jax. He also donated \$1 million last year to the The Together Strong Community Fund meant to combat anti-semitism after an increase in hate speech in the city last year.



### **Kevin Gay**

An insurance salesman from 1983 to 1999, Gay transitioned to the nonprofit realm and led Operation New Hope for 23 years. He stepped down as CEO in 2022. Kevin made transition from selling insurance to changing lives.



### **Darnell Smith**

Smith has worked as market president for Florida Blue for almost 10 years. Smith has also served on the boards of Sulzbacher Center, Lift Jax and the Cathedral Arts Project.



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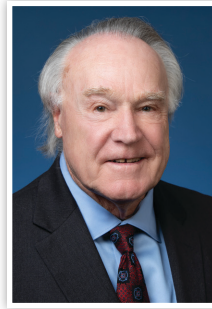
## TRANSITION COMMITTEE CHAIRS

As part of the transition process, Mayor Donna Deegan's transition team conducted a review of the opportunities and challenges facing Jacksonville.

She appointed the committees, and the leaders were announced June 6, 2023, as follows:



**The Infrastructure Committee** focused on neighborhoods, the downtown riverfront, parks and recreation, resiliency, affordable housing, and homelessness. This focus area was led by former Jacksonville City Council Member, construction business owner and restaurateur **Garrett Dennis**.



**The Public Safety Committee** focused on revisiting the Jacksonville Journey; a city-wide effort to boost literacy and grow prevention and intervention programs. This focus area was led by former Education Chair of the Jacksonville Journey, past Duval School Board Chairman, and attorney **W.C. Gentry**.



**The Health Committee** focused on the appointment of a Chief Health Officer; maternal and children's health; primary and dental care access; mental health and addiction; elder care; social determinants of health; and health insurance. This focus area was led by nationally recognized financial advisor and physician **Carolyn McClanahan, M.D., CFP**.



**The Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Committee** focused on retaining local art talent, public and private programming, art in public spaces and buildings, and attracting more public events. This focus area was led by Yellow House Founder and Director **Hope McMath**.



**The Economic Development Committee** focused on permitting, ladders for small business, talent development, and downtown development. This focus area was led by JEA Director of Economic Development **Ed Randolph** who previously served as the city's Director of Business Development.



**The Constituency and Community Outreach Committee** focused on diversity, youth outreach, faith outreach, higher education, and non-profits. This focus area was led by University of North Florida professor and two-term member of the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission **Dr. Parvez Ahmed, PhD**.



**The Military and Veterans Committee** focused on the main issues and concerns facing our local military members, establishing a veterans community center, and the need for more access to veteran activities and services in Jacksonville. This focus area was led by **retired U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Rick Snyder**.

# TRANSITION COMMITTEES

Infrastructure

Health

Economic Development

Public Safety

Arts, Culture & Entertainment

Constituency & Community Outreach

Military & Veterans Affairs





## Infrastructure

### SUBCOMMITTEES & CHARGES

#### NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVES

(Septic Tanks, Sidewalks, lighting, Bulkheads)

The neighborhood committee focus will be to recommend processes and procedures to revitalize and improve underserved communities that have been left behind. Explain how investing into these communities will improve the quality of life for the residents, socially, economically, and educationally.

#### Charge:

The Neighborhoods focus will include holding publicly noticed listening sessions with all established CPACS and major neighborhood groups to discuss urgent concerns, deferred improvements, and their respective communities' vision for future enhancement. Finally, the subcommittee will meet with the current and/or immediate past chair of the Council's NCSPHS Committee to review current or future priorities, and to identify neighborhoods experiencing the greatest need.

The committee will also meet the COJ Public Works Department, Department of Transportation, JEA, and JTA to: discuss specific obstacles to infrastructure improvement citywide; identify shovel ready projects in the Northwest quadrant and Jacksonville's older and underserved neighborhoods; review the current CIP for overdue/upcoming/neglected infrastructure improvement areas, especially as it pertains to sidewalk, roadway, and utility improvements; and review in detail all current Septic Tank Phase-Out projects and consider expansion opportunities.

#### RIVERFRONT

This committee will explore what it will take to create a vibrant, active downtown riverfront that will benefit all of Jacksonville's residents and encourage visitors. The recommendations should come from community conversations, stakeholders and economic concerns, previous research, status, and safety issues.

#### Charge:

This focus area will meet with the Riverfront Parks, Downtown Investment Authority, Museum of Science and History, Jacksonville University, JaxPort, COJ Public Works Department, and the Chief Resilience Officer to discuss implementation of best practices for both economic and environmental outcomes, as well as making the river accessible to every resident for enjoyment.

#### PARKS AND RECREATION

The Parks and Recreation committee will find that although Jacksonville is surrounded by water, it is also green. There are national parks, state parks and preserves, urban parks and beachside parks. Plus, there are dozens of unique gardens and an arboretum and botanical garden.

#### Charge:

This focus area will meet publicly with COJ Parks and Recreation leadership, Groundwork Jacksonville, and other organizations involved with key green spaces, including the Emerald Trail, to discuss any unfinished or pending projects and to identify opportunities for improvement downtown and citywide. Additionally, this focus area will solicit community input from at least one public hearing.



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## RESILIENCY

The resiliency committee will focus on the health of Jacksonville's processes and outcomes of how individuals and the city successfully adapt to difficult or challenging experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. Climate Change is another area that this committee will look into in regard to resiliency.

### Charge:

This focus area will meet publicly with COJ Planning Director, the Chief Resilience Officer and other appropriate parties to determine what changes need to be made to zoning and building codes to promote density, efficiency and resiliency as the city moves forward.

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## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Affordable Housing committee will provide research and data pertaining to rental housing increases and the impact on thousands of people on waitlist for affordable housing in Jacksonville. What resources are available that could impact positive outcomes and what is the status of our city?

### Charge:

The focus area will hold listening sessions with the Jacksonville Housing Authority, Jacksonville Finance Housing Authority, First Coast Apartment Association, LISC, HabiJax, Jacksonville Community Land Trust, Northeast Florida Builders Association, Ability Housing, members of the recent Council CQLI Special Committee, and other housing-related organizations, as needed, to better ascertain past efforts, the current housing landscape, specific future solutions, and how to quickly implement those.

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## HOMELESSNESS

The Homelessness Committee will quickly see that there are groups of people who experience homelessness in different ways, but all homelessness is characterized by either extreme poverty, health related, social issues, lack of services, at will, etc., for the most part, coupled with a lack of stable housing. How do we bridge the gap between homelessness and our local government, community, services, and faith outreach?

### Charge:

This focus area will meet with the homeless shelters and non-profits who specialize in at-risk homeless to look at models moving forward to serve the community in a fair and equitable way that serves their needs as well as the surrounding community's. Additionally, the focus area will focus on steady funding sources for mental health and direct services, permanent housing sources, and workforce readiness.

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## TRANSPORTATION

### Charge:

To meet with traffic and transportation officials involved in planning future transportation projects, including new highways and roadways, improvements to waterways, transit, unmanned and electric vehicles to determine what city policies need to be implemented for best practices and use. Discuss possible transit-oriented design and transit-adjacent development.



## Health

### SUBCOMMITTEES & CHARGES

The Health Committee will assess the local health care landscape.

- **Chief Health Officer** – Expound on the duties, roles, and responsibilities of the Chief Health Officer and how this position fits into the structure of the mayor’s administration.
- **Maternal and children’s health** – tracks maternal and children’s health in Duval County and makes recommendations on areas to improve programs and outcomes to the CHO and Programs Director.
- **Primary care and dental care access** – Track primary care and dental care access and primary care health measures and make recommendations on areas to improve programs and outcomes.
- **Mental health/addiction issues** –Mental health care and addiction treatment access and issues and make recommendations on areas to improve programs and outcomes.
- **Elder care committee** – Address elder care issues and makes recommendations on areas to improve programs and outcomes to the CHO and Programs Director.
- **Social determinants of health** – Address social determinants of health in Jacksonville and make recommendations.
- **Health Care and Health Insurance** – There are many issues surrounding health care and health insurance such as cost, health information, health access, health equality, health information technology and privacy, underinsured portions of our population, shortage of primary care physicians, mental healthcare access, coverage, and value-based care.

#### Charge:

Launch working groups to explore the following topics: primary care and dental care access, mental health and addiction, maternal/child health, elder issues, social determinants of health, and health insurance access. These groups will develop a top-down assessment of the issues in these areas along with a status of the organizations in the community that are serving these areas. Their charge will be to address the challenges facing these organizations and the challenges faced by the beneficiaries of these organizations when accessing services.

#### Charge:

Develop job descriptions and review candidates for Chief Health Officer (CHO) and Director of Health Program Coordination (DHPC). Build a Health Care Committee to advise the CHO and DHPC.

## Economic Development

### SUBCOMMITTEES & CHARGES

#### PERMITTING

With the many up-and-coming entrepreneurs in Jacksonville, the City’s building department processes need to be streamlined to ensure that businesses will be able to open their doors as soon as possible. This committee will research the policies and procedures for permitting, have conversations with business owners and make recommendations. An efficient permitting process will not only help businesses but could curtail construction safety and delays.

#### Charge:

This focus area will seek input from the COJ planning department, small businesses affected by permitting delays, and representatives from permit-intensive industries to identify technology, process, and staffing improvements that will simplify, streamline, and drastically speed up the permitting process in our fast-growing city.

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## SMALL BUSINESS LADDERS

As much as “climbing the corporate ladder” is conceptualized as being successful and working upper management, we must focus on our small business ladders as well. Small businesses are the backbone of city. Opportunities must be provided for small businesses across the spectrum to succeed with access to funding.

### Charge:

Review the City’s current permitting/zoning/procurement/bid processes to determine efficiency and/or opportunities for small businesses, with an emphasis on inclusion.

### Charge:

The Startups, Incubators, and Small Business Subcommittee will meet publicly with the Jax Chamber and appropriate directors in planning, zoning and licensing to determine how best to create the most welcoming and nurturing municipal environment for small businesses in the Southeast. They shall be given a complete list of all properties held or owned by the city to determine:

1. Potential sites for Small Business incubators throughout the city;
2. Potential buildings and properties for lease or sale to small businesses;
3. Recommendations on efficient ways to communicate available services to small businesses across the entire city.

They shall meet with the director of purchasing to discover how best to make the City’s vendors list process available to all small business throughout the city,

Finally the committee will hear from small business groups and emerging networking groups for feedback on the users experiences of city services and fees.

### Charge:

The BIDMA Subcommittee will meet publicly with the General Counsel’s office to determine best practices in helping the city’s many merchants districts and commercial areas form voluntary BID structures in order to help fund improvements and various programs allowed under BIDS all over the city.

### Charge:

This focus area will meet publicly with representatives from the Small Business Development Center directors from UNF, and the Urban Enterprise Center to discuss restoring outreach of programs stimulating business development interest and education throughout area schools and continuing education programs. The committee will explore what kinds of resources and strategic partnerships are necessary to extend the services offered by the Small Business Administration at UNF to the City’s North, West, and Northwest Quadrants, including groups that guide startups and small businesses through the process of obtaining investments, loans and financing.

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## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

### Charge:

Meet with representatives of FSCJ to grow the city partnership on workforce development for industries that have a shortage of skilled workers and identify local businesses/targeted industries to partner with.

### Charge:

Explore tax incentives for businesses who recruit from local workforce programs or skilled employees from national talent searches.

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## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

### Charge:

Meet with Downtown Investment Authority and Office of Economic Development to discuss pending or upcoming downtown development opportunities, and develop a strategic plan to maximize their impact and spread the benefits.

### Charge:

Meet with Downtown Traffic engineer, Parking Commissioner, COJ Public Works Department to discuss past and future plans to simplify parking and traffic downtown. Meet with the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office to identify better traffic pattern practices for large events so that downtown merchants and businesses can better benefit. Additionally, address the problem of absentee owners and single level parking lots.





### Charge:

This focus area will meet publicly with Economic Development, Curricula representatives from JU, FSCJ, Ed Waters, and UNF, the Director of the Jacksonville Space Port and other interested parties to determine how best to promote new tech investment, startups, and workforce readiness in the fields of AI, BioEngineering, Robotics, Space Industry, and other emergent technologies like Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality content creation here in Jacksonville. It will hear from appropriate research and development representatives from the US military and the area's Medical Technology centers to determine how best to grow these important economic sectors in our City and how best to work with local institutions to educate and support a community of these workers, designers and creators.

### Charge:

This focus area will meet with representatives from EWC to explore how to create closer connections between the campus and downtown, along with the UF expansion and other potential higher education institution collaboration.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

### Charge:

Explore current, planned, and possible economic development projects with the JAX Chamber, JAXUSA partnership and Office of Economic Development to identify how the city can best support.

## Public Safety SUBCOMMITTEES & CHARGES

### JACKSONVILLE JOURNEY

The recommended focus for this committee is on revitalizing the Jax Journey program with an emphasis on education, literacy, and community policing along with teen programming, neighborhood stabilization and juvenile justice intervention.

### Charge:

This focus area will hold public listening sessions with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, leaders of the 2020/2021 Safer Together Workshops, First Coast Crime Stoppers, Duval County Teen Court, and program leaders of JSO-led community engagement efforts, including Teen Police Academy, Citizens Police Academy, and others, as needed, to determine opportunities for increased and more effective community-oriented policing strategies.

### Charge:

This focus area will research and conduct a deep dive into former Jacksonville Journey initiatives and programs to determine which programs/initiatives, if any, could be restarted or re-imagined in an effort to make Jacksonville a safer city with lower arrest rates and decreased recidivism.

### LITERACY

There is a link between literacy, success, and quality of life. Therefore, we will focus on ways literacy can help to lift up families and communities through quality programs.

### Charge:

The Education and Literacy Subcommittee will meet with Kids Hope Alliance (KHA), Jacksonville Public Library, Duval County School Board, Read USA, and other literacy initiatives to:

1. better ascertain the current literacy landscape citywide and;
2. identify opportunities for improvement, expansion, and remediation across the city.

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## CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Criminal Justice Reform is dedicated to ending over-incarceration and racial disparities in our criminal justice system through data-driven, proven approaches that will save taxpayer money, keep our families intact, and make our communities safer by maintaining human dignity, and prioritizing rehabilitation, treatment, and alternatives to incarceration.

### Charge:

This focus area will meet with public and private prevention and intervention programs to index the various models in use and determine how to best expand those models that are successfully reducing recidivism in Jacksonville.

## Arts, Culture & Entertainment (ACE) SUBCOMMITTEES & CHARGES

The Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Committee embraced Mayor Deegan's elevation of the conversation around the power of arts and culture to define the greatness of our city. The clarity of her call in taking a position that arts and culture have value to the residents of Jacksonville, and to those who visit, has energized the sector.

- RETAINING LOCAL TALENT
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- PROGRAMING
- QUALITY OF LIFE

## Constituency & Community Outreach SUBCOMMITTEES & CHARGES

### YOUTH OUTREACH

The Focus of Youth Outreach is on young people with a participatory approach to research, strategies, and planning. There should be emphasizes on economics, social, and professional development and growth, and lifetime opportunities.

### Charge:

Speak with youth-oriented organizations to identify ways to incorporate young people into the civic process, including participation on city boards; education; and entertainment.

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### FAITH OUTREACH

The focus of the Faith Outreach committee is to enlist, enable, empower, and expand the work of volunteer faith-based and community-based organizations. The committee is tasked with providing recommendations to the mayor that will encourage the government and the faith-based community to work together to improve social services for our city.

### Charge:

Meet with faith-based organizations to identify ways to better incorporate ecumenical practices into non-profit and charitable cooperative ventures that strengthen the unity of the city as a whole. Identify obstacles that faith organizations encounter when providing direct services to the community and solutions to those challenges. Index faith observances, high holidays, and festivals to increase public understanding, respect and participation among the diverse communities that make up the beautiful Jacksonville mosaic.

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### DIVERSITY

The focus of the Diversity committee is to ensure that there is a diverse group of individuals who have different backgrounds and skills that will work together as a team to

achieve the Mayor’s vision of Jacksonville being a welcoming city for all of us, and to provide recommendations of what a diversified city should look like. Take into considerations age, abilities, nationality, ethnicity, religious background, personal history, professional opportunities, skills, gender political preferences, communities, etc. These differences will help us discover creative solutions and innovative methods to improve our city overall.

### Charge:

The Diversity Subcommittee will meet to determine how best to reflect the city’s tremendous diversity - including Black, Hispanic, Asian American and Pacific Islander, LGBTQ+, and immigrant communities - on the various boards committees, commissions and other organizations appointed by the Mayor’s office, and how best to make sure that they remain diverse into the future.

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### HIGHER EDUCATION:

Explore ways to take full advantage of higher education opportunities.

### Charge:

Meet with representatives of all local higher education institutions to identify the economic infrastructure of the future and develop programs that address those industries while training students to be the leaders of those industries, including AI, virtual reality, space, medical bioengineering, robotics, genetics research, and related fields to make sure Jacksonville is competitive in the economy of the near future.

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### NON-PROFITS:

The focus of the Non-profit group is to look at the health of our nonprofits by categories and locations throughout the city. A strong nonprofit sector is a major key to a thriving community. Our nonprofits create job opportunities, connect people and services. The nonprofit leaders have strong voices and contribute to economic stability and mobility.

### Charge:

Identify opportunities for grant writing programs and partnerships with the city to help local-area nonprofits to reach their missions.



## Military & Veterans Affairs

### SUBCOMMITTEES & CHARGES

The focus of the Military/Veterans group shall be multi-faceted. Provide data pertaining to what are some of the main issues and concerns facing our local military members and veterans in our city. Provide recommendations to the mayor how their lives can be improved and what type of activities, services, etc., are they looking for in our city, how our city can best serve our military members and veterans. Research and provide recommendations for a Veterans Community Center in Jacksonville.

### Charge:

Meet with the COJ Military Affairs Department and veterans service organizations (VSOs) to understand the landscape of current services available in Jacksonville, usage by members of the veteran’s community, and gaps in services, including a Veterans Community Center.

### Charge:

Meet with representatives at Naval Station Mayport and Naval Air Station Jacksonville to identify ways that the City of Jacksonville can further support the active-duty military presence that contributes so much to our community.



# Campaign Promises / Pillars

Infrastructure | Economy | Healthcare

“CHANGE FOR GOOD”

## GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

For more than half a century, Jacksonville has allowed infrastructure in the Urban Core and other neglected neighborhoods to deteriorate. Lights, paved streets, sidewalks, sewers, and removed septic tanks have been promised, but not delivered.

We are asked to believe in leaders who invest millions in shiny new projects, while ignoring the foundation on which those projects stand. We are facing a crippling affordable housing crisis and City Hall is not doing enough. They talk about innovation, but can't or won't even master the basics, like picking up our trash and recycling.

We fail to lead on infrastructure at our own peril as issues like the climate crisis cause our neighborhoods to flood and force us more and more into a defensive posture.

There is so much we can do, if only our city government had the political will to do it. That lack of leadership, priorities, and vision is exactly what we will fix.

It's time to lead instead of merely react. We will keep Jacksonville's past and present promises and make infrastructure a true priority. Here are just a few of the policies we will focus on as part of our Good Infrastructure plan:

We face an affordable housing crisis driven by a dire shortage of affordable housing inventory and that is compounded by out of state corporate investors purchasing local property and driving up prices. We need to inventory and make available unused city-owned property, require new developments to include a percentage of workforce housing, update zoning ordinances to support more multifamily units, keep properties in local hands, and ensure adequate funding for affordable housing programs.

Jacksonville's downtown has so much potential that can only be reached with a cohesive, long-term vision that includes everyone in the city. We need a continuous Riverwalk that connects living spaces, businesses, parks, and public spaces alongside the St. Johns River.

We need to update downtown infrastructure to attract more development, including vacant properties. Building a thriving downtown will lift our entire local economy.

### Fix crumbling infrastructure in neglected neighborhoods:

Jacksonville's oldest neighborhoods have been left far behind when it comes to new infrastructure projects. Many still need streetlights, sidewalks, replaced septic tanks, upgraded sewers, and expanded drainage. It's time to make good on the broken promises of consolidation.

### Tackle the affordable housing crisis:

We face an affordable housing crisis driven by a dire shortage of affordable housing inventory and that is compounded by out of state corporate investors purchasing local property and driving up prices. We need to inventory and make available unused city-owned property, require new developments to include a percentage of workforce housing, update zoning ordinances to support more multifamily units, keep properties in local hands, and ensure adequate funding for affordable housing programs.

### Build a vibrant downtown:

Jacksonville's downtown has so much potential that can only be reached with a cohesive, long-term vision that includes everyone in the city. We need a continuous riverwalk that connects living spaces, businesses, parks, and public spaces alongside the St. Johns River. We need to update downtown infrastructure to attract more development, including vacant properties. Building a thriving downtown will lift our entire local economy.



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## GOOD ECONOMY

We have every natural advantage we need to grow and prosper. What's missing is imagination and the political priorities to create an economy that works for everyone in Jacksonville.

With each of us participating in an interactive city that lifts as it climbs, we all thrive. The big corporations, small businesses, and workers.

A key pillar of our #ChangeForGood platform is building a good economy that includes all of us. We'll ask our existing corporate partners to be part of the solution, and we'll bring in businesses that want to be part of growing a better, fairer, more inclusive city. Businesses that value our increasing diversity.

There are some big things we can do together. Changes we've known we could make for a generation if we only had the political will to get it done. That changes with us.

The beauty in all of this, in doing what's right, is that we also do what's best for economic growth.

Here are a few of the policies that will be part of our Good Economy plan:

### Attract companies that reflect our values:

As we bring in more businesses to Jacksonville, we'll have an eye towards companies that believe it takes a welcoming, inclusive city and diverse workforce to spur innovation. We'll build an economy that works for large and small businesses because we all do better when we all do better.

### Prioritize policies that benefit small businesses:

Far too many small businesses are going under because they simply don't know about the existing city resources available to them. We'll make sure all business owners have equal access to resources like façade grants, incubator programs, and merchant associations that help them succeed.

### Streamline the permitting process:

It shouldn't take years to get a permit to start a business but that is all too often the case if you aren't connected to someone in city government. We need to cut the red tape and streamline the permitting process so it's easier to do business in Jacksonville.

### Proportionally spend city money with minority-owned businesses:

For too long, a handful of well-connected people have benefitted from contracts with the city. The bidding process must be reformed and made more transparent, so city business is opened up for everyone.





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## GOOD HEALTHCARE

Jacksonville has every chance now to be a top-tier city, and yet on basic measures like primary health, we are falling behind. Our city has some of the finest medical institutions and healthcare providers in the country, and yet we are the only major metropolitan area in Florida to rank in the bottom half of health outcomes. For instance, our child and infant mortality rate ranks as the very worst in the state, as does our life expectancy.

The issue is clear: there is a lack of access to healthcare in Jacksonville, a lack of attention from City Hall, and a lack of communication and coordination between the city and the many capable health care professionals, community groups, and organizations.

A healthy population is foundational to our health as a city both physically and financially. We need leadership that makes improving our city's approach to health care and public health a priority, especially as we navigate out of the pandemic.

I've been meeting with our city's top doctors and other health care professionals for months, getting firsthand input from those with a front row seat to the barriers. Together, we've put together a plan of action that will help all the citizens of Jacksonville and radically improve our health care outcomes:

In order to make Jacksonville's health a top priority, our community needs a chief health officer. This appointed position will be tasked with coordinating programs to

achieve efficiency in services that are offered, developing a communication strategy so the citizens of Jacksonville know how to access those services, applying for grants for new programs, and working with the health care leaders in our community to improve our city's health.

The many organizations making a difference in the health of our community need more support. Whether in providing basic health care to locals or public health initiatives for issues such as obesity, nutrition, mental health, or addiction—we will make sure we have outbound community services that reach residents on the issues that affect them most.

Our city needs a devoted communications team that is the point-of-contact for emergency health events and to provide communication about all city health services – both public and private.

We will not allow Jacksonville to be a bystander to what happens in Tallahassee. As Mayor, we will aggressively push state leadership to push for home rule of our health departments, and for needed solutions for improving healthcare outcomes.

By providing better healthcare and resources for our growing population, we can improve health outcomes, decrease disparities in access to health care and inequities in health outcomes, and be prepared for future emergencies – including pandemics, hurricanes, and climate change.

It has been years since medical professionals in Jacksonville have had the ear of city government and I am excited to work with the healthcare community to achieve a state of health the people of Jacksonville deserve.



# Infrastructure



## Garrett Dennis

Infrastructure  
Transition Committee Chair

- ▲ Neighborhood Initiative
- ▲ Riverfront
- ▲ Parks and Recreation
- ▲ Resiliency
- ▲ Affordable Housing
- ▲ Homelessness
- ▲ Transportation

# Infrastructure

Neighborhood Initiative | Riverfront | Parks and Recreation  
Resiliency | Affordable Housing | Homelessness | Transportation

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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVES (Septic Tanks, Sidewalks, Lighting, Bulkheads)**

The neighborhood committee focus will be to recommend processes and procedures to revitalize and improve underserved communities that have been left behind. Explain how investing into these communities will improve the quality of life for the residents, socially, economically, and educationally.

Many of the older neighborhoods in the Northwest Quadrant of the city have never received the infrastructure improvements that were promised by Consolidation over sixty years ago. These underserved neighborhoods should be a priority, and the City of Jacksonville should make a commitment to fix this decaying infrastructure.

There is more to infrastructure than just sidewalks and septic tanks. There are many intangibles that need to be addressed in addition to bricks and mortar. Successful neighborhoods are those which offer a high quality of life, a concept which includes walkability, open public spaces and parks, libraries, trees, attractive streetscapes, well-kept public and private properties, transportation access, healthy commercial areas, public safety, visual aesthetics, and a sense of community -- all of this is in addition to well-maintained public infrastructure.

Improving the quality of life in Jacksonville, particularly the Northwest Quadrant, is one of the most important things our new administration can do.

Our committee believes that the Deegan Administration has a rare opportunity to do a reset on the way many of the City's departments respond to the problems that face Jacksonville.

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## **MEMBERS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE TRANSITION COMMITTEE**

This Subcommittee has been dedicated to the mission and charge requested from the Mayor's Transition team. Garrett Dennis has been a good leader as we have developed the Neighborhoods Initiatives Subcommittee Report contribution to the Mayor's Infrastructure Committee. Here are the members of the team:

Dr. Wayne Wood | Committee Co-Chair  
*Neighborhood Activist, author and historian*

Diallo Sekou-Seabrooks | Committee Co-Chair  
*Developer of the nonprofit Urban Geoponics, Community advocate and Real Estate Investor*

Eunice Barnum  
*President of the Sherwood Forest/Paradise Park Community Association*

James Coggin  
*Senior Director, Grantmaking and Impact Investing at the Community Foundation*

David Garfunkel  
*President of LIFT JAX*

William Hoff  
*Urban Core Community Advocate*

Leslie Jean-Bart  
*Attorney at Terrell Hogan*

Carla Jones  
*Storytelling with Strategy Agency*

Michael Kirwan  
*Attorney at Foley & Lardner, President of*

Tyler Matthews  
*President ETM, infrastructure and development consulting*

Jim Robinson  
*Civil Engineer, former Director of Public Works for COJ*

## CHARGE:

The Neighborhoods focus will include holding publicly noticed listening sessions with all established CPACS and major neighborhood groups to discuss urgent concerns, deferred improvements, and their respective communities' vision for future enhancement. Finally, the subcommittee will meet with the current and/or immediate past chair of the Council's NCSPHS Committee to review current or future priorities and to identify neighborhoods experiencing the greatest need.

## CHARGE:

The committee will also meet the COJ Public Works Department, Department of Transportation, JEA, and JTA to discuss specific obstacles to infrastructure improvement citywide; identify shovel ready projects in the Northwest quadrant and Jacksonville's older and underserved neighborhoods; review the current CIP for overdue/upcoming/neglected infrastructure improvement areas, especially as it pertains to sidewalk, roadway, and utility improvements; and review in detail all current Septic Tank Phase-Out projects and consider expansion opportunities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

### JEA's Septic Tank Phase-Out Program

The JEA Septic Tank Phase-Out Program requires appropriated funding not only to start construction but also to start the lengthy outreach process required to secure participation.

- The Mayor's office should thoroughly reevaluate the septic tank ordinance to streamline it, including the 70% acceptance requirement. Further, at the current pace of the program, the Failure Area Neighborhoods will not be addressed for another 30 years.

Identifying and appropriating a long-term source of funding allows the JEA team to begin the outreach process immediately. Failing septic tanks create a threat to both the health of citizens and our rivers.

- The Mayor's office should provide dedicated funding as soon as possible, in order for this project to show significant progress in the next four years. This will reduce the time necessary to abate the threat to public health and the environment. Increased long-term funding should be secured.



- The Mayor's office should consider creating a septic tank pump-out program for tanks that are not scheduled to be removed. Private contractors can provide this service similar to private contractors that handle garbage collection or school buses. The county can be divided into zones that the private contractors could bid to service. Every septic tank would be pumped out at a minimum of once every 5 years. This would ensure the tanks are more likely to perform and property owners should enjoy savings, since contractors will be able to provide the service cheaper than current service due to efficiencies of scale. A fee similar to the annual garbage fee would be assessed on property owners with septic tanks. This charge would likely be approximately \$40 -\$50 a year.
- The Mayor's office should encourage JEA to further efforts to underground overhead utilities in connection with the septic tank phase-out program. In addition, JEA should be encouraged to adopt a plan to underground most of the remaining overhead utility lines to harden our utility system against future storms and wildfires. Undergrounding utilities will improve reliability, save on maintenance costs and improve the aesthetics of our community.





### Citizen Planning Advisory Committees (CPACs)

Citizen Planning Advisory Committees (CPACs) are intended to maintain open and effective communication between city government and Jacksonville residents, businesses, neighborhoods, community organizations, and educational institutions. The CPACs are divided along the boundaries of the city's six planning districts. Former City Councilwoman Randy DeFoor, who chaired the City Council's Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health & Safety Committee (NCSPHS), reported to our subcommittee that the information provided by residents through the CPAC system often goes nowhere. She also expressed frustration that the CPACs had no connection to the Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health & Safety Committee.

- The boundaries of CPACs should be more compact so neighborhoods with similar issues can find more common ground. Consequently, the number of CPACs should be increased from six to seven, with the boundaries of each aligned with the School Board districts.
- A Mayor's representative should attend each CPAC meeting and take back recommendations to the Mayor's office. Response from the Administration, with resolutions or recommendations, should be received by the CPAC Chair within 2 weeks after the meeting.

- The Mayor should ask the City Council President to reschedule the Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health & Safety Committee meetings to a 5:00 pm time slot to be more conducive for engaging citizens active with the CPACs in the NCSPHS meetings.
- The Subcommittee recommends changing the name "CPAC's" (Citizen Planning Advisory Committees) to "Community Forums" to accurately represent their activities.

### 630-CITY

630-CITY is a vital service that is the most frequent way in which citizens interact with the city government. It is very effective in registering and helping to resolve citizens' problems.

There are two major needs that can be addressed immediately:

- The service is not as widely known or understood as it should be. The Mayor's office should embark on an extensive marketing campaign to publicize 630-CITY and encourage its use.
- 630-CITY staff members are well-trained and courteous. They are not, however, equipped to handle mental health crises. The City's new Chief Health Officer should implement a system of on-call mental health professionals to which 630-CITY crisis calls can be directed.

### The Municipal Code Compliance Division (MCCD)

The Municipal Code Compliance Division (MCCD) has not had a staffing increase in ten years, causing the capacity of the division to lag far behind the needs of the city. This department is directly responsible for managing the physical blight in underserved neighborhoods, such as those in the Northwest quadrant.

- Support reviewing an increase in staffing level of code compliance officers, which would allow for more even enforcement of the relevant ordinance codes across the city in a way that is truly driven by community needs rather than citizen complaints.
- Officer training should be regularly updated, enabling code enforcement officers to interpret and effectively enforce municipal codes.

- Evaluate the current classification of key positions within the department that carry higher workloads relative to the same position in other departments within the city. This will reduce turnover, further improving efficiency.
- Invest in a modernized software package for MCCD (the current package was developed in 1997), which would allow for integration with other City systems, improve tracking of cases, allow for more robust data analysis, improve decision-making, and maximize the staff time available.
- Foreclosure options for abandoned properties should be streamlined:
  - o Properties that repeatedly engage the code enforcement process consume staff time and departmental resources. Many vacant properties have absentee owners and can consume inordinate sums of money when it comes to nuisance abatement and demolition expenses. Liens are often not collected, and this should be remedied.
  - o Earlier identification and intervention can reduce costs and preserve scarce housing units, particularly those owned by out-of-town individuals and corporations, which are often difficult to contact. Revitalization of blighted properties through early intervention allows the property of habitual offenders to be transferred into the hands of community organizations, non-profits, and investors, which would accelerate the process to save housing resources and protect those properties' chains of title.
- Special Magistrates should not be members of the Office of General Counsel, but should be a neutral party to avoid conflict of interest.
- The City should enhance maintenance of historic city-owned cemeteries in Northwest quadrant. Focus on Emmet Reed cemetery should be an immediate project.

## The Public Works Department

The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance and construction of an incredible collection of City assets that directly impact the quality of life in Jacksonville's neighborhoods. With a growing CIP budget and the forthcoming resiliency plan, an increase in the Public

Works Department's operating budget is critical. Current staffing levels and turnover rates present a challenge to infrastructure improvements citywide.

- The City should pursue funding through the Justice40 Initiative, under which, the Federal Government has made it a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.
- Prioritize older and underserved neighborhoods, particularly in the Northwest quadrant.
- The resurfacing of major neighborhood streets is ranked by the Director of Public Works as the #1 improvement that changes neighborhood attitudes about pride in the place they live. Increased road resurfacing will also improve road safety and reduce maintenance costs. The resurfacing budget should be increased, with priority on underserved communities.
- Increase the visibility and accessibility of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), using a more consumer-friendly format so citizens can understand how the system works and can participate in the planning process, such as a publicly accessible dashboard (website).
- Explore bringing waste management under City control rather than using private contractors and waste management companies.
- Enhance efforts to improve tree canopies through quarterly maintenance and proactive tree planting in underserved neighborhoods. As sidewalks are added to communities, trees should be planted to provide needed shade.
- The City should prioritize safety projects that will increase pedestrian and bicycle safety mirroring the Vision Zero strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.
- The City should encourage Parks and Recreation to acquire property to enhance public access to our waterways.
- Additional resources should be dedicated for litter removal.

## Neighborhood Ambassador Program

- The City should implement a pilot Urban Core Ambassador Program, modeled after DVI's Ambassador program. The pilot project would take place in older neighborhoods proximate to Downtown, north of the St. Johns River. DVI should consider a partnership with JTA to acquire funding and prioritize older neighborhoods, neglected neighborhoods, and neighborhoods in the Northwest Quadrant.

## Transportation

Coordination among the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, the Florida Department of Transportation, the North Florida TPO, Public Works, JEA, other utility providers, railroads, and other stakeholders, is needed to facilitate transportation projects, in the beginning of each project, and to acquire grants and Federal funding for the efficient development of local transportation needs.

- A collaborative transportation committee, which would include the Mayor's Office, JTA, FDOT, the North Florida TPO, Public Works, JEA, other utility providers, railroads, and other stakeholders, is needed to develop a comprehensive transportation plan, coordinate logistics on major projects, and collectively pursue strategic funding opportunities. Adopt legislation to establish the core group of required attendees and to ensure this committee continues with this and future administrations.
- Consider lowering of speed limits in residential neighborhoods as appropriate, and implement other traffic calming techniques to make neighborhoods safer.

## Planning, Zoning, and Historic Preservation in Older Neighborhoods

Many older neighborhoods in the urban core have historic buildings that are eligible but have not yet been designated by the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission. The designation of Historic Districts, as well as individual historic landmarks, engenders pride in neighborhoods and often produces a decrease in blight and increase in property values.

- Priority should be given to older and underserved neighborhoods for historic designation, including individual landmark buildings as well as contiguous districts.
- The City should develop a policy to give special consideration to legacy residents and implement strategies to protect them against displacement.

The Historic Preservation Commission, as well as the staff of the Planning and Development Department, can have a major impact on older neighborhoods. In the recent past, these entities have often been more sensitive to desires of developers than the needs and wishes of neighborhood citizens. The Zoning Code is outdated and needs revision.

- Update COJ's Zoning Code to address the many outdated provisions, to reduce the amount of variances and waivers, and to consider today's needs for density and walkability.
- COJ should re-evaluate the criteria for PUDs to avoid inappropriate developments intruding into the neighborhoods.
- Several older neighborhoods have Zoning Overlays, which provide customized protection for the special character of those neighborhoods. These Zoning Overlays should be enforced. Also, Zoning Overlays should be considered to protect additional older and underserved neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood plans should be updated, maintained, and supported to serve as guidance documents for neighborhood redevelopment.
- Appoint a Director of the Planning and Development Department who is attuned with the concerns of neighborhoods and who understands what is needed to create sustainable and vibrant neighborhoods.

## Office of Economic Development

- The Administration should create policies for economic security for food desert neighborhoods.





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### SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: RIVERFRONT

This committee explored what it will take to create a vibrant, active downtown riverfront that will benefit all of Jacksonville’s residents and encourage visitors. The recommendations provided in this report come from research, previously adopted plans and reports, and many public meetings with numerous stakeholders and citizens. The valuable discussions identified the challenges and opportunities surrounding the riverfront. These discussions served as the foundation for the recommendations to promote positive economic and environmental outcomes as well as creating opportunities to make the entire riverfront more accessible, vibrant, and inclusive.

### CHARGE:

**This focus area will meet with the Riverfront Parks, Downtown Investment Authority, Museum of Science and History, Jacksonville University, JaxPort, COJ Public Works Department, and the Chief Resilience Officer to discuss implementation of best practices for both economic and environmental outcomes, as well as making the river accessible to every resident for enjoyment.**

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### MEMBERS OF THE RIVERFRONT TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Sondra Fetner | Chair  
*Director of Placemaking, Jessie Ball duPont Fund*

Katherine Hardwick | Vice Chair  
*Vice President of Marketing & Research, Downtown Vision*

Daniel Ashworth, Jr.  
*Senior Landscape Architect/Lead Designer, ETM, Inc.*

Stephen Dare  
*Public Policy*

Kevin DeSue  
*Crowley Maritime*

Stephanie Garfunkel  
*Vice President, Strategic Communications  
The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida*

Ted Pappas  
*President, PBV Architecture*

Nancy Powell  
*Executive Director, Scenic Jacksonville*

## INTRODUCTION:

With the exception of our citizenry, the majestic St. Johns River is the greatest asset of our City. Yet, a great majority of the River is only accessible to those privileged enough to own a riverfront house, a boat, and/or a private club membership. It is imperative that the public spaces adjacent to the River become more welcoming, accessible, and vibrant so all Jaxsons, regardless of socio-economic status, have the opportunity to enjoy this unique public asset.

A majority of this Report focuses on the Downtown Riverfront for good reason. Currently, there are several major public and private developments under construction or in design along the Downtown Riverfront, and the momentum cannot be denied. The City should capitalize on this once-in-a-lifetime growth and heightened public advocacy to create an iconic Downtown Riverfront for generations to come. To maximize results, we recommend taking a more holistic approach to the Northbank and including more voices in design decisions.

Over the past several years, the City, the DIA, and several for-profit and nonprofit organizations have invested substantial time and effort into planning and developing the Downtown Riverfront. The City has taken proactive steps towards repairing and improving the Northbank Riverwalk bulkhead – essential for upcoming park enhancements. Concurrently, investments have been made in new infrastructure like boat ramps, kayak launches, and boat docks.

Launched in 2018, The Corkscrew, Downtown's outdoor gym, is nestled under the Acosta Bridge, it houses sculptural workout equipment, movable exercise gear, a bike ped counter, is attended to by the Downtown Ambassador team throughout the week and offers a model for future riverfront activations. Furthermore, a riverfront wayfinding signage system was installed in 2019, aimed at aiding pedestrians in accessing both the north and Southbank Riverwalks.

Notable among mixed-used development projects currently under construction are projects like One Riverside Park in Brooklyn, and RiversEdge: Life on the St. Johns on the Southbank, which are reserving land for new riverfront parks just steps away from hundreds of planned residential units. Simultaneously, numerous ongoing initiatives are centered on broadening water access, rehabilitating creeks, and enhancing themed riverfront park nodes. This network of public space along the riverfront will drive economic development, enhance community health and wellness, advance access and equity, and cultivate community pride. They include:

- **St. Johns River Park and Friendship Fountain Activity Node:** Envisioned as the “Exploring the St. Johns River” area, this project encompasses a botanical garden, a history-themed play park, and upgraded fountains. These elements weave together the narratives of the indigenous Timucuan people, historic landings, settlements, and botanical explorations in Jacksonville’s history.
- **Musical Heritage Garden:** The Center for the Performing Arts’ riverfront lawn is being transformed into a musical heritage-themed activity hub. Characterized by symbolic landscaping and a children’s musical play area, it will also feature a new Wallcast Outdoor Venue for live-streamed performances and movie screenings.
- **Riverfront Plaza:** Encompassing seven acres, the central lawn in Downtown is being thoughtfully designed by Perkins&Will. The envisioned features include a destination playground, river terrace, park pavilion, pedestrian and bike connections, iconic public art installations, and native landscaping.
- **Shipyards West Park:** With a vacant riverfront property as its canvas, Agency Landscape + Planning is crafting a vibrant space linking Riverfront Plaza and Metropolitan Park. This future hub will house notable attractions such as the Museum of Science and History (MOSH), the Jacksonville Fire Museum, and the USS Orleck Naval Museum.
- **McCoy’s Creek Greenway Restoration & Trail:** A comprehensive project aims to bring McCoy’s Creek to light, address environmental concerns, and mitigate flooding. It involves introducing a pedestrian bridge, greenway trail, and kayak launch facilities.
- **Hogan’s Creek Greenway Restoration & Trail:** An initiative to restore Hogan’s Creek seeks to enhance resilience and water access. Its highlight is a planned trail that seamlessly connects the Riverwalk, creek, and Sports & Entertainment District.
- **Metropolitan Park:** a major redesign in the planning stages that is adjacent to the Four Seasons Hotel and the stadium. This is the largest public riverfront park along the downtown riverfront at 14 acres.

However, the general public is often confused by the multiple projects in the pipeline or is skeptical of the “fancy renderings”, since the full potential of the Downtown Riverfront has never been fully realized in decades.

On February 8, 2023, the DIA, the Parks & Recreation Department, Build Up Downtown, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and Riverfront Parks Now co-hosted “Riverfront 2025: A Look Ahead,” a live update on Downtown Riverfront parks and private developments on our Northbank and Southbank. Speakers presented over 20 under-construction, in design, or planned projects along the Riverfront to a packed auditorium in the Main Library. The event was a success and indicated that a vibrant, inclusive, and world-class Riverfront is a top priority for the public.

The Riverfront that is not within the Downtown footprint is just as important and valuable as the Downtown Riverfront. Increased accessibility to the waterways, as well as regular maintenance and programming of these spaces is critical for all Jaxsons to enjoy the River.

Finally, the JaxPort is a significant economic driver in the City. In the last five years it has attracted \$1.2 billion in investment, which provides jobs and economic impact for the city and beyond. The City should build on its existing relationship with the Port to optimize communication, coordination, and resiliency efforts between the two entities.

#### **MAJOR POINTS OF THE REPORT:**

1. Provide strategic leadership, collaboration, and community engagement for the Downtown Riverfront and establish the Riverfront as a Mayoral Initiative.
2. Complete all Riverfront projects that are in design or under construction so that the public can enjoy these spaces as soon as possible.
3. Support the activation and enhancement of the Riverwalk and adjacent park spaces to create a welcoming, fun, and unique destination that attracts diverse visitors year-round.
4. Improve overall maintenance of City-owned riverfront property, including but not limited to the Riverwalk, parks, bulkheads, marinas, and docks.
5. Hire a full-time dedicated Grants Director with additional staff as needed to be strategic and proactive in obtaining grants for the Riverfront and the rest of the City.
6. Improving accessibility and the health of the waterways and riverfront environments.

7. Create a Strategic Partnership between the Navy, Army, COJ, Private Carriers, JaxPort to increase coordination, funding, and unified response to sea level rise.
8. Continue to utilize, implement, and re-evaluate where necessary, existing and adopted plans or reports concerning the Riverfront.

#### **OBSERVATIONS/CURRENT CONDITIONS:**

##### **Strengths**

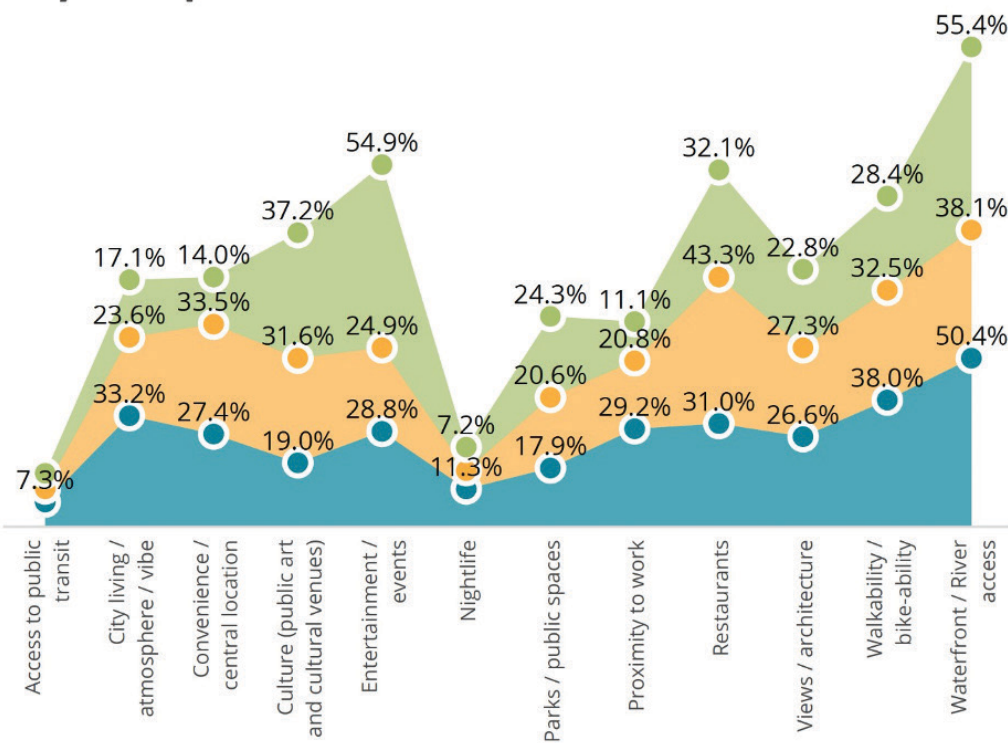
- St. Johns River is a major and unique asset of Jacksonville.
- Significant amount of publicly-owned land concentrated along the Downtown Riverfront.
- Existing Riverwalk infrastructure on north and south banks with planned expansions and bike/ped connectivity.
- City-owned lands along the riverfront have been identified for new or renovated parks for public access and enjoyment, with a connected Riverwalk.
- Prior riverfront plans have been commissioned and adopted, and contain ideas and programs that we can draw upon and implement.
- Strong community interest in the river.
- Remarkable river geography that is unique due to its bends and curves and size.
- Downtown Riverwalk is already a member of the High Line Network, along with the Emerald Trail.

##### **Weaknesses**

- Long vacant riverfront properties that have yet to be developed into usable or enjoyable places, with the current state unsightly and uninviting.
- Projects undertaken years ago are still under construction with uncertain timelines for completion. (Friendship Fountain, as an example.)
- The City has commissioned plans that have gathered dust on the shelf.



## What has the greatest POSITIVE impact on your experience Downtown?



**"Waterfront / River access" ranked in the Top 3 for all audiences.**

### Residents:

1. Waterfront / River access
2. Walkability / bike-ability
3. City living / atmosphere / vibe

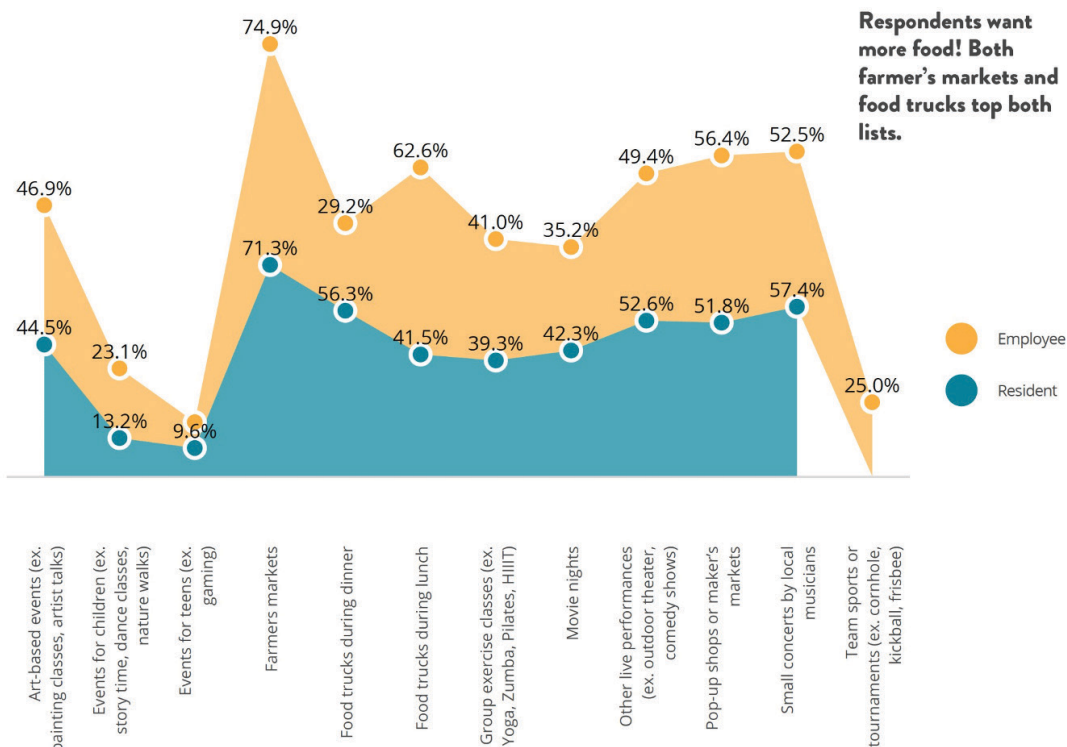
### Employees:

1. Restaurants
2. Waterfront / river access
3. Convenience / central location

### Visitors:

1. Waterfront / river access
2. Entertainment / Events
3. Culture - public art and cultural venues

## Residents & Employees: If available in or near Downtown's parks, which activities would you be likely to participate in? (Select all that apply.)



**Respondents want more food! Both farmer's markets and food trucks top both lists.**

- Lack of regular and diverse programming, especially smaller activities.
- Facilities out of service and lack of connectivity during construction.
- Insufficient funding to complete projects.
- Aging infrastructure.
- Public skepticism or apathy due to lack of significant progress.
- Sparse amenities such as public restrooms, sufficient shade, public art, and furniture.

## Opportunities

- Currently strong funding cycle for federal grants for this type of infrastructure project (see Tampa Riverwalk expansion).
- Capitalize on Downtown momentum and consensus.
- Public's desire for improved utilization of the Riverfront (Downtown Vision annual survey).
- To complete parks already in design or under construction.
- Riverfront-focused conservancy is already established.

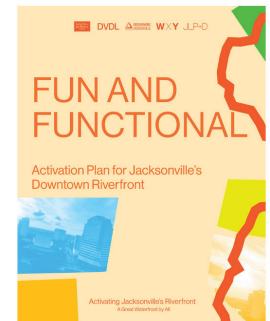
## Challenges

- Coordination challenges, government silos, lack of clear responsibilities.
- Lack of a unified, cohesive, and iconic Downtown Riverfront.
- Lack of “things to do” along the Riverfront.
- Increased costs of construction materials, complex land issues, high labor costs, and lack of urban/riverfront contractors and skilled labor.
- Riverwalk not yet fully connected.
- Construction delays for private development.
- Climate change that causes extreme weather events, excessive heat, and sea level rise creates health, environmental, and resilience issues on the Riverfront.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

As of August 11, 2023, the Riverfront Committee held nine publicly noticed meetings and encouraged collaboration with the Parks Subcommittee through attendance at each other's meetings. Members of the public were present at all of the riverfront subcommittee meetings and provided public comment and helpful input.

The subcommittee received and reviewed the Riverfront 2025 presentation, the DIA Business Investment & Development Plan, Fun & Functional: Activation Plan for Jacksonville's Downtown Riverfront, recommendations from the St. Johns Riverkeeper, as well as the presentations from Public Works and the Chief Resilience Officer to the Resilience Subcommittee.



1. **Provide strategic leadership, collaboration, and continued community engagement for the Downtown Riverfront.** This can be accomplished by making the Riverfront a Mayoral Initiative and assigning a point-person from the Administration to provide oversight and coordination. No need to reinvent the wheel- the City should learn from other cities that utilize a conservancy/nonprofit organization model for park stewardship, operations and management on behalf of the city. Proven successful in many great public spaces across the country, these partnership models provide long-term value, efficiency, flexibility and ensure continuity beyond administrations. The City should build upon its partnership with Riverfront Parks Conservancy, who should be a key partner in the stewardship of the Riverfront. Finally, the creation of a Riverfront Taskforce will allow more voices in the design and planning process.

2. **The need for additional funding to complete the design and construction of the Riverfront parks at a world class level for the public's enjoyment in the near future.** The DIA identified the amount of funds necessary to complete several parks that are either under construction or in design. Completing these parks will reassure Jaxsons that the Riverfront momentum is real and, most importantly, provide opportunities for everyone to enjoy the riverfront as soon as possible.
3. **The importance of activating the Riverfront to be welcoming to a diverse audience through programming and everyday amenities that will bring people enjoyment all year-round.** Some laudable efforts are underway but more is needed, to include creative approaches to a riverfront that will be under construction for up to five more years. Successful activation in recent years include the annual Jax RiverJams Presented by VyStar Credit Union, monthly Sip & Stroll Presented by PNC, and weekly health and fitness classes.
4. **The need to address the riverfront access outside of Downtown, We learned that the vast majority of our riverfront (approximately 90%) is privately owned outside of Downtown, and that there is opportunity for more access and better access from existing facilities.** The subcommittee felt more time was needed to more deeply explore this topic. We discovered the 2018 Maritime Management Report that should be revisited.
5. **The JaxPort is a significant economic driver in the City.** In the last five years it has attracted \$1.2 billion in investment, which provides jobs and economic impact for the city and beyond. The City should establish a strategic alliance with the U.S. Military, the Port, and other pertinent authorities to coordinate responses to climate change and resilience.
6. **Continue to utilize, implement, and re-evaluate where necessary, the following existing and adopted plans or reports.** All of the provided Plans and Reports sought public input and engagement and are valuable tools to achieving a vibrant, active riverfront that will benefit all of Jacksonville's residents and encourage visitors. Each should be revisited and implemented where possible.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Provide strategic leadership, collaboration, and continued community engagement for the Downtown Riverfront.**
  - a. **Strategic Leadership:** The Riverfront should be an official Mayoral Initiative, with a special focus on the Downtown Riverfront. Since several city departments and organizations have different jurisdiction on decision making with the Downtown Riverfront, there is a pressing need to align efforts for effective execution on the vision, and include partner organizations and the public. Assigning a point-person from the Administration to provide oversight in this crucial space to increase coordination, communication, and efficiency.
  - b. **Collaboration:** We heard from several organizations that collaborate with the City to enhance riverfront access, vibrancy, and activation and how within Jacksonville and across the country, Conservancy/nonprofit partner organizations provide long-term value and ensure continuity beyond administrations. These strategic collaborations are necessary to quickly build an active, diverse, and publicly supported Riverfront, especially when the city does not have the capacity or resources to provide the same level of public benefit. The subcommittee also learned from consulting firms JLP+D, Biederman Redevelopment Ventures, and LS3P about possible revenue sources, funding and operational models.
  - c. **In addition to the learning from other cities, we had input from our own partner organizations in Jacksonville that have been successful:**
    - i. Memorial Park Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Florida nonprofit entity, whose mission is to preserve, enhance and promote Memorial Park as the premier historic city park in Jacksonville, Florida. It was created in 1986 by a group of park enthusiasts and local philanthropists concerned with Memorial Park's persistent state of decline and disrepair, just a year after Memorial Park was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Riverside (now Riverside-Avondale) National Historic District.



- ii. For almost 10 years, Groundwork Jax has been tirelessly focused on the Emerald Trail which will connect and restore 30 miles of the trails and creeks throughout the urban core Groundwork. Jacksonville showed how they can be flexible, faster, and apolitical to bridge changes in city leadership.



- iii. MOSH is working with the City to design and construct public park space on the site of their new facility



- iv. Iguana Investments is constructing the Riverwalk, marina, and amenities adjacent to the Four Seasons Development on behalf of the City.
- v. The newly formed Riverfront Parks Conservancy will establish a comprehensive partnership agreement with the City to steward the entire Downtown Riverfront.
- vi. Events and programming along the Downtown Riverfront are produced by organizations, such as Downtown Vision, yoga4change, and the YMCA in partnership with the City.

- vii. Commissioned by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the Riverfront Study and Activation plan was initiated to serve as a resource for the City in the planning and development of the Riverfront. The goal of the Plan is to create a Riverfront that is for, and by, all.

- d. **Community Engagement:** One of Mayor Deegan's goals is to bring more citizens to the table. Intentionally increasing community engagement around the riverfront will create more opportunities for civic involvement, public support, and stewardship

#### ACTIONABLE ITEMS:

##### Short-Term:

1. **Establish the Riverfront as a "Mayoral Initiative" with a point-person identified on the staff** to provide oversight and coordination amongst stakeholders and constituents to drive the Downtown Riverfront Parks and Riverwalk Initiative. Role could expand to other downtown parks and public spaces once a riverfront initiative is established.
2. **Develop and implement a mutually beneficial park stewardship program that is flexible and appropriate for the park space and city.** Park partners can manage, maintain, operate, and/or program city-owned public spaces on behalf of the city for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.
3. **Commit to the Riverfront Parks Conservancy partnership as the governance model for the downtown riverfront parks.** Like Groundworks Jax with the Emerald Trail, this type of framework will allow nonprofit organizations to focus on the public space, mobilize faster, and implement plans.
  - a. Immediately begin to include the Conservancy as a key partner for riverfront parks and Riverwalk design and planning.
  - b. Renegotiate the agreement for a five year term, with renewal options.
  - c. Provide start-up operational funding.



## REAL ESTATE

### Pittsburgh Three Rivers Park:

\$130M public investment catalyzed **\$2.6B in real estate development.**

## HEALTH & RECREATION

### Denver Confluence Park:

Outdoor recreation helped park users get healthier and **save \$65M in medical costs.**



## JOBS & BUSINESSES

### Chattanooga Waterfront, TN

Attracting Volkswagen to **create jobs** for local residents and **fostering businesses** in the Innovation District

## EQUITY

### 11th Street Bridge Park, Washington DC

A plan links park development to programs, policies, and government investments in **workforce training, small business opportunities, arts and culture, and affordable development.**



## Activating Jacksonville's Riverfront



4. **Create a taskforce of subject matter experts, to be co-led by the Conservancy and Jessie Ball duPont Fund** that would evaluate and oversee the design and implementation of iconic and destination riverfront parks and public spaces, including the Riverwalk.
5. **Ensure that the Riverfront parks are legally protected for the long-term.**

### Funding Needs:

- **Salary for Mayoral Riverfront Point Person** (if additional hire)
- **Funding for the start-up operational support for the Riverfront Parks Conservancy over a minimum three-year period.** NOTE: Funding sources to be expanded through the work of the proposed task force.

### Who Needs to be Involved:

- Office of the Mayor,
- DIA,
- Parks Department,
- Conservancy,

- Jessie Ball duPont Fund,
- Other nonprofit partner organizations such as DVI, BUD, Cultural Council and others.

### Evaluation and Success:

- Clear, transparent and timely decision making
  - Demonstrated collaboration and effective public involvement
  - Parks are designed to world class levels and constructed within defined budgets and timelines.
  - Interim design and activation is implemented during the construction phases.
2. **Complete all Riverfront projects that are in design or under construction so that the public can enjoy these spaces as soon as possible.**

The public sentiment is that Jacksonville is the “city of renderings” and citizens have become incredulous to the possibility of a highly activated and fully developed riverfront. In order to restore hope and public support for increased and continued investment in downtown, the need to complete the Riverfront parks in the pipeline cannot be understated. According to experts

from JLP+D, who specialize in place based economic development, “[a]cross the country, various waterfront activations and public space improvement demonstrate the investments’s potential to spur new development, improve quality of life, create good jobs, attract talent and business, and generate compelling public sector return on investments.”

## ACTIONABLE ITEMS:

### Short-Term:

1. **Fully fund and accelerate implementation of the following projects that are under construction so that they can open in Mayor Deegan’s first two years. These projects are:**
  - a. **Riverfront Plaza Phase 1** - fully funded, but per the DIA, there may be unforeseen cost increases
  - b. **St. Johns Park/Friendship Fountain** - needs additional \$3M in FY 23/24 per DIA request
  - c. **Musical Heritage Garden** (behind Performing Arts Center) - needs additional \$750K in FY 23/24 per DIA request
  - d. **Hogan Street Connector** (connects to Riverwalk) - needs additional \$2.5M in FY 23/24 per DIA request
2. **Identify funding sources to fully complete the development of all Downtown Riverfront parks currently in design, specifically:**
  - a. **Riverfront Plaza- Phase 2 immediately** - Phase 2 needs \$20M FY 25/26 per DIA request
  - b. **Shipyards West Park** - needs additional \$33-40M in FY 24/25; per DIA request
  - c. **Metropolitan Park** - needs additional \$7M in FY 24/25; per DIA request
  - d. **Fund the Riverwalk connectivity plan**, currently known as “Run the Bridges”
3. **Increase support for MOSH in the following ways:**
  - a. **Integrate the new museum** into the overall Downtown revitalization.

- b. **Allocate funds to construct the Riverfront park** that will be designed surrounding the new MOSH museum.

4. **Expedite and explore complementary public investments in public spaces** and natural features, including Hogan’s Creek and the Emerald Trail.

### Mid-Term:

1. **Fund the Riverwalk Extension from Catherine Street to Metropolitan Park**
2. **Design the Riverwalk Extension to Memorial Park**

### Long-Term:

1. **Construct the Riverwalk Extension to Memorial Park.**
2. **Fund and construct the Southbank Riverwalk Extension to the west toward the SUP**

### Funding Needs:

- Allocate more funds in the CIP as identified above
- Seek grant opportunities from diverse sources
- Seek corporate sponsorships, partnerships, and naming rights

### Who Needs to be Involved:

- Mayor’s Office
- Parks Department
- Public Works
- Downtown Investment Authority
- Grant writers/lobbyists

### Evaluation and Success:

The evaluation of this action item can be measured by how quickly the Riverfront parks and spaces can be fully completed and open to the public.





Riverfront Plaza Phase 1

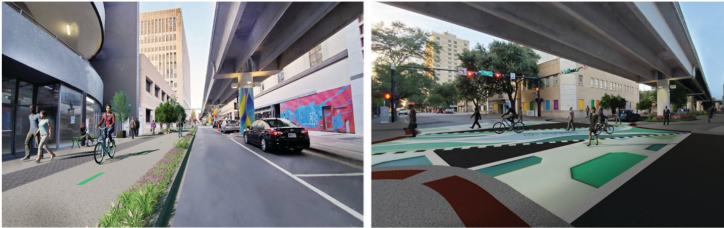


St. Johns Park /  
Friendship Fountain



Musical Heritage Garden

Hogan Street Connector  
(connects to Riverwalk)



- 60% Design
- Construction Expected to Begin Mid 2024

**3. The importance of activating the Riverfront to be welcoming to a diverse audience through programming and amenities that will bring people enjoyment every day.**

In order to achieve this recommendation, the city must be innovative, bold, and creative in funding, designing, and activating the Riverfront year after year.

The Activation Plan developed five social and cultural principles to guide future programming and development of Downtown Riverfront: (1) welcoming and accessible to all, (2) attracts a diversity of audience and experience, (3) is flexible and community-driven, (3) is fun and functional, and (4) promotes well-being and care. The subcommittee also received examples of world-class waterfront public spaces and learned that cities can experience significant economic and social benefits from a vibrant and inclusive destination waterfront space.

**ACTIONABLE ITEMS:**

**Short-Term:**

- 1. Engage a professional design firm, such as WXY, to enhance the Riverwalk into a cohesive, iconic, safe, culturally vibrant place.**
  - a. Address existing and new segments** and include shade, public art, furnishings, lighting, food and beverage needed in the expansive public spaces along the Downtown Riverfront.
  - b. For the art,** partner with local artists and art organizations, such as the Cultural Council.
  - c. Invest in temporary solutions,** such as furnishings and amenities on the Riverfront to provide more shade, seating, and food trucks or small kiosks for vibrant activation of the Riverfront to support the destination parks. These should not be permanently installed until construction is completed.
  - d. Design revenue-generating amenities** to support the ongoing maintenance and operations of Riverfront Public Spaces.
- 2. Activation/Programming: Streamline the permitting process for Riverfront events and programming, including improving the risk management analysis.** This will allow more groups and organizations to activate and enjoy the Riverfront.

- 3. Purchase wayfinding signage,** including Run the Bridges programming on the Riverwalk to help direct visitors during and after construction and improve real-time communications, including celebrations, about closing and opening of spaces along the Riverwalk and to educate the community about river history and ecology and raise awareness about the pollution problems impacting the health of our waterways.

- 4. Riverfront parks provide an outstanding opportunity to educate the community about our river and its tributaries.** Coordinate with universities and nonprofits, like MOSH, Emerald Trail, St. Johns Riverkeeper and Timucuan Parks Foundation, to increase programming at the various riverfront parks. Work with schools to engage students in field trips and waterfront activities and programs.

- 5. Encourage collaboration among organizations to implement green infrastructure demonstration projects** (living shorelines, bioswales, pervious pavers, cisterns, etc.) to raise awareness about stormwater runoff and resiliency solutions.

**Mid-Term:**

- 1. Target and support more boat tours on the River.**
- 2. Implement technology for wayfinding and marketing.**

**Long-Term:**

- 1. Design improvements including Riverwalk extensions continuing the emphasis on unified design.**

**Funding Needs:**

- Philanthropy and grant applications
- Partnerships with other organizations that want to utilize the Riverfront for activation
- Allocation of funds to the Downtown Economic Development Fund specifically earmarked for activation
- Allocation of funds to build and install amenities that could be revenue generating
- Explore seeking contributions from adjacent property owners



## Who Needs to be Involved:

- Public
- Park Partners, i.e. Conservancy
- Public Works Department
- Downtown Investment Authority
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Mayor's Office
- Organizations desiring to activate the Downtown Riverfront

## Evaluation and Success:

The evaluation of this action item could be accomplished by the overall appearance of the Riverfront and usage of the space.

### 4. **Improve overall maintenance of City-owned Riverfront property, including but not limited to the Riverwalk, parks, bulkheads, marinas, and docks.**

We heard from the public and several speakers that emphasized the importance of regular and enhanced maintenance along the riverfront to improve the access, attraction, and enjoyment of visitors to the riverfront. The City is making a historical investment in its riverfront and it is imperative that the investment is protected for generations to come. A 2018 Northbank bulkhead inspection report indicated that all of the bulkheads had reached their useful lifespan and would need to be replaced in 2023-2025.

## ACTIONABLE ITEMS:

### Short-Term:

1. **Fund park managers who are responsible for specific riverfront spaces** to efficiently manage and monitor maintenance needs, or contract with park partners (i.e. Conservancy) or organizations that manage or maintain public spaces.
2. **Fund a professional horticulturist or master gardener** to prioritize the protection and addition of shade trees and native plantings. Consider collaboration with Groundwork Jax's stewardship program.

3. **Be proactive - immediately retain a professional consultant** to estimate and forecast the costs of operating, securing, maintaining, and generating revenue in the Riverfront parks so each is successfully maintained and utilized by the public.
4. **Budget for enhanced maintenance and security of the Riverfront.**
5. **Annually transfer remaining Tax-Increment Finance Funds from the DIA CRAs** to the Downtown Economic Fund for park maintenance, operations, and programming.
6. **Delegate the responsibility of, and funding for, maintenance or inspection of each public space or infrastructure asset (i.e. park or bulkhead) to the appropriate city department or Park Partner.**
7. **Utilize existing technology to monitor maintenance needs in real-time.**

### Mid-Term:

1. **Investigate and evaluate the feasibility of receiving contributions from riverfront adjacent private property owners** for maintenance, operations and activation of the Riverwalk and destination parks.

### Long-Term:

1. **Routinely inspect all city-owned bulkheads** (every 7-8 years) and repair in a timely manner.
2. **Budget for long-term capital expenditures for Riverfront investments.**

### Funding Needs:

1. **Allocate sufficient funds to expand and strengthen the capacity of the City and its partners** to manage the additional operations and maintenance needs of the Riverfront.
2. **Support budget transfer of tax-Increment Finance Funds from the DIA CRAs to the Downtown Economic Funds** for park maintenance, operations, and programming.





Courtesy of the Downtown Investment Authority

#### Who Needs to be Involved:

- Public
- Park Partners, i.e. Conservancy, Downtown Vision
- Public Works Department
- Downtown Investment Authority
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Mayor's Office
- Potential Downtown Riverfront Taskforce

#### The evaluation of this action item should be measured by the following metrics:

- The overall appearance and condition of the Riverfront and infrastructure
- The speed in which maintenance or repair is completed
- Positive feedback from visitors of the Riverfront

5. **Hire a full-time dedicated Grants Director with additional staff as needed to be strategic and proactive in obtaining grants for the Riverfront and the rest of the City.**

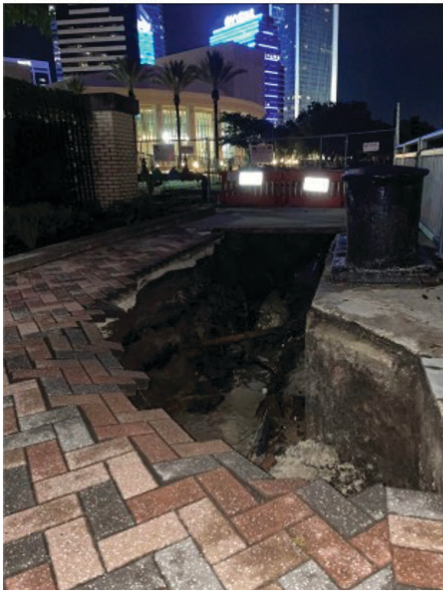
Hiring a Grants Director for Jacksonville can lead to improved grant acquisition, enhanced and efficient funds allocation and utilization, and increased funding opportunities. Their expertise and focus on grants can contribute to the overall success of the Jacksonville Riverfront's initiatives and projects.

#### ACTIONABLE ITEMS:

##### Short-Term:

1. **Dedicate a budget line item to hire and onboard a Grants Director and staff**, such as grant writers and administrators.
2. **Build up staff of Grant Writers, Grant Administrators, and support staff** under Grants Director to increase grant application capacity.
3. **Continuously review Jacksonville's current grant portfolio.** Assess the status of ongoing grants, deadlines, reporting requirements, and any potential funding gaps.

# Riverwalk Pavers



4. **Grants Manager to work with city leadership and experts** to refine and update the city's grant acquisition strategy.

3. **Explore the integration of technology solutions that streamline grant management processes,** enhance collaboration, and provide real-time insights into the city's grant portfolio.

## Mid-Term:

1. **Continuously evolve Jacksonville's grant acquisition strategy** to align with changing priorities, emerging opportunities, and evolving community needs.
2. **Investigate and pursue diverse funding sources beyond traditional grants**, such as endowments, impact investing, and social enterprise initiatives.
3. **Develop a succession plan** to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities and knowledge when there are changes in the Grants Manager role.

## Long-Term:

1. **Explore and implement innovative financing mechanisms**, such as pay-for-success models, that align funding with measurable outcomes.
2. **Forge strategic alliances with academic institutions, research centers, and think tanks** to leverage their expertise in grant writing and funding strategies.

## Funding Needs:

Dedicated COJ funding for the Grants Director position, along with the necessary support staff positions for a rebuilt and fully staffed COJ Grants Office.

## Who Needs to be Involved:

- Mayor's Office
- City Council
- Downtown Investment Authority
- City Departments
- Neighborhood and Community Organizations
- City Citizen Action Committees (CPAC, etc.)



## Evaluation and Success:

The evaluation of this action item could be accomplished by such metrics as grant funding increases, grant success rate, diversification of funding, number of grants, the initiation and completion of grant-funded projects, community impact, grants compliance and efficient closeout procedures, long-term funding sustainability, innovative funding approaches, and Grants Office efficiency and process improvement.

## 6. Improving accessibility, and the health of the waterways and Riverfront environments.

### Actionable Items:

#### Short-Term:

1. **Identify opportunities to provide more on-the-water experiences or programming that engages residents with the river and its tributaries.** This may require subsidizing the river taxi and outfitters in some instances where it is not financially viable for a private company to provide those services.
2. **Pursue relevant studies with the Army Corps of Engineers.**
3. **An assessment of the types of access opportunities provided (fishing, boating, walking, wildlife watching, etc.) should be conducted** to ensure the needs and interests of residents are being sufficiently met and are inclusive. This should include evaluating the construction of a Catherine Street non-motorized hand launch.
4. **Revisiting the 2018 Maritime Management Plan Recommendations.** The plan was produced by the city by JU, UNF and the NE Florida Regional Council and adopted by City Council. The plan addresses in detail individual parks, maintenance of existing facilities and increased water access opportunities.
5. **Produce a map to show all riverfront parks and watercraft access facilities within Duval County.**
6. **Pursue a regular weekly boat tour of the Timucuan Preserve.**

## 7. Evaluate the accessibility of a Jacksonville Zoo-Downtown tour/route.

### Mid-Term:

1. **Assess the feasibility and viability of converting city owned properties along the riverfront to publicly accessible waterfront parks or watercraft access points.**

### Long-Term:

1. **Take steps to legally preserve public riverfront parks in perpetuity** for the benefit of future generations and to accommodate climate change.

### Funding Needs:

Funding needs will be determined upon further review.

### Who Needs to be Involved:

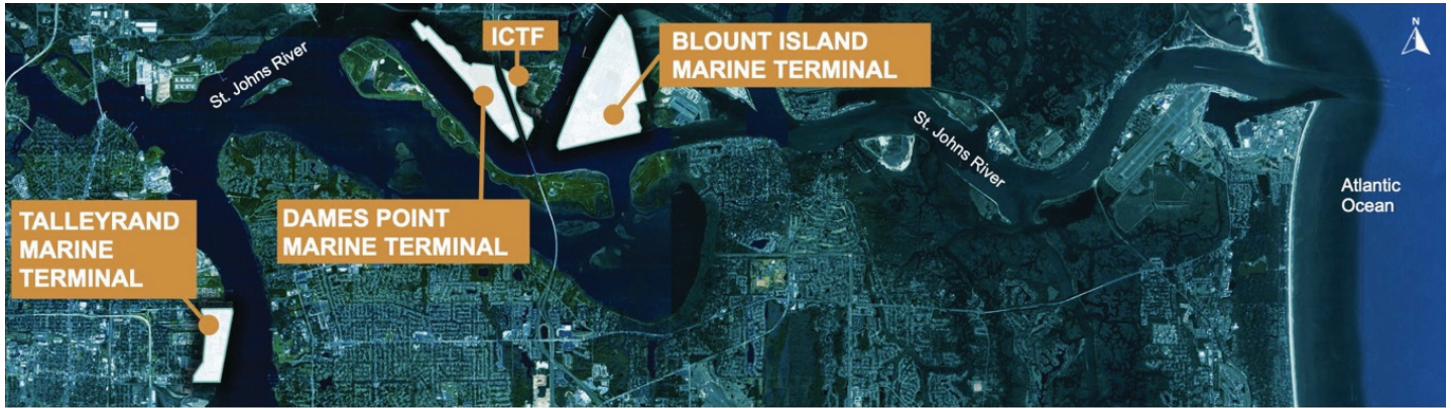
- Mayor's Office
- City Council
- Parks Department
- Public Works
- St. Johns Riverkeeper
- Water Taxi/Boat Tour operators
- Jacksonville Zoo

### Evaluation and Success:

- The public will have ready information of all the places within Duval County where individuals and families can enjoy the St. Johns River, whether on the river's edge or in and on the river itself.
- Facilities will be updated, safe and modernized.
- Regular boat tours will expose more visitors and residents to the natural beauty of Jacksonville.



# Terminal Locations



## TERMINAL SPECIFICATIONS

18 BERTHS 28 CRANES

7. **Create a Strategic Partnership between the Navy, Army, COJ, Private Carriers, JaxPort** to increase coordination, funding, and unified response to sea level rise.
8. **Continue to utilize, implement, and re-evaluate where necessary, the following existing and adopted plans or reports.**

All of the following Plans and Reports sought public input and engagement and are valuable tools to achieving a vibrant, active riverfront that will benefit all of Jacksonville's residents and encourage visitors.

- DIA Business Investment & Development Plan (2022, 2022-0372-E)
- Fun and Functional: Activation Plan for Jacksonville's Downtown Riverfront (Jessie Ball duPont Fund) (2022, in DIA BID Plan)
- Maritime Management Plan (2018, adopted by City Council 2018-393-A).
- Emerald Trail Master Plan (Revised 2021)

## References, Data, and Supplemental Information

In addition to the plans listed above, the following links are provided.

### Zoom Recordings

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17OYkwy3AIg-ZO3-9sHourZOCycVKrsB>

### Presentations & Reports

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jZ0\\_mIia5PFhQF5kIsIrxtiM\\_kluVNLb](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jZ0_mIia5PFhQF5kIsIrxtiM_kluVNLb)

### DIA Master Plan Executive Summary

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XyKKEGPWdGoZiG5ytxq5UGYKbKrYtOrv/view>

### Fun & Functional: Activation Plan for Downtown Jacksonville

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D9MokIsFWNr-BbZYMzpO4O-j8Wppb3Ow/view>

### Riverfront 2025 Presentation

<https://buildupdowntown.org/riverfront2025/>

# jaxparks

## Overview

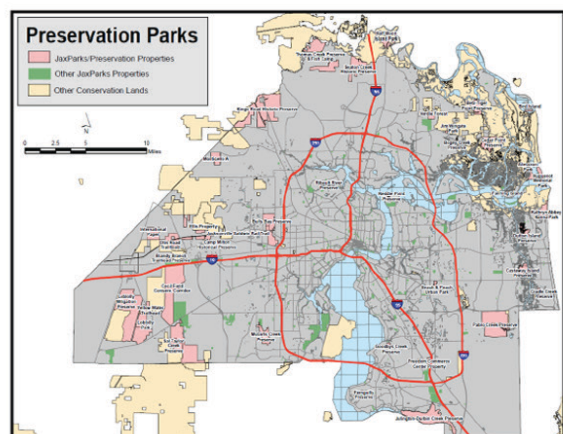
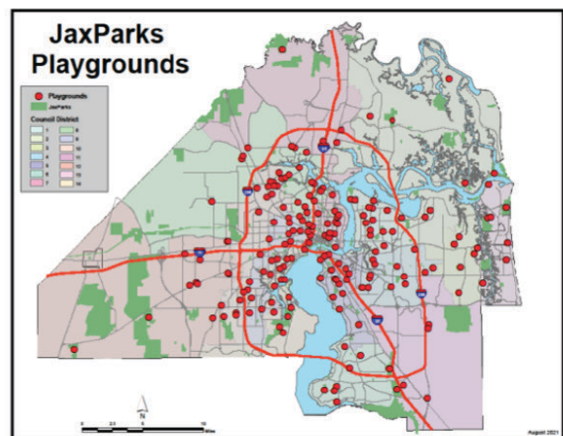
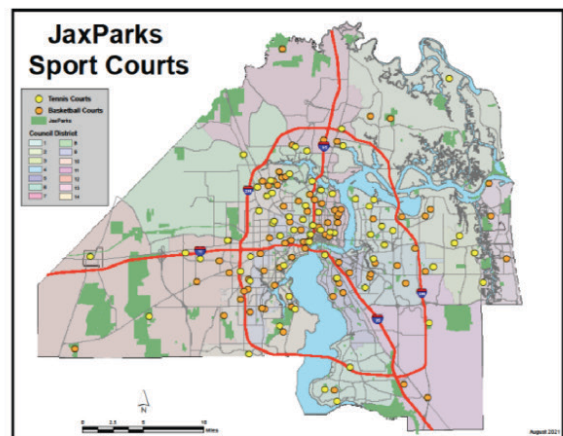
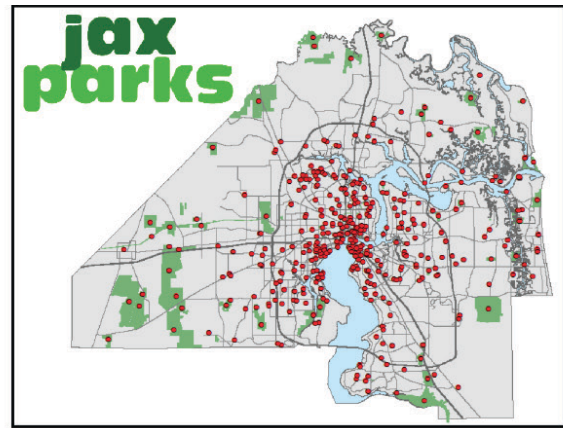
The City of Jacksonville boasts the largest urban park system in the United States, spanning 80,000 acres and encompassing a remarkable variety of natural and recreational spaces. This extensive system includes 10 state parks and five national parks, alongside an impressive 392 city parks covering 36,831 acres. The city offers a diverse array of outdoor activities, with 59 miles of paved trails and 141 miles of unpaved trails for hiking, biking and exploring.

The recreational offerings are abundant, catering to various interests and age groups. The city provides ample opportunities for community engagement and programming, including park maintenance, tennis centers, pools, senior centers and community centers. Notable initiatives like Summer Enrichment, Rec-n-Roll and Summer Night Lights contribute to an active and vibrant community. Specialized programs such as Specialty Camps, Drowning Prevention, Teen Warehouse and Club Rec offer unique experiences.

The park system differentiates between Active Parks, equipped with sports courts, playgrounds and fields, and Preservation Parks, which offer natural spaces for passive recreation.

The city places significant emphasis on updating and enhancing playgrounds, with 195 playgrounds in total. Notably, 64 playgrounds have been replaced within the past five years, and ongoing efforts include six playground projects currently underway, 23 slated for replacement in the near future, and 37 identified for replacement by 2023-2024, according to the Special Committee on Parks. The average cost for a playground is \$150,000, reflecting the commitment to providing safe and enjoyable play areas for the community.

Jacksonville offers a robust selection of court facilities across its park system. With a total of 137 parks featuring various types of courts, the city accommodates a wide range of sports and activities. Specifically, there are 18 parks equipped with pickleball courts and a total of 167 basketball courts available. The park system also provides 171 tennis courts for enthusiasts.







The city has been proactive in enhancing its court infrastructure, as evidenced by recent efforts. Notably, 18 basketball courts have been resurfaced or reconstructed, ensuring improved quality and safety. Additionally, a total of 16 new pickleball courts have been introduced to meet the growing popularity of the sport. Furthermore, the city has invested in its tennis facilities, resurfacing 6 tennis courts to provide better playing conditions. Overall, Jacksonville's commitment to maintaining and expanding its court offerings underscores its dedication to fostering an active and engaged community, providing residents with ample opportunities to enjoy various sports and recreational activities.

Preservation Parks, like Hanna, Huguenot and Castaway Island, provide parking, trails, picnic areas, and waterfront access, inviting residents to immerse themselves in nature. Recreational opportunities abound, including picnic spots, pavilions, paved and unpaved trails for walking, running, biking, horse riding, kayak launches, boat ramps and designated fishing areas. The parks are home to a wide variety of wildlife, providing a chance for observation and photography.

## MEMBERS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE - PARKS AND RECREATION TRANSITION SUBCOMMITTEE

Laura Phillips Edgecombe | Committee Co-Chair  
*Director of Development & Strategic Partnerships - Build Up Downtown*

Eric Smith | Committee Co-Chair  
*Attorney - Law Office of Eric Smith*

Jeff Blount  
*Chief Operating Officer - Meyer Najem Southeast Meyer Najem Construction*

Darrin Eakins  
*CEO - Golden Age Innovations*

Olivia Frick  
*Business Development Associate - LS3P*

Barbara Goodman  
*Chairperson of the Board - Riverfront Parks Conservancy*

Ivy Henderson  
*Landscape Designer - City of Jacksonville*

Brandi Mathews  
*Client Services Manager - Stop At Nothing, Inc.*

Americus Spencer  
*Owner - Spencer Construction & Engineering*

Orlando Spencer  
*Managing Realtor - O-Luxury, LLC*

## History

Former Mayor John Peyton appointed a task force in April 2004 to study Jacksonville's vast park system and make recommendations to take our park system from "biggest to best." The task force studied all of the city's parks, including the newly acquired Preservation Project properties. It also studied state and federal parks, other publicly held lands and property within the city limits owned by The Nature Conservancy. The work was divided into three segments. The first entailed taking an inventory of our parkland assets and learning about all of the different types of parks in the city. We did this by means of presentations from parks personnel and by visiting many existing parks, maintenance facilities and preservation areas.



The second phase defined “best” as it relates to parks. The task force conducted some 30 public meetings and hearings and heard presentations from some of the country’s leading experts on park systems. Most importantly, task force members spoke with hundreds of citizens and park goers, in public hearings and out in the parks, to find out what they expect from their local government. The task force then created several subcommittees to take this information and review process, governance, funding, safety and maintenance issues. It also created a vision for the future of the city’s parks.

In the third phase, the task force discussed and debated these subcommittee reports to create its final recommendations to Mayor Peyton to take Jacksonville’s parks from “biggest to best.”

From August 22, 2017 to May 24, 2018, the 2017 – 2018 Special Committee on Parks performed a community-wide assessment of parks for access, maintenance, and more robust integration of our parks system in youth development and youth engagement. They determined what measures should be used to determine the quality of parks. They commissioned an inventory of the quality, existing facilities, needed facilities, maintenance needs, location and sufficiency of all city active and passive parks and made recommendations about how parks should be improved to be more of an asset to the community in the areas of youth development and youth engagement. Their final report was released on June 12, 2018

In May of 2021 the City Council engaged in a Strategic Planning Session. During that time the Council established improving Parks and Community Centers as one of the top five Council Priorities. The Special Committee on Parks and Quality of Life convened, discussed and made recommendations on the specific projects to be addressed with the funding in the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year budget. The committee was charged with providing a detail report that included, but was not limited to, the following matters:

- Evaluation on current levels of services for citywide parks, senior centers, learning facilities and community centers
- Current backlog of maintenance needs of citywide parks, senior centers, learning centers and community centers
- Recommendations for improvements to citywide parks, senior centers, learning facilities and community centers to address infrastructure, maintenance, and safety needs
- Past and current youth and senior programming to evaluate impacts and accessibility for all citizens

- Status of current recreational and learning facilities and recommendations for improving connectivity, and providing a supportive learning environment for citizens of all ages.

## References / Data

20050322.Parks Task Force Report

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HUnspXCjI7vZtrW2AUNy8NqutYCEHUEb/view>

201904.Parks and Recreation Maintenance Committee.Draft Final Report

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp\\_Zu6gKrIuVi2\\_9B-BeNQsV/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp_Zu6gKrIuVi2_9B-BeNQsV/view)

20220126 Presentation GAI Consultants Parks

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp\\_Zu6gKrIuVi2\\_9B-BeNQsV/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp_Zu6gKrIuVi2_9B-BeNQsV/view)

20211006 Handout CMs Park Binder

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp\\_Zu6gKrIuVi2\\_9B-BeNQsV/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp_Zu6gKrIuVi2_9B-BeNQsV/view)

20210909 Park Master Plan Presentation

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp\\_Zu6gKrIuVi2\\_9B-BeNQsV/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp_Zu6gKrIuVi2_9B-BeNQsV/view)

20230208 Presentation GAI Consultants -Parks Master Plan

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp\\_Zu6gKrIuVi2\\_9B-BeNQsV/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp_Zu6gKrIuVi2_9B-BeNQsV/view)

## Present Day

The Deegan Administration will be guided by the principle that every person should have a voice in City Hall and a seat at the table. Our culture will be an inclusive one where we encourage collaboration between leaders from all walks of life and who look like Jacksonville. Transparency, accountability, and innovation will be at the center of our decisions as we build a bridge to the next generation and industries of the future. These values will guide the next chapter in Jacksonville’s history and the culture that we will strive to create.

Mayor Deegan is committed to a comprehensive review of opportunities and challenges facing Jacksonville and identifying policy solutions that give every person the opportunity to have a good quality of life. To fulfill that pledge, the transition team is forming a series of policy and outreach committees charged with developing plans that move forward Mayor Deegan’s vision of a healthy, safe, resilient, inclusive and innovative city that works for all of us.

As part of the transition process, Mayor Donna Deegan's transition team is conducting a review of the opportunities and challenges facing Jacksonville. She is announcing the committees and leaders who will identify policy solutions that give every person the opportunity to have a good quality of life. The focus areas include infrastructure; health; economic development; public safety; arts culture and entertainment; constituency and community outreach; and military and veterans.

The Infrastructure Committee will focus on neighborhoods, the downtown riverfront, parks and recreation, resiliency, affordable housing, and homelessness. The Deegan Administration will work to fix Jacksonville's crumbling infrastructure and make good on the broken promises of the past. These investments include better streets and sidewalks, septic tank removal, stormwater drainage systems, bulkheads, tree planting, parks, trails and more.

Infrastructure efforts will emphasize resilience, smart growth, and a good quality of life for all neighborhoods.

## **The Parks and Recreation Subcommittee**

### **Scope:**

The Parks and Recreation committee will find that although Jacksonville is surrounded by water, it is also green. There are national parks, state parks and preserves, urban parks and beachside parks. Plus, there are dozens of unique gardens and an arboretum and botanical garden.

### **CHARGE:**

**This focus area will meet publicly with COJ Parks and Recreation leadership, Groundwork Jacksonville, and other organizations involved with key green spaces, including the Emerald Trail, to discuss any unfinished or pending projects and to identify opportunities for improvement downtown and citywide. Additionally, this focus area will solicit community input from at least one public hearing.**

### **Executive Summary**

The City of Jacksonville Mayor Deegan's Transition Infrastructure Committee Parks and Recreation Subcommittee was tasked to meet with local leadership representing key organizations involved with the City of Jacksonville's expansive park and recreation system to discuss current and pending projects, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement.

The Subcommittee's objective is to offer suggestions that will influence future policies for a comprehensive parks and recreation system. These recommendations emphasize the vision for a system that encompasses both active and passive activities, adapts to changing climates, embraces diversity, fosters connections, encourages collaboration, preserves cultural and historical significance, promotes education, captivates engagement, ensures financial sustainability, prioritizes environmental sustainability, ensures inclusivity, maintains facilities, creates memorable and inspiring experiences, enhances health and well-being, responds effectively, prioritizes safety and features thoughtful design.

The Subcommittee conducted comprehensive research by delving into previous reports and recommendations. They orchestrated a series of seven public meetings and workshops, providing opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions with key stakeholders, collaborating closely with notable organizations Acuity Design Group, Biederman Redevelopment Ventures, Build Up Downtown, City of Jacksonville Parks, Recreation and Community Services, Downtown Investment Authority, Friends of James Weldon Johnson Park, Memorial Park Association, Groundwork Jacksonville, Jacksonville Equestrian Center, Jessie Ball duPont Fund, LS3P, Riverfront Parks Conservancy, Riverfront Parks Now, Riverside Avondale Preservation and Timucuan Parks Foundation. These efforts were further enriched by the Subcommittee's active involvement in the City of Jacksonville Parks, Recreation and Community Services Open House. During this event, the Subcommittee not only gathered valuable feedback from local citizens regarding the revitalization of James Weldon Johnson Park, but also obtained crucial information necessary for the completion of the COJ Parks Master Plan update. Furthermore, the Subcommittee harnessed the collective expertise of its committee members to inform its work.

Throughout this process, presentations were conducted, illuminating vital topics such as the City of Jacksonville as a whole, Downtown Jacksonville's dynamics, the significance of P3 relationships and insights into successful park and public space projects in other cities. This inclusive approach, which encompassed research, engagement with stakeholders, public input, and a focus on diverse subject areas, underscores the Subcommittee's commitment to shaping a parks and recreation system that thrives.

**Our biggest takeaway: Make no small plans.  
It's Never Just About the Parks.**

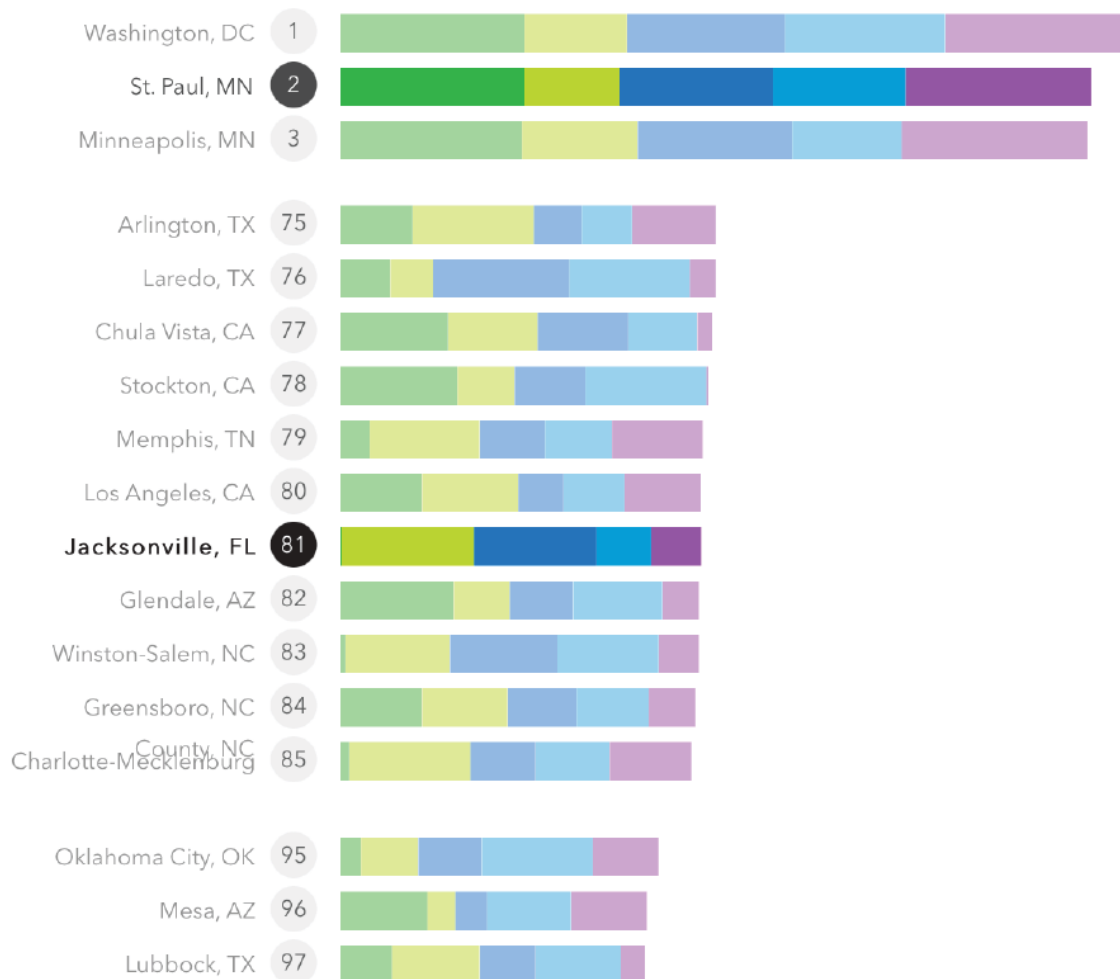
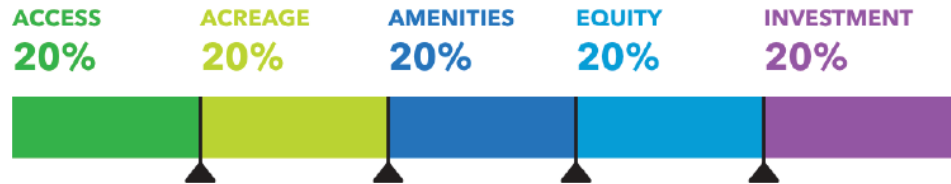


# 2023 ParkScore® Index Custom Rankings

Customize the weights of each scoring category

PARKSCORE WEIGHT ⓘ

Reset



## CURRENT OBSERVATIONS

### Strengths

**Public Spaces:** Abundance of public spaces throughout the city.

**Existing Riverwalk:** Infrastructure offers opportunities for recreation and connectivity. City-Owned Lands: Potential for new or renovated parks and connected Riverwalk.

**Prior Plans:** Commissioned and adopted riverfront plans provide valuable ideas. Community Engagement: Strong community interest and engagement.



**High Line Network Membership:** Emerald Trail and Downtown Riverwalk are part of the prestigious High Line Network.

## Weaknesses

**Trust for Public Land Parkscore:** Lower national ranking in access, acreage, investment, amenities, and equity. Programming Gap: Lack of diverse and regular programming, especially smaller activities. \*Exception is Friends of James Weldon Johnson Park; they have festivals and cultural celebrations that attract participants from diverse areas and celebrate Jacksonville's culture.

**Parks Permitting and Special Event Permitting:** Permitting process is not streamlined.

**Construction Impact:** Facilities out of service and connectivity issues during construction. Ongoing Projects: Delayed or unfinished projects (e.g., Friendship Fountain).

**Funding Constraints:** Insufficient funding to complete projects and address needs. Aging Infrastructure: Presence of aging infrastructure limits potential.

**Unimplemented Plans:** Existing plans not fully implemented.

**Sparse Amenities:** Insufficient amenities such as restrooms, shade, art, and furniture.

**Limited Private Funding:** Projects funded predominantly by public funds, lacking private balance. Vacant Riverfront Properties: Unattractive, unused properties hinder enjoyment.

**Community Pools:** Understaffed and many closed.

## Opportunities

**Federal Funding:** Favorable funding cycle for federal grants for infrastructure projects. Downtown Momentum: Leverage ongoing downtown development to enhance the riverfront. Public Demand: Respond to public desire for improved riverfront utilization.

**Completion of Parks:** Opportunity to finish ongoing park designs and constructions. Iconic Riverfront Parks and Marinas: Develop additional funding sources for completion. Riverfront Conservancy: Utilize established conservancy for focused riverfront efforts.

**Post-COVID Demand:** Increased public interest in parks and outdoor spaces post-COVID. Partnerships for Programming: Collaborate with partners for diverse programming.

**Corporate Sponsorships and Donations:** Tap into private sector support for funding.

## Challenges

**Coordination Challenges:** Overcoming silos, unclear responsibilities, and decision-making. Limited Activities: Addressing the lack of diverse activities along the Riverfront.

**Construction Costs:** Navigating increased construction and development expenses.

**Labor Challenges:** High labor costs due to limited urban/riverfront contractors and skilled labor. Connectivity Gap: Ensuring full connectivity of the Riverwalk for seamless experiences.

**Private Development Delays:** Potential delays in private development projects. Climate Change: Addressing challenges posed by climate change and sea-level rise.

**Timely Funding and Maintenance:** Ensuring timely funding for construction and ongoing maintenance. Diversity of Programming: Offering diverse programming to cater to different audiences.

**Marketing and Communication:** Effectively communicating park offerings to the public

## KEY TAKEAWAYS | OVERVIEW

### The City of Jacksonville Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Between July 7, 2023 and August 14, 2023, The Transition Infrastructure Committee Parks and Recreation Subcommittee conducted comprehensive research by delving into previous reports and recommendations. They orchestrated a series of seven public meetings and workshops, providing opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions with key stakeholders, collaborating closely with notable organizations Acuity Design Group, Biederman Redevelopment Ventures, Build Up Downtown, City of Jacksonville Parks, Recreation and Community Services, Downtown Investment Authority, Friends of James Weldon Johnson Park, Memorial Park Association, Groundwork Jacksonville, Jacksonville Equestrian Center, Jessie Ball duPont Fund, LS3P, Riverfront Parks Conservancy, Riverfront Parks Now, Riverside Avondale Preservation and

# jaxparks

Lonnie C. Miller Regional Sr. Park



Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing Park



DTJAX Park  
Programming



Kayak Launches



Artist Walk



Friendship Fountain



Shipyards West





Timucuan Parks Foundation. These efforts were further enriched by the Subcommittee’s active involvement in the City of Jacksonville Parks, Recreation and Community Services Open House. During this event, the Subcommittee not only gathered valuable feedback from local citizens regarding the revitalization of James Weldon Johnson Park, but also obtained crucial information necessary for the completion of the COJ Parks Master Plan update.

Furthermore, the Subcommittee harnessed the collective expertise of its committee members to inform its work.

Throughout this process, presentations were conducted, illuminating vital topics such as the City of Jacksonville as a whole, Downtown Jacksonville’s dynamics, the significance of P3 relationships and insights into successful park and public space projects in other cities. This inclusive approach, which encompassed research, engagement with stakeholders, public input, and a focus on diverse subject areas, underscores the Subcommittee’s commitment to shaping a parks and recreation system that thrives.

The relationships that exist within and between these entities are positive. The leaders of these groups and the community are willing participants and are already putting forth strong efforts to ensure that various projects and initiatives are completed and objectives met. The needs that exist or the current challenges faced along with opportunities for improvement are listed below by the presenter.

The key themes that continue to emerge are more evident in our overall recommendations report, though generally all of the information we heard as a subcommittee is summarized below. We sincerely thank you for allowing us to amplify the voices of so many organizations both public and private to ensure our parks and recreation services are some of the most well used, loved and beneficial to our citizens.

We would like to highlight the presentation by LS3P, whose overall message conveyed was that parks are not just physical spaces; they are dynamic hubs that contribute to community well-being, economic growth, and social cohesion. By involving the community, tapping into diverse funding sources, fostering partnerships with conservancies, and strategically planning for the long-term, cities can create vibrant and meaningful public open spaces that enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike.

**In the future, we recommend meeting with CPACs, Friends of Jax Playgrounds, Garden Club of Jacksonville, Greenscape of Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach Parks and Recreation Department, Jacksonville Civic Council, Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens, JEA, JTA, Private Developers, The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, The Florida Department of Environmental Protection Division of Recreation and Parks.**

**DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT AUTHORITY**

The following links provide full presentations on projects in the works and proposed, as well as status updates, visuals and funding needs.

**COJ Projects**

- 20230713.subcommittee.pr.coj parks recreation and community services.mp4  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j6b-LsXQ-zBxXOVtAlxmqW4f3RbZx5EG/view>
- 20230713.subcommittee.pr.coj parks recreation and community services.pptx  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HrfQKqUxk2FzlgmotZqOeZYPiWlyUDr7/view>

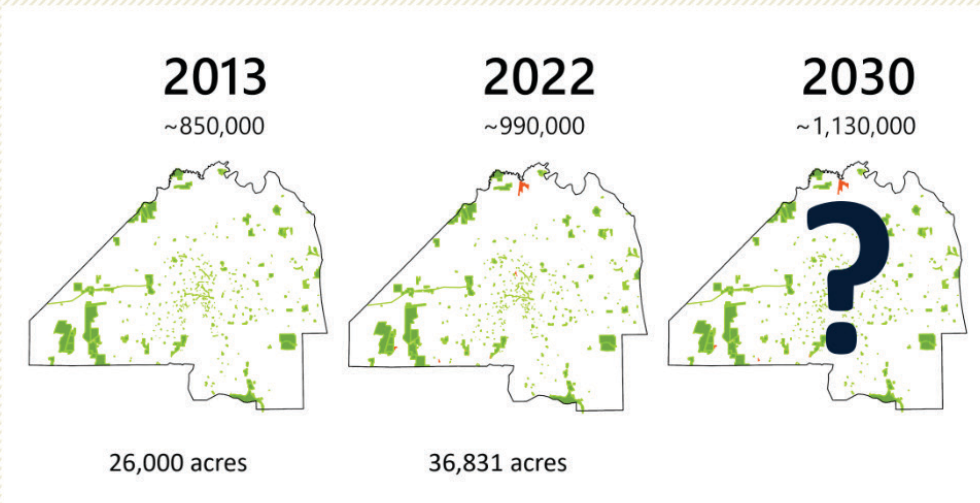
**DIA Projects**

- 20230720.subcommittee.pr.dia v2  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZ\\_Lvh\\_xnw6t\\_Qe1XT9WbEFBIK4g8gqt/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZ_Lvh_xnw6t_Qe1XT9WbEFBIK4g8gqt/view)



# Why now?

The City of Jacksonville has set a goal to update the Parks Master Plan **every 10 years**. The previous Master Plan was completed in **2003**.



## City Park Facts

- 405 City Parks
- 36,831 acres
- 2 oceanfront parks with camping
- 59 miles of paved trails
- 141 miles of unpaved trails
- 195 playgrounds
- 137 parks with courts

## COJ Master Plan Update

### What?

The City of Jacksonville, in partnership with GAI Consultants, is updating the Jacksonville Parks Master Plan to create a 10-year vision for the City's future parks system. By developing recommendations and action plans that improve, grow and maintain the City's parks, trails and recreation facilities, the Plan will help the City continue providing quality recreation options to the Jacksonville community.

The new Master Plan will examine the parks system's needs and address social and environmental resilience, climate adaptation, build social capital and enhance the bonds and bridges of social cohesion.

### Why?

The City of Jacksonville has set a goal to update the Parks Master Plan every 10 years to address social and demographic changes, climate adaptation, resource allocation, new improvements, priorities and management systems.

A previous Master Plan was completed in 2003, but since that time there have been many changes in population, park usage and demand for facilities. This update to the Master Plan creates an opportunity to take a fresh look at the

parks system and ask the community to share their thoughts, opinions, needs and desires for the future of Jacksonville Parks.

### When?

The first phase of the Jacksonville Parks Master Plan was completed in 2022. During the first phase, the project team assessed the existing conditions of the park system and developed a list of improvement priorities.

The second phase of the Plan kicked off in January 2023 and created an initial vision and framework for the park system. When the vision is completed, the public will provide feedback and the draft Plan and recommendations will be developed.

The final Master Plan is expected to be completed by Summer 2024.

## Preliminary Ideas: Common Themes

### Resilient - What Does It Mean to be Resilient?

- Ecological Resilience
- Social Cohesion
- Institutional Coordination
- Departmental Resilience
- Land Development Regulations

## **Equitable - What Does It Mean to be Equitable?**

- Access to Parks Park Quality
- Vulnerable Populations

## **Authentic - How Can the Parks System be Responsive to the Unique Culture of Jacksonville?**

- Needs assessment
- Public Engagement
- Types of Amenities

## **Quality - How Can Jax Parks Maintain and Provide High Quality Parks?**

- Capital Planning
- Department Resilience
- Land Development Regulations

## **Needs**

**Sports Courts Manager Coordinator** for increased Pickleball, Tennis and Basketball Activities.

**Public Outreach Coordinator/Manager** The position would be tasked with marketing and community outreach highlighting the programs, activities, planning projects and facilities the Department has to offer.

**Foundations/Trust Fund Coordinator/Manager** This role would work with the companies, organizations and individuals to generate additional financial support for programs and facilities.

**CIP Account Compliance Coordinator** of CIP projects to ensure the funding is tracked, expended and publicly updated in a timely manner.

**Park Maintenance Crew** (Qty 6) Development of a Downtown Maintenance Crew.

**Park Maintenance Crew** (Qty 2) Additional staff as we provide more access to the Preservation Parks Park Ranger - Hanna Park (Qty 2) Staffing to improve the level of service at our most visited park.

**Park Ranger - Huguenot Park** (Qty 2) Staffing to expand the hours year round at this beachfront facility.

**Certified Pool Operator Training Opportunity** to increase the knowledge of aquatic facilities to additional team members

**Park Maintenance Software Technology** that will allow for electronic update inspection and service records for park facilities.

**Park Partnership Partners Program** Creation of a volunteer force of citizens that will become the champions for parks in their neighborhoods. The group of volunteers will meet quarterly with Parks Management (Director) to obtain updates regarding parks and hold a listening session for new ideas/opportunities. Volunteers will receive a polo style shirt which can be worn when they are out in their parks.



## **THE DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT AUTHORITY (DIA)**

### **Vision for the Riverfront**

A series of large signature parks and smaller unique nodes all connected by a welcoming and accessible Riverwalk that together form an extraordinary Riverfront destination for residents and visitors. This destination public riverfront is enhanced by interspersed private developments that bring activity, safety, dining and people to the waterfront and assist with funding of programming and maintenance.

### **The 'Big 5' Initiatives**

- #1: Unify the Northbank and Southbank Riverwalk** and complete adjacent signature parks as a premier Jacksonville destination
- #2: Connect parks** through trails, sidewalks and bikeways
- #3: Activate parks** via capital improvements, maintenance upgrades and programming
- #4: Develop new neighborhood parks**
- #5: Update Downtown codes and standards**

### **Issues and Concerns**

**Timely CIP funding** for completion of construction -- phasing dilemma

**Ongoing maintenance** once a Destination park is completed

**Management of regular programming** in Destination parks

**Adequate funding support for above**

**Diversity of programming and audiences**

**Marketing and communication** of offerings to public

**Timing of closures and construction** over next several years

## Opportunities

**Mayor Deegan's support to fully fund and complete** Riverfront parks and Emerald Trail, which includes the Riverwalk

**Post-COVID increase in public demand for parks**

**Riverfront Conservancy** – could manage maintenance and possibly programming of riverfront parks as well as raise private funds

**\$500,000 available for Downtown parks maintenance and programming** via DIA managed economic development fund and plan for annual transfers from CRA

**Federal and State grants**

**Corporate sponsorships, philanthropic and private donations, membership**

**Earned income via park rentals, event fees, permits, concessions, etc.**

**Partnerships for programming**

## Short-Term + Quick Wins

**Allocating additional CIP funds** of \$3.5M in FY 23-24 for St. Johns River Park to allow completion in 2024 Allocating \$750,000 additional CIP funds for Musical Heritage Garden in FY 23-24 to allow completion in 2024

**Allocating additional \$2.5 million** in FY 23/24 CIP funds for Emerald Trail Hogan Street Connector completion (recommending \$2.5M in FY 23-24)

**Continue to grow programming** through employee on loan short-term

**Support Riverfront Parks Conservancy** or similar non-profit to manage programming and maintenance of riverfront as parks come on-line (similar to Groundworks for Emerald Trail)

**Amend current year CIP to include:**

- Additional \$20 million for Riverfront Plaza Phase Two in FY 25-26 (full park funding except art)
- Additional \$33-40 million in FY 24/25 to fully fund Shipyards West Park and Piers, allowing constructing to proceed in one phase
- Additional \$7 million in FY 24/25 to fund Metropolitan Park based on current estimates

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Fully fund construction of Riverfront Parks**, marinas, Emerald Trail and Riverwalk improvements to create a Downtown Destination available to the public

**Review and increase staff capacity** in Parks, Public Works and Procurement as needed to facilitate faster project implementation

**Establish model for programming and maintenance of Riverfront Parks**, as well as Emerald Trail and other Downtown Destination Parks, such as Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing Park, that will likely include a partnership with a single-purpose non-profit entity

**Review and streamline form agreements** with operating partners and program providers

## Long-Term

Fully complete network of parks and Riverwalk (complete all Northbank and Southbank) Regular, diverse & accessible programming 7 days/week

Sustainable funding for park maintenance and programming

Activated parks help attract workers back to the office, new businesses and residents to Downtown and investment in new development Downtown





## FRIENDS OF JAMES WELDON JOHNSON PARK

### Key Strategic Issues

#### Park Redesign

- **How do we create a public space that exists as a hub** of community enrichment and economic development for a thriving downtown?

#### Funding

- **How do we create long-term financial viability for continued growth** as part of a robust public/private partnership with COJ?

#### Awareness and Identity

- **How do we educate our key stakeholders** about FJWJ as an innovator and change agent for Downtown?

#### Leader Awareness and Identity

- **How do we raise awareness** and develop a stronger sense of community ownership of the public space?

### Goals

- Be a vital asset and amenity for Downtown, valued by all
- Promote/increase quality of life for our residents and visitors
- Increase diverse funding
- Build champions for the public space/for the organization
- Be a recognized leader in placemaking

## RECOMMENDATION

### Fund Construction Money for JWJ Park

- James Weldon Johnson Park, Jacksonville's oldest and most historic park, was in Isaiah Hart's master plan to be the city's hub of commerce and Downtown life. Today, it is the epicenter of Jacksonville's civic activity, the front lawn of City Hall and still the heartbeat of Downtown. However, the last time it received any type of design work was in 1978. Once a lawn, it is now filled with brick pavers that are showing their age with settling that occurs naturally, broken curbs and outdated design.
- Friends of James Weldon Johnson Park assisted the COJ Parks Department in securing a \$1,250,000 grant to create a new Park design. The design will be revealed in the coming weeks and will go through a process of public input. The construction money is currently estimated to be \$10M to implement the design, which should be prioritized within the upcoming CIP Budget. City Hall and Jacksonville, deserves to have a showcase front lawn.



## MEMORIAL PARK ASSOCIATION

### Funding

- Sponsorship of Events
- Adopt the Park Program
- Legacy Givers
- Fall and Spring Appeals
- \$.5 Million in CIP Fund

### Maintenance

The park is maintained through the partnership of the city and Memorial Park Association.

- COJ - Darryl Joseph
  - Lawn Maintenance
  - Pinestraw
  - Irrigation

- MPA
- Weekly weed maintenance
- Replace dead plants
- Esplanade renovation

### Challenges and Opportunities

- Hurricanes
- Flooding
- Infrastructure
- Security
- Aging Donor Base
- Construction Delays
- Permit Process
- 400+ Parks
- Budget
- Forgotten Story of “Why”

### Opportunities

- Endowment
- Funding for Centennial Celebration – 2024 Emerald Trail
- Funding of Donor Wall Example for other parks



## GROUNDWORK JACKSONVILLE

### Challenges

- 30-Year Gas Tax vs 2029
- Slow Procurement Process
- Lacks Flexibility
- Leadership Changes
- Unrestricted Funds
- Major Foundations

### Benefits

- Vision
- Speed & Flexibility
- Decisions
- Process
- Community Engagement
- Apolitical
- Consistent Leadership
- Expertise
- Focus Stewardship/Maintenance
- Activation



## JACKSONVILLE EQUESTRIAN CENTER

### Priority Projects

- Replace parking lot lighting, main arena lighting and barn lighting with LED fixtures
- Continue stall floor clay replacement
- Replace gutters in all barns to prevent frequent flooding in stalls
- Seal and re-stripe paved parking lots
- Repair/replace aging freezers, walk-in coolers and ice machines
- Collaborate with Fair Board and City for construction of Livestock barn and additional RV hookups
- Improve existing gravel roads and RV pads with asphalt
- Install additional security cameras
- Improve WiFi access for entire facility, including administration, RV areas and event spaces
- Continue (or accelerate if possible) old equipment replacement



## JESSIE BALL DuPONT FUND

### SWOT

#### Strengths

- Industrially diversified (170/501)
- 7th most affordable city in the US (2021)
- Racially and ethnically diversified (138/501)

#### Weaknesses

- Lack of access to patient capital
- Public expenditures per capita low even by FL standards
- Not a top destination for college grads within FL
- Unclear city identity
- Gerrymandered

#### Opportunities

- People are discovering Jacksonville organically
- Mayor has made inclusive downtown development a legacy issue
- Fiscal

#### Threats

- The war for talent
- Rising housing costs attracting investor landlords  
Higher interest rates stall development



## RECOMMENDATIONS

**MORE City & Public funding to support the maintenance, operations and programming of our existing nonprofit stewards (to name a few):**

- Downtown Vision Inc.
- Emerald Trail
- James Weldon Johnson Park
- Riverfront Parks Conservancy
- Memorial Park Association
- Friends of Jacksonville Playgrounds

### **Build local capacity for community stewardship of Public Parks and Spaces**

- We need more park stewardship

### **Placemaking & Placekeeping**

- Make public spaces inclusive and accessible and pleasant to visit

**Don't reinvent the wheel! Understand how high quality, destination public spaces that are operated, managed, maintained by nonprofits work:**

- Tampa Riverwalk
- The Underline, Miami
- Bryant Park, NYC
- The Highline, NYC
- Waterfront Park, Seattle

### **Be Creative & Flexible**

- Now is the time to figure it out

### **Be the Change you want to see**

- Instead of ONLY complaining on Twitter, form a park group to care for your local park

**City must consider the costs and feasibility of programming and maintenance of its downtown destination parks before grand opening.**



## MEMORIAL PARK ASSOCIATION

### **Current Situation**

- Conservancy is in start up mode: all volunteer organization and initial partnership with city (Parks, DIA, etc.)
- High demand and expectations for our Riverfront Parks to be built and maintained and programmed at a world class level
- There is not yet an identified and agreed upon funding/business model for parks governance and operations management in the short-term and the long-term.
- Friends of the Park Agreement with the City of Jacksonville is for a one year term.

### **Key Messages**

- To be successful, the Conservancy needs to have a long-term commitment and agreement with the city.
- Conservancy needs to have a true seat at the table, with input into the front end of design for future management of amenities.
- We see our role as the community's voice for outreach and ongoing support.
- The Conservancy model must be created specific to Jacksonville and with full support of DIA, DVI, Parks, city administration and other key stakeholders.
- Governance, funding and management/operations

### **Opportunities**

- Potential Sources of Operation Revenue for Urban Riverfront Parks Funding Model Options:
  - Earned Revenue (venue rentals, food and beverage, events, etc.)

- Developer fees or contributions (RiversEdge CDD, Iguana for Met Park) City and County
- Philanthropy – individuals and foundations  
Corporate Sponsorships
- Grants



## RIVERFRONT PARKS NOW

### Priorities

- Active parks and public space with sweeping views, kayak ramps, walking piers, splash zones, cultural institutions, public art, shade and beautiful gardens, spaces dedicated for retail, dining and more
- People-focused, Resilient, Beautiful Waterfront Places
  - for Community Gathering, Events, Recreation and Health and Wellness Inspired by world class parks across the US and the World
- With public art as a destination and an experience Providing Long-Term, Tangible, Positive Economic Impact
- Developing a world class, urban riverfront park system is a smart economic development strategy:
  - Adds value to adjacent or surrounding properties and attracts further investment
  - Reduces reliance on city incentives to developers
  - Attracts talent and younger generations who want urban, walkable places
  - With green infrastructure, shade trees and stormwater features, the riverfront parks can help provide our downtown protection from flooding, increase adaptation to sea level rise and cool and clean the air.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish Riverfront Parks as a Mayor's Initiative, with a point person identified on the Mayor's staff.
- Commit to the Conservancy partnership as the governance model for the downtown riverfront parks.
- Immediately begin to include the Conservancy as a key partner for riverfront parks design, operations and programming.
- Renegotiate the Friends of the Park Agreement for a five-year term with successive renewable five-year terms. This will help with fundraising and partnerships and long-term commitments

### Summary of Current Situation

- We have consensus and momentum among business leaders, city leaders, citizens and non profit organizations that achieving the vision of a connected network of destination riverfront parks and green spaces downtown is critical to our city's future.
- The Riverfront Activation Study, conducted in 2021, provides a framework and principles to follow along with general community desires.

- The 2022 DIA Master Plan CRA-BID Update identified a major priority “Capitalizing on the River” and in FY 2022/23 the Curry administration allocated substantial CIP funding for the riverfront parks, the Riverwalk extension, creek restoration and the Emerald Trail.
- The Riverfront Parks Conservancy is formed with support of DIA and Parks Dept. A Friends of the Park agreement between the City and RPC was executed in March 2023.
- DIA, DVI, Build Up Downtown, Riverfront Parks Now, the duPont Fund and the Riverfront Parks Conservancy collaborate extensively. Together we produced the Riverfront 2025 Update in February 2023

### Challenge or Gaps in the Plan

- There is a gap in unifying the public spaces from a design, cohesiveness and planning/timing perspective. Among the planned riverfront parks and along the Riverwalk, on Bay Street, A. Philip Randolph, Liberty Street. And inland connections to the Emerald Trail, LaVilla, OutEast and the Southbank.
- Resilience in riverfront design is currently focused on grey infrastructure versus green: building up, raising bulkheads and building parking on ground floor. Trees & shade are among the #1 public needs for heat and health; plans are not designing around maintaining existing mature shade trees.
- Process for public input, decision making and communications of changes and updates.
- With the exception of Metropolitan Park, there is not yet a long-term park designation/legal/deed protection on many of the city lands that are to become parks.
- Funding for completion and for long-term operations and maintenance.

### Challenges: Funding for Short and Long-Term

- While we should not “value-engineer” or dumb down the designs to cut costs, a steering-level review process with public input is needed to make sure the expected benefits match the design and investment and understand if there are equally good or better alternatives.

- We must commit to a high level of park maintenance, operations and programming, which will require reliable funding.
- Park designs must include an integrated plan for the city to benefit from earned revenue within the parks, while keeping the majority of programming free to the public

### Opportunities

- New leadership in Jacksonville embraces resilience as a core strategy of the riverfront.
- We have made much progress in reserving and planning for public park space along the riverfront. There is much excitement and support for this effort from citizens across our city.
- Involved nonprofits and other organizations have capable leaders-champions who are committed to moving the project through and who are collaborating on a regular basis.
- Other cities’ experiences have proven blueprints to follow and adapt to Jacksonville’s needs and situations.
- The DIA leadership, Board and CRA Plan have embraced the riverfront’s public space as a core downtown strategy.
- The Riverfront Parks Conservancy has been established and is dedicated to the stewardship, enjoyment and ongoing improvement of the riverfront parks. (Separate presentation).
- The Emerald Trail is forging ahead and will intersect the Riverfront in four locations, providing riverfront access and connectivity to the 35 neighborhoods served by the Trail.
- Arts, culture and history can be woven into the riverfront through design, activation, events, festivals.

### RECOMMENDATIONS: Short-Term (1 -3 years)

- Get the design right and take steps to ensure there is a unified approach
- Engage professional design & urban planning resources to unify the planned uses, designs and phased construction – among the parks, across the





linear Riverwalk park and for critical streetscapes and connections.

- What kind, where and how many built structures, including parking.
- Evaluate and plan for appropriate types and levels of earned revenue.
- Consider smaller or interim solutions to test the retail, restaurant and entertainment venues.
- Prioritize resilience and streetscapes with shade trees (existing and new), incorporation of green infrastructure and increased Riverwalk and sidewalk widths and building setbacks.
- Provide additional CIP funding to ensure world class design, construction and dedicated funding options for ongoing operations and maintenance.
- Explore grant/funding opportunities from federal, state and foundations sources: for green infrastructure, adaptive reuse (shipyards piers), resilience, health and wellness, etc.
- Solidify the mechanism for TIF Funding to move Economic development and be designated for annual park maintenance, operations and programming.
- Require new private development adjacent to one of the riverfront public spaces/parks to provide dedicated funding for park maintenance and programming.
- Plan for earned revenue by designing appealing kiosks/cafes or food venues and at least one wedding/event venue that has all the requisite facilities/amenities to make it a desirable space.
- Develop and implement a “best practices” core competency in park planning, engagement and decision-making process.
- For each major project, a steering team should guide the process. Ideal team size is 8-12 people.
- Clearly define the decision-making process, community engagement process and timeline.
- Provide multiple ways for input, ensuring in person but also utilize digital tools effectively.
- Keep the community informed throughout the process.
- Be clear and consistent, so the public knows what to expect.
- The process should become efficient, transparent and effective and produce a better outcome.
- Support the Riverfront Parks Conservancy
  - Work collaboratively to develop the partnership model that will fit Jacksonville, evolve and be successful beyond administrations.
- Build Riverfront Plaza in one phase and get it done
  - Demonstrate success and allow the public to enjoy the park without interruptions.
  - Adapt design if development is not moving forward
- Prioritize green infrastructure for resilience, especially shade and existing shade trees.
- A new tree planted today will take 20 years to mature

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: Long-Term (3-5+ years)**

- Plan for continued capital upgrades and maintenance needs – CIP and annual operating budgets.
- Park designation to protect the identified riverfront park lands; consider long-term deed restrictions to prevent future land swaps.
- Consider city owned riverfront land as a special category for protection and determine appropriate citizen and government approvals to give away or sell.
- Across the 3000 miles of St. Johns River, the vast majority is privately owned.

### **The Riverfront: The Time is Now to Get it Right**

For the first time in decades, there is significant funding, momentum and collaboration to create a world class “Riverfront for All.” Riverfront Parks Now appreciates Mayor Deegan’s desire to realize this vision and make it a reality. We are at a critical stage with investment, design and operational decisions that require thoughtful attention and we urge the following actions:

#### **1. Holistic, Strategic Approach and Sweat the Details**

- Engage world class expertise to unify the entire riverfront to ensure an appealing continuous, connected, flexible, green, destination linear park and connected trails.
- Define the overall strategy and specific plans for: revenue generation venues, food and beverage, parking, connectivity, amenities, events/activities of different kinds and sizes and audiences.

#### **2. More Eyes & Voices: Collaboration, Community & Leadership**

- Provide liaison/point person from the Mayor’s Office. (Mayor Delaney precedent)
- Support the Conservancy as the lead partner.
- Appoint an 8-10 member riverfront steering team for park direction, design and final recommendations for approval.
- Implement best practice community feedback at multiple stages and for major changes/decisions.

- Include public art and culture: Cultural Council, LaVilla, Historic Eastside, MOSH, JHS, etc.

#### **3. Prioritize Resilience, Shade, Stormwater Management and Protection from Heat**

- Prioritize green resilient solutions and incorporate features into visitor education.
- Protect existing mature shade trees and plan for abundant new shade trees.
- Make the Riverwalk a beautiful, shade-tree lined haven for walkers, runners and strollers.

#### **4. Funding**

- Identify and seek grant opportunities to assist with remaining funding needs.
- Additional CIP for world class park construction in a defined timeline.
- Support the Conservancy for capacity building.

#### **5. Maintenance & Operations Planning**

- Design revenue opportunities into the parks and public spaces.
- Support additional city funding for maintenance, operations and activation.
- Require neighboring developers to meaningfully contribute to long-term maintenance.
- Transition TIF Funding to Economic Development Funds for parks.

#### **6. Strengthen Riverfront Property Protection and Standards**

- Legally protect new and existing parks to ensure they remain as parks in perpetuity.
- Raise design standards and rethink disposition requirements for riverfront development.
- Require higher ROI from potential riverfront developers.

## 7. Timing and Phasing

- Build Riverfront Plaza now, in one phase. Adapt plan if private development is not happening.
- Complete Friendship Park and the Musical Park at the Performing Arts Center.



### TIMUCUAN PARKS FOUNDATION

#### Challenges

- **Westside Trail Corridor**
  - Incompatible economic development at I-10 underpass (addition of a 2nd train line at north end of Cecil Field corridor)
  - At risk: Loss of continuity, trail connections and opportunity to be part of a statewide network of trails and conservation corridors - \$70 million investment
- **Hodges Tract**
  - Lack of public access (potential loss of private road)
  - At risk: Bad publicity - \$32 million taxpayer investment for property which will have no public access
  - At risk: Loss of an opportunity for Healthy Parks development
- **Castaway Island Preserve**
  - Safety and Security
  - At risk: The park becoming a neighborhood nuisance
  - At risk: Loss of an opportunity for Healthy Parks development

## Cedar Point Rezoning

- Issue with development adjacent to preservation properties and fire-managed public lands

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Engage with TPF to build COJ awareness of the economic, health and resiliency value of the parks and preserves as well as threats and challenges
- Support TPF as a \$250K line item to assist parks department with protection of key parks and park corridors, community outreach, volunteer programs and the Healthy Parks initiatives
- Paving of the road into the Ribault Club, Historic St. George Episcopal Church and the Kingsley Plantation



### RIVERSIDE AVONDALE PRESERVATION

#### Mission

Preserve the historic fabric of Riverside and Avondale, promote local businesses, arts and culture; advocate with and for the neighborhood.

#### Vision

Connect residents and visitors to our parks and cultural destinations in a way that enhances our history, nature, and the arts through placemaking.

### A Cultural Trail in Riverside Avondale

#### Goals

- Establish wayfinding that will support our cultural destinations, hospitality/retail merchant districts and historic parks
- Highlight our architectural history through stories of what has been preserved and what is lost Promote the arts through what is existing and what is to come



- Create a safe space to enjoy the tree canopy, landscaping and the river
- Build partnerships between the many stakeholders supporting the 5 Points community (Parks Dept., Groundwork Jax, Rotary)

## LS3P

The conversation involved participants who are experts in urban design, planning, and community engagement. The presenters, Blake Reeves and Melissa McCann, both of LS3P, express their gratitude for the opportunity to share their expertise on parks and urban development. The key topics they discussed are outlined below:

- **Community Engagement and Ownership:** The participants highlight the critical role of community engagement in the development and revitalization of public parks. They emphasize that involving local residents and stakeholders fosters a sense of ownership, pride, and attachment to these spaces. They discuss how engaging the community in the planning process ensures that the parks cater to the specific needs and preferences of the residents.
- **Diverse Funding Sources:** The conversation delves into the funding challenges associated with park development. The participants explore a range of funding mechanisms, including public funds, grants from organizations, corporate sponsorships, and the establishment of conservancies. They emphasize the importance of utilizing a mix of funding sources to ensure the sustainability of park projects.
- **Role of Conservancies:** The participants discuss the role of conservancies in managing and maintaining parks. They explain that conservancies can play a pivotal role in fundraising, programming, and community engagement. These organizations can collaborate with local communities to create events, activities, and amenities that align with the residents' interests.
- **Creating a Parks Culture:** The conversation addresses the concept of building a "parks culture" within a city. The participants underscore the significance of making parks central to community life by organizing various activities and events. This helps to foster a strong sense of community identity and connection among residents.
- **Strategic Planning:** Strategic planning emerges as a crucial theme throughout the conversation. The participants stress the importance of identifying key parks that can have the most substantial impact on the community. They advocate for long-term planning that considers community needs, accessibility, and sustainability. Strategic planning also involves setting clear goals and benchmarks to measure the success of park initiatives, and social cohesion. By involving the community, tapping into diverse funding sources, fostering partnerships with conservancies, and strategically planning for the long-term, cities can create vibrant and meaningful public open spaces that enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike.
- **Marketing and Branding:** The participants discuss the role of marketing and branding in promoting parks and garnering public support. They suggest that effective communication about park development projects can create excitement and anticipation within the community. A well-defined branding strategy can also convey the broader vision and goals of park development.
- **Immediate Programming:** The conversation highlights the value of immediate programming and activation within parks. Even before significant physical changes are made, introducing events, classes, and activities can attract people to the parks and establish a sense of community engagement. These immediate initiatives can create a positive atmosphere and attract diverse groups of people.
- **Personal Experiences:** The participants share personal experiences and anecdotes that illustrate the transformative power of parks in urban environments. These stories underscore how well-designed and activated parks can bring people together, create lasting memories, and contribute to a city's identity.

**The overall message conveyed is that parks are not just physical spaces; they are dynamic hubs that contribute to community well-being, economic growth, and social cohesion.**

By involving the community, tapping into diverse funding sources, fostering partnerships with conservancies, and strategically planning for the long-term, cities can create vibrant and meaningful public open spaces that enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Short-Term

- Programming + Activation
- Social + Civic Engagement

### Mid-Term

- External Support Outreach Advisory
- Civic Structure + Partnership

### Long-Term

- Outstanding Design Resilience

## ACTIONS

### Review for Implementation: Historical Reports, Presentations and Other Resources

20050322.Parks Task Force Report  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HUnspXCjI7vZtrW2AUNy8NqutYCEHUEb/view>

201904.Parks and Recreation Maintenance Committee.Draft Final Report  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp\\_Zu6gKrIuVi2\\_9B-BeNQsV/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp_Zu6gKrIuVi2_9B-BeNQsV/view)

20220126 Presentation GAI Consultants Parks  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NLooXfWBM\\_35WIU\\_v00mdPYsf7MRe-F2/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NLooXfWBM_35WIU_v00mdPYsf7MRe-F2/view)

20211006 Handout CMs Park Binder 20210909  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1enz6VmuCeppDzdTZkatvUbzeU6yyoPcO/view>

Park Master Plan Presentation  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Mivjf7sHWouETWcQO6o1v-dd-EclFvSV/view>

20230208 Presentation GAI Consultants -Parks Master Plan  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jYFCqWkieFQ5Kg-10e84s3I9LRdBxgNp/view>

Maritime Management Plan - 2018-393 On File  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JTlfvjrZ6zAkz3hZmix7ia16wb0mRpNL/view>

## Establish a Parks and Public Places Advisory Board

- Communicate directly to Mayor's Office
- Create Committees dedicated to:
  - Council Districts {14 committees}
- Develop, Oversee and Enforce Strategy and Metrics of Accountability
  - Implementation of the COJ Parks Master Plan (update 2023)
  - Activation
  - Public Engagement
  - Design of Parks and Public Places Outside of Downtown
  - Construction of Parks Outside of Downtown
    - Funding
    - Phasing
    - Timelines
    - Implementation
- Work with City of Jacksonville Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services
- Comprise members with diverse and qualified subject area experts

## Hire a Senior Director of Downtown Public Spaces with additional staff as needed

- Communicate directly to Mayor's Office
- Coordinates across city government, community organizations and the private sector to create "extraordinary public spaces" and aid the city's economic recovery
- Develop, Oversee and Enforce Strategy and Metrics of Accountability
  - Activation
  - Public Engagement

- Iconic Design of Downtown Parks and Public Spaces
- Construction of Downtown Parks and Public Spaces
  - Funding
  - Phasing
  - Timelines
  - Implementation
- A Parks and Public Spaces Conservancy
  - Riverfront
  - Downtown {other}
- Commit to a conservancy partnership as the governance model for the Downtown riverfront parks.
  - Example: Riverfront Parks Conservancy, who has requested:
    - Immediately begin to include the Conservancy as a key partner for riverfront parks design, operations and programming.
    - Renegotiate the Friends of the Park Agreement for a five-year term with successive renewable five-year terms. This will help with fundraising and partnerships and long-term commitments.
- Delegate appropriate funds to grow and strengthen the capacity and work product.
- Hire a consulting firm to quickly move forward smart and iconic urban planning and design of Downtown Parks and Public Places.



#### **Review for Implementation: Resources Reports, Presentations and Other Resources**

20230713.subcommittee.pr.coj parks recreation and community services.mp4  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j6b-LsXQ-zBxXOVtAlxmW4f3RbZx5EG/view>

20230713.subcommittee.pr.coj parks recreation and community services.pptx  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HrfQKqUxk2FzlgmotZqOeZYPiWlyUDr7/view>

20230720.subcommittee.pr.acuity design group  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MXsvWsAEwgJwDSUjZx7aVcaIIvoM58zi/view>

20230720.subcommittee.pr.dia v2  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZ\\_Lvh\\_xnw6t\\_Qe1XT9WbEFBIK4g8gqt/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZ_Lvh_xnw6t_Qe1XT9WbEFBIK4g8gqt/view)

COJ FY 2024 Proposed CIP  
<https://www.coj.net/departments/finance/docs/budget/fy24-proposed-cip.aspx>

DVI DTJAX Survey Results 2023  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RHY42jPvLXviXBH0VmLHyuA3A\\_TdH6P0/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RHY42jPvLXviXBH0VmLHyuA3A_TdH6P0/view)



DVI State of Downtown 2022

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xp9jNTvCXJpcEVpD2XwMGkh1ceyrBwSO/view>

Riverfront 2025 Recording

<https://buildupdowntown.org/riverfront2025/>

Riverfront Activation Plan

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sJjoiZQHkkJ-UUydeI3qGvvd9ajFEH5E/view>

Special Committee on Resiliency 2020-2021

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-qwFjcc6pjQMByqeyA2R98TQfMSuJdWz/view>

Summary DIA Master Plan

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s8olO-c-7NHCUacNm0XAWuYDQJaQR2H/view>

Summary Riverfront Activation Plan

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/15HbJKTgYhEyZ3soZw9mHZYW1w\\_gvxi8a/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/15HbJKTgYhEyZ3soZw9mHZYW1w_gvxi8a/view)

Project for Public Spaces: The Power of 10+

<https://www.pps.org/article/the-power-of-10>

Build Up Downtown Website

<https://buildupdowntown.org/>

COJ Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Master Plan Website

<https://www.imaginejaxparks.com/>

COJ Parks, Recreation and Community Services Website

<https://www.coj.net/departments/parks-and-recreation.aspx>

Emerald Trail Website

<https://www.groundworkjacksonville.org/emerald-trail/>

LS3P Urban Environments Website

<https://www.ls3p.com/our-people/>

Riverfront Activation Plan Website

<https://www.dupontfund.org/project/waterfront>

Trust for Public Land Jacksonville Score Website

<https://www.tpl.org/city/jacksonville-florida>

**Strengthen the overall safety, security and cleanliness of every facility to improve functionality, useability and enjoyment for everyone.**

- Conduct a risk assessment to determine specific needs per park.
- Install
  - Water Fountains
  - Restrooms
  - Cameras
  - Lighting
  - Emergency Call Boxes
  - Phone Charging Stations
  - Signage
  - Trash / Recycle Receptacles
  - ADA accessibility

**Delegate appropriate funds to grow and strengthen the capacity and work product in the following areas, within the Parks, Recreation and Community Services department:**

#### **Maintenance**

- Hire a (private) parks maintenance consulting firm to conduct a park assessment survey and make recommendations
- Implement recommendations of the {private} parks maintenance consulting firm
- Hire a Chief of Maintenance with additional staff as needed (ex: Master Gardener)
- Funding for maintenance consultants (day to day and long-term) in the areas of:
  - Horticulture
  - Equipment
  - Vandalism
  - Amenities
  - Janitorial

## Marketing and Communications

- Hire a Chief of Marketing & Communications Director with additional staff as needed
- Develop and successfully execute a more robust marketing strategy to increase the awareness and utilization of:
  - Existing Facilities
    - ex: Connected Trail Systems Map
  - Construction Timelines and Milestones
  - Programming and Activation
- Dedicate funds to digital and print assets, etc.
- Increase Public Engagement / Input
- Advocacy for different types of parks
- Regional park connectivity
- Campaigns (Parade of Parks, Pride In Our Parks)
- Guides

**Delegate appropriate funds to grow and strengthen the capacity and work product in the following areas, within the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department:**

### Grants

- Hire a Chief of Grants with additional staff as needed
  - Enhance / Improve / Expand the management of public and private grants to result in an increase of available funding.
- Parks Trust Fund
  - Hire a Chief of Development with additional staff as needed
    - Explore the potential to increase private partnership opportunities to result in an increase of available funding
- Programming (Equitable, Inclusive, Capacity, Funding)

- Develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan that enhances the current cultural assets by addressing the unique needs of each community
- Identify parks that can host events, noting amenities
- Streamline parks permitting process between City of Jacksonville departments, to include Office of Special Events
- Identify programming strategic partners
- Identify alternative uses for underutilized spaces, such as pocket parks
  - ex: community gardens

**Review the staffing request per Daryl Joseph | Chief of Parks, Recreation and Community Services | City of Jacksonville**

**Delegate appropriate funds to grow and strengthen the capacity and work product in the following Departments:**

### Public Works

- Procurement
- Office of General Counsel

**Increase funding in CIP budget for all Downtown parks to ensure completion of projects to full and best potential as an iconic top ranked urban parks system.**

- Emerald Trail Hogan Street Connector completion
- St. Johns Park
- Metropolitan Park
- Musical Heritage Garden
- James Weldon Johnson Park
- Shipyards West
- Riverfront Plaza (Phase Two)
- Riverwalk Extension and Connectivity
- Northbank from Working Waterfront to Memorial Park

- Southbank from Rivers Edge to Fuller Warren Shared Use Path (SUP)
- Emerald Trail

**Identify and partner in shared stewardship for parks, community centers, etc. to share the lift of management operations, maintenance, activation, safety, inventory of assets, etc.**

- Streamline agreements and requirements for partnerships.
- examples include:
  - Athletic Associations
  - Community Organizations
  - ‘Friends of ...’ Groups
  - Conservancies

**Review and streamline long-term, joint-use lease agreements with Duval County Public Schools**

- Pools
- Parks

**Improve recruitment efforts for lifeguards to maximize the number of open pools at any given time and provide reasonable access.**

- Competitive Hourly Pay
- Marketing
- Public Private Partnerships

**Identify and provide alternative ways to experience local waterways.**

- ex: jet ski, dinner cruises, kayak launches
- Review river taxi contract
- Specific attention should be given to use of facilities on Exchange Club Island; Pottsburg Creek.
- Reminder: Review for Implementation Maritime Management Plan - 2018-393 On File

**Restore the original City Council legislative intent creating the historic freestanding Crime Victim Services Center (VSC).**

- To this end move the VSC and crime victim services delivery to the Neighborhoods Department. This will provide the correct strategic placement to maximize the ability to deliver services effectively to innocent victims of violent crime as well as human trafficking. It will also facilitate better interface with JSO and the Office of the States Attorney.

## RECOMMENDATIONS | ACTIONS

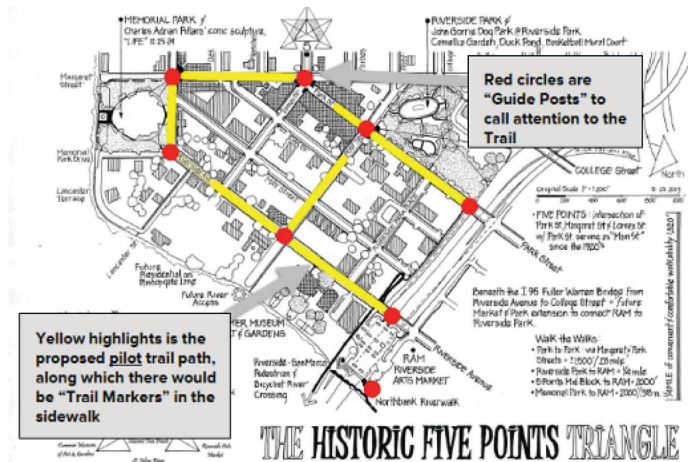
### We Support

- We strongly advocate for the expansion and improvement of public transportation systems to facilitate convenient access to a wide array of community resources. These resources encompass not only public parks and community pools, but also encompass essential amenities, senior centers and a host of valuable community services. By bolstering public transportation, we aim to ensure that every member of our community can easily and seamlessly enjoy these enriching and vital facilities.
- We support the connectivity of parks, celebration of art, recognition of vital aspects of Jacksonville’s history, boosted tourism and activation of areas already a destination but lacking context, wayfinding and connectivity.
  - ex: RAP proposal for a Riverside Avondale Cultural Trail
- We support the recommendations of the Transition Infrastructure Committee | Riverfront Subcommittee.
- We support the recommendations of the Transition Infrastructure Committee | Resilience Subcommittee

## BENEFIT AND IMPACT

Thriving neighborhoods warrant effectively maintained parks and recreational facilities that can flexibly adjust to their surroundings, ensuring an ongoing capacity to evolve in response to the preferences of their inhabitants. A dynamic parks department offers a multitude of advantages and has a significant impact on communities:





- Community Well-Being
- Cultural and Artistic Expression
- Economic Growth
- Educational Opportunities
- Environmental Benefits
- Health Promotion
- Public Safety
- Social Cohesion
- Stress Relief and Mental Health
- Youth Development

A thriving parks department enhances the fabric of a community by providing spaces for recreation, social interaction, and cultural enrichment. Its positive impact is far-reaching, influencing the well-being, economy, and overall livability of the area it serves. Through fostering connections, promoting health, encouraging creativity, and contributing to environmental sustainability, well-designed public spaces play an essential role in creating vibrant and cohesive communities.

## TIMELINE

### Immediately

- Review for Implementation: Historical Reports, Presentations, and Resources
- Review for Information and Additional Needs: Speaker Presentations

## Short-Term

- Establish a Parks Advisory Board
- Hire a Senior Director of Downtown Public Spaces with additional staff and funding as needed
- Conduct a risk assessment for safety, security, and cleanliness enhancements
- Delegate appropriate funds to grow and strengthen the capacity and work product in the following areas, within the Parks, Recreation and Community Services department
- Streamline parks permitting process
- Develop comprehensive programming and implementation strategy
- Strengthen maintenance, marketing and communication efforts
- Increase funding for Downtown parks in CIP budget
- Streamline agreements and requirements for partnerships and shared stewardships
- Streamline joint-use lease agreements with Duval County Public Schools
- Improve recruitment efforts for lifeguards

## Mid-Term

- Strengthen overall facility safety and security
- Complete network of Downtown Parks and Riverwalk Review streamlined parks permitting process
- Review comprehensive programming and implementation strategy
- Continue to cultivate partnership and shared stewardship initiatives
- Continue to delegate appropriate funds to grow and strengthen the capacity and work product in the following areas, within the Parks, Recreation and Community Services department
- Update comprehensive programming and implementation strategy



- Continue to increase funding for Downtown parks in CIP budget
- Review streamlined agreements and requirements for partnerships and shared stewardships
- Review streamlined joint-use lease agreements with Duval County Public Schools
- Identify and provide alternative ways to experience local waterways
- Restore City Council legislative intent for Crime Victim Services Center

## Funding

Ultimately, the most successful public space funding strategies often involve a mix of these sources, tailored to the specific needs and goals of the community. Collaboration and engagement among government agencies, private partners, local residents and other stakeholders are key to creating and sustaining vibrant public spaces.

- Corporate Sponsorship
- Crowdfunding and Community Campaigns
- Earned Revenue (ex: Food and Beverage, Events)
- Government Funding

- Grants and Fundraising
- Land Development Contributions
- Matching Funds and Incentive Programs
- Private Philanthropy
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Special Tax Districts
- Tourism and Hospitality Taxes
- User Fees and Rentals

## Who Needs To Be Involved:

### Overall

- Businesses and Economic Development Groups
- Civic Leaders and Elected Officials
- Community Organizations
- Community Residents
- Cultural and Arts Organizations
- Educational Institutions
- Environmental and Sustainability Groups
- Health and Wellness Organizations
- Historians
- Local Government
- Philanthropic and Funding Organizations
- Private Developers
- Public Safety and Security Agencies
- Seniors and Elderly Services
- Technology and Innovation Experts
- Tourism and Hospitality Associations
- Transportation and Mobility Experts

- Urban Planners and Design Professionals
- Youth and Children's Organizations

## RECOMMENDATIONS

(include, but are not limited to)

- City of Jacksonville Mayor's Office
- City of Jacksonville Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department
- City of Jacksonville Public Works Department
- City of Jacksonville Downtown Investment Authority
- City of Jacksonville Office of Economic Development
- City of Jacksonville Office Special Events
- City of Jacksonville Procurement Division
- City of Jacksonville Office of Resilience
- Build Up Downtown
- Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville
- Downtown Vision, Inc.
- Jacksonville Civic Council
- Jessie Ball duPont Fund
- Riverfront Parks Now
- Riverside Avondale Preservation
- Visit Jacksonville

## Reference

- Framework of a Collaborative Vision for Downtown Jacksonville
  - Initiative of Build Up Downtown, Jessie Ball duPont Fund and Downtown Vision currently being compiled
- Vibrant Jax Alliance
- Initiative of Build Up Downtown, Downtown Investment Authority and Jessie Ball duPont Fund

## Evaluation and Success

Evaluating the success of public places requires a holistic approach that considers both quantitative and qualitative factors. Regular monitoring, feedback collection, and a willingness to make adjustments based on community needs and trends are essential for maintaining and enhancing the success of public spaces.

Evaluating the success of public spaces involves assessing various aspects to determine their effectiveness, impact on the community, and whether they meet their intended goals. Key factors to consider when evaluating and measuring the success of public places:

- Accessibility
- Adaptability and Flexibility
- Aesthetic Appeal and Design Quality
- Community Engagement
- Cultural and Historical Relevance
- Economic Impact
- Environmental Impact
- Feedback and User Satisfaction
- Inclusivity
- Long-Term Sustainability
- Maintenance and Cleanliness
- Physical and Mental Well-Being
- Programs and Events
- Safety and Security
- Social Interaction and Cohesion
- Usage and Activity Levels



## REPORTS, PRESENTATIONS and RESOURCES

### Historical

City of Jacksonville Neighborhood Bill of Rights  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPU42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPU42EkO/view)

20050322.Parks Task Force Report  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HUnspXCjI7vZtrW2AUNy8NqutYCEHUEb/view>

201904.Parks and Recreation Maintenance Committee.  
Draft Final Report  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp\\_Zu6gKrIuVi2\\_9B-BeNQsV/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AdaoVMgNpp_Zu6gKrIuVi2_9B-BeNQsV/view)

20220126 Presentation GAI Consultants Parks  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NLooXfWBM\\_35WIU\\_v00mdPYsf7MRe-F2/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NLooXfWBM_35WIU_v00mdPYsf7MRe-F2/view)

20211006 Handout CMs Park Binder  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1enz6VmuCeppDzdTZkatvUbzeU6yyoPcO/view>

20210909 Park Master Plan Presentation  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Mivjf7sHWouETWcQO6o1v-dd-EclFvSV/view>

20230208 Presentation GAI Consultants -Parks Master Plan  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jYFCqWkieFQ5Kg-10e84s3I9LRdBxgNp/view>

### Speaker Presentations

20230713.subcommittee.pr.coj parks recreation and  
community services.mp4  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j6b-LsXQ-zBxXOVtAlxmqW4f3RbZx5EG/view>

20230713.subcommittee.pr.coj parks recreation and  
community services.pptx  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HrfQKqUxk2FzlgmotZqOeZYPiWlyUDr7/view>

20230720.subcommittee.pr.acuity design group  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MXsvWsAEwgJwDSUjZx7aVcaIIvoM58zi/view>

20230720.subcommittee.pr.dia v2  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZ\\_Lvh\\_xnw6t\\_Qe1XT9WbEFBIK4g8gqt/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZ_Lvh_xnw6t_Qe1XT9WbEFBIK4g8gqt/view)

20230720.subcommittee.pr.riverfront parks conservancy

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wJkkB6H0TSxRhgXKPnQLZDc7xA0BsIdR/view>

20230720.subcommittee.pr.riverfront parks now  
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20230720.subcommittee.pr.staff recommendations for parks,  
recreation and community services memo  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mlgc40QBdRjgPi7bW\\_gai\\_yWPtpfUDBL/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mlgc40QBdRjgPi7bW_gai_yWPtpfUDBL/view)

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20230727.subcommittee.pr.friends of james weldon  
johnson park  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FWFT8J\\_e3cRZb99QdzoKSBlOJ\\_0f-oqz/edit#slide=id.p1](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FWFT8J_e3cRZb99QdzoKSBlOJ_0f-oqz/edit#slide=id.p1)

20230727.subcommittee.pr.memorial park association  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EYEp1612c3bES8JSnyMMAL8A8dnwai0t/view>

20230727.subcommittee.pr.groundwork jacksonville  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1WbyRre9TQr6N\\_nUMVPEBtNhxmaZQIPco/edit#slide=id.p1](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1WbyRre9TQr6N_nUMVPEBtNhxmaZQIPco/edit#slide=id.p1)

20230727.subcommittee.pr.jacksonville.equestrian.center  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TkPbMy\\_gfq-fy6MHtdqcyGVsbHKamdyE/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TkPbMy_gfq-fy6MHtdqcyGVsbHKamdyE/view)

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<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1cfBatpHudY-LFnBTETQcVCG9Wi7KC7sm/edit#slide=id.p1>

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community services  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Uuj5aFlofJATwcu\\_Y-5YOQpySfbeeac1/edit#slide=id.p1](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Uuj5aFlofJATwcu_Y-5YOQpySfbeeac1/edit#slide=id.p1)

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h8ohAo-I9TOebm-6jCIulRtCKlzyQr6Y/view>

20230801.subcommittee.rf.riverfront parks now  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Kbvttrrf3l57ldJ2WUJeL9OZ7KRqjsi\\_-view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Kbvttrrf3l57ldJ2WUJeL9OZ7KRqjsi_-view)

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1x2WCLGg8v17CPPrRE71Yumdn8xs9X4qmV/view>

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[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QG\\_bkrBuOFH7FfCiLkhXoxhBNM-6cqnI/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QG_bkrBuOFH7FfCiLkhXoxhBNM-6cqnI/view)

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1I0PQkzLLo6Aw-etSmsXbyetPM-lKnqS4/view>

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<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1hNWST0T590a85CqO-ScrlEnVWIemvIO4/edit#slide=id.p1>

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13WAX8kdSpBoELBdMFYltfVYRH1FBSqq-/view>

## Resources

COJ FY 2024 Proposed CIP  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

DVI DTJAX Survey Results 2023  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

DVI State of Downtown 2022  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Maritime Management Plan - 2018-393 On File  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Riverfront 2025 Recording  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Riverfront Activation Plan  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Special Committee on Resiliency 2020-2021  
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Summary DIA Master Plan  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Summary Riverfront Activation Plan  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Project for Public Spaces: The Power of 10+  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Build Up Downtown Website  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

COJ Parks, Recreation and Community Services Master Plan Website  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

COJ Parks, Recreation and Community Services Website  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Emerald Trail Website  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

LS3P Urban Environments Website  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Riverfront Activation Plan Website  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

Trust for Public Land Jacksonville Score Website  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f\\_\\_MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gxEUrbjeWJsRG9f__MCQ6I5vPUUp42EkO/view)

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: RESILIENCE

### Mission & Charge

The Resilience Committee will focus on the health of Jacksonville's processes and outcomes of how individuals and the city successfully adapt to difficult or challenging experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. Climate Change is another area that this committee will look into in regard to resilience.

### CHARGE:

**This focus area will meet publicly with COJ Planning Director, the Chief Resilience Officer and other appropriate parties to determine what changes need to be made to zoning and building codes to promote density, efficiency and resiliency as the city moves forward.**

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## MEMBERS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE - RESILIENCE TRANSITION SUBCOMMITTEE

Ashantae Green | Sub-Committee Chair  
*A Green Design Co.*  
*Duval Soil & Water Conservation District*

James Richardson | Sub-Committee Co-Chair  
*COJ Environmental Protection Board*

Sarah Boren | Sub-Committee Co-Chair  
*City of Atlantic Beach Environmental Stewardship Committee*

Nathan Ballentine  
*Overalls*

Matthew Colaciello  
*Hire Ground*

Logan Cross  
*Sierra Club*

Shanell Davis-Bryant  
*Sage Growth Solutions*

Josh Gellers, PhD  
*University of North Florida*

Megan Hayward  
*Committee Sgt. at Arms Temporary Assistance Guru*

Adam Hoyles  
*SWCA Environmental Consultants*

Dante Jennings  
*GreenLining Jax*

Christina Kelcourse  
*Sunshine Organics & Compost*

Sean Lahav  
*Halff*

Josh Melko  
*University of North Florida*

Jim Minion  
*Farm Out Design Services*

Emily Pierce  
*Rogers Towers, P.A.*

Amanda Polematidis, PE  
*TLC Engineering Solutions & USGBC North Florida*

Joshua Rosenberg  
*NativeJax*

Dr. Adam Rosenblatt  
*University of North Florida & Citizens' Climate Lobby*

Dr. Todd Sack, MD  
*My Green Doctor*

John Sapora  
*Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)*

Alexander Traversa  
*Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)*

Rebecca Williams  
*FOBT Pipeline Inc.*



Executive Summary

Mayor Deegan should establish the framework to build internal culture, and track and ensure accountability and oversight by establishing the Department of Resilience and Sustainability, appointing a Chief Sustainability Officer, creating a technical advisory committee, and organizing an internal agency and departmental working group, along with allocating essential resources such as staff, office space, and direct access to the Mayor.

**Implement Existing Plans:** Resilient Jacksonville Plan, COJ Climate Action Plan, COJ City Council Special Committee on Resiliency Final Report, Adaptation Action Area Working Group Recommendations, and all of the other city plans that exist on the topic.

**Expand the city’s focus on resilience beyond infrastructure, flooding, and heat** to encompass broader aspects of sustainability, the root causes of climate change (especially greenhouse gas emissions), climate-smart development, community well-being, food security, environmental stewardship, equity, and environmental justice, as well as the effective adaptation and mitigation of various chronic stresses or everyday challenges and acute shocks or sudden events.

**Integrate Resilience, Sustainability, and Environmental Stewardship into every city department** across the city’s goals, plans, projects, regulations, codes, and policies, and into personnel training and performance reviews.

**Fund incentives aimed at improving resilience and sustainability** and resolving issues related to the built environment, facilities/critical institutions, climate change and environment [land, trees, air, water (ocean, river, navigable bodies)], health (mental and physical), well-being, food system resilience, environmental justice, and community education/engagement.

**Specific emphasis should be placed on projects** relating to septic tanks, legacy and ongoing pollution, green infrastructure, efficient use of vacant land, engaging the youth, and ensuring food security.



**Collaborate with key stakeholders** including hospitals, governmental bodies, businesses, non-profits, faith-based organizations, and other vital assets to ensure awareness and accountability in supporting the goals of resilience and addressing climate change, along with the following:

- |                            |               |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| • American Red Cross       | • JAA         |
| • COJ Boards & Commissions | • JAXPORT     |
| • Tree Commission          | • JEA         |
| • DIA                      | • JTA         |
| • DCPS                     | • NEFRC       |
| • EPA                      | • SJRWMD      |
| • FDEP                     | • UF/IFAS     |
| • FDOT                     | • USDA        |
| • FFWCC                    | • US Military |

## Measure and Evaluate Success

Designate a department or individual as the party responsible for identifying, measuring, and assessing documented outcomes associated with each recommendation, including budgetary items and grants, to determine successes, failures, and areas of improvement (compared to years prior to implementation) on an annual basis.

## Observations/Current Conditions

### Strengths

- A Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) actively developing a resilience plan based on the best available science and data.
- Abundance of experts and community members who are genuinely invested, possess a wealth of experience, and have been actively involved for many years.
- Access to multi-million dollar Tree Fund to aid in addressing trees/green infrastructure, resilience, and climate change.

**Resilience is a bi-partisan issue, as demonstrated by City Council's adoption of the City Council Special Committee on Resiliency Final Report.**

### Weaknesses

- Historically, numerous recommendations have been formulated, but their implementation has been limited. It is essential to transition from constant planning to decisive action and implementation.
- There is a need for robust communication, marketing efforts, and enhanced community education and engagement.
- Lack of administrative capacity and dedicated team for resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.
- Jacksonville lags behind numerous major cities in establishing climate and sustainability goals.
- Jacksonville lacks a Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) or sustainability department, setting it apart as one of the few major cities without dedicated resources for this purpose.
- Lack of enforcement of and compliance with regulatory protections.

## Opportunities

- Unprecedented level of resilience-related Federal funding and grants.
- Strong potential for extensive collaboration among various departments, agencies, and community partners.
- Opportunity for the Mayor to champion resilience and sustainability to reduce the impacts of climate change in an equitable way.
- Move beyond enforcement and compliance into environmental stewardship.
- Jacksonville can join other major cities in leading the way on resilience, sustainability, and addressing climate change.
- Tackling resilience and climate change issues will dramatically enhance the quality of life and equity across the community. Educate youth and the broader public on the drivers of, and solutions to, resilience challenges present at the local level.

## Challenges

- A significant portion of the population does not understand the concept of resilience but feels the need for its solutions.
- The need for resilience and climate change action is urgent and complex. These issues demand long-term dedication, ongoing efforts, and a sense of optimism. Meeting these challenges necessitates substantial collaboration, widespread public engagement, and effective communication.

**Lack of coordination between independent authorities and the administration presents an obstacle to achieving a cohesive approach to local resiliency.**

## COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

### Community Involvement

The Resilience Subcommittee, composed of 23 members and 15 subject matter experts, prioritized community engagement through five meetings and over 40 submitted input forms, yielding more than 210 suggestions across diverse areas like climate change, health, and environmental justice. Valuable public comments further enriched the

process. The Subcommittee also conducted numerous one-on-one sessions with stakeholders, which enhanced the resulting insights.

Moreover, the Subcommittee researched and engaged with regional leaders and other cities to learn about effective strategies designed to address resilience and climate change. From the community, a strong emphasis on community education emerged, alongside a desire for innovative projects and incentives. Approaches like cooling centers were well-received, and community members expressed interest in collaborative efforts between City departments for tree planting, resilience projects, and funding initiatives to address various challenges.

## 23 - Committee Members from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods

## 15 - Subject Matter Experts

## 210 - Submitted Suggestions & Recommendations

## 6 - Public Committee Meetings

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are 4 Core recommendations with multiple sub-actions. Recommendations have been split into short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions. Key collaborators, funding opportunities, and metrics have been identified for each.

1. **The mayor should urgently champion data-driven and forward-thinking resilience and sustainability policies** rooted in both local risk and global climate imperatives, to ensure Jacksonville's environmental, health, and economic prosperity through comprehensive strategies, environmental stewardship, targeted carbon reduction milestones, and robust collaboration with internal and external agencies.

### ACTIONABLE ITEMS

#### Short-Term (Immediate to 120 days):

- 1.1 Issue a Mayoral Declaration regarding climate change and carbon emissions reductions that outlines her vision to take local action to tackle the root causes of climate change and achieve 100% zero-carbon energy by 2050.
- 1.2 Establish the Department of Resilience and Sustainability within the Mayor's Office and appoint a Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO).

- 1.3 Create a COJ Sustainability, Resilience, and Environmental Stewardship Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that has the authority to provide recommendations, advice, and resources, is charged with helping staff implement the recommendations from the Transition Committees, the COJ Climate Action Plan, Resilience plan, and future plans, and, if appropriate, serves as a member liaison on IDA, DDRB, and/or the Planning Commission.
  - a. Lead and Partners: Mayor and City Council for legislation; Working group/team that includes City departments and boards/commissions, and independent authorities (Port, JEA, JTA, JAA, DIA, etc., and regional entities such as NEFRC)
  - b. Funding: None (use existing staff)
  - c. How: Introduce and adopt legislation to create TAC
  - d. Measure progress and success: Quarterly report out on created annual plan to Mayor, CRO, and CSO
- 1.4 Organize an internal agency and departmental working group for resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.
- 1.5 Introduce language (e.g. City Council of Orlando's Resolution) and collaborate with the COJ City Council to formally commit to the following:
  - a. Use 100% carbon-free energy for all municipal operations by 2035
  - b. Use 100% carbon-free energy for the entire community by 2050
- 1.6 Review all members of boards, commissions, and authorities—especially those of JEA—to ensure openness and willingness to include resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship in decision-making.
- 1.7 Initiating a COJ-wide review of environmental stewardship policies, ordinances, enforcement, and status of Jacksonville's waterways to ensure Jacksonville's health, sustainable neighborhoods, and economic prosperity.





- 1.8 Leverage resources from the Tree Protection and Related Expenses Tree Fund to set a tree canopy goal with no net loss. Fund the Urban Forestry Master Plan, initiate a strategic tree planting initiative, and implement recommendations from the Jacksonville Trees to Offset Stormwater Case Study.
- 1.9 Initiate a comprehensive baseline assessment of legacy and ongoing pollution sources threatening community health and Jacksonville's waterways (e.g., modified Social Vulnerability Assessment), marking the initial step towards fulfilling Action Item #15 in the Resilient Jax Action Plan to enhance watershed health and improve water, soil, and air quality.

#### Mid-Term (1-2 years):

- 1.10 Require a review of all current and future infrastructure projects to identify opportunities to incorporate resilience strategies and reduce carbon emissions, and aggressively seek state and Federal funding to support such projects.

#### Long-Term (2+ years):

- 1.11 Build and implement a data-driven infrastructure investment plan prioritizing human health, equity, environmental stewardship, and economic growth.

#### Who else needs to be involved:

- City Council
- CRO, CSO
- All independent and other relevant governmental authorities (i.e., DIA, DCPS, FDER, FDOT, FFWCC, JAA, JAXPORT, JEA, JTA, SJRWMD, US Military, etc.)
- Downtown Investment Authority
- Relevant non-profit and education partners, (i.e., Scenic Jacksonville, UNF, JU, FSCJ, UF/IFAS, EWU, NAACP EJC committee, Greenlining Jax, Global Shapers, NEFL Green Chamber, St. Johns Riverkeeper, American Red Cross, etc.)
- Relevant for-profit partners

#### Evaluation and Success:

1. All short-term actions are taken and documented.
2. Number of trees retained, planted, and maintained through maturity.
3. Percentage increase in tree canopy.
4. Usage of tree funds.

5. Revision of charge of boards to include resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.
  6. The passing of legislation and annual review of progress towards these goals.
- 2. Focus on the built environment** (vertical, horizontal, and natural) through the use of building codes and ordinance changes related to facilities, institutions, and natural resources to include resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

## ACTIONABLE ITEMS

### Short-Term (Immediate to 120 days):

- 2.1 Strengthen and enforce the current sustainable building ordinance 2009-11 by implementing these changes.
  - a. Lead: Planning and Development, Building Inspection Division
  - b. Partners: DIA, DDRB, USGBC North Florida, NEFBA, ABC, AIA, FCMA, City Council
  - c. How: Implement existing and adopt amended legislation
  - d. Funding: a) Money for private sector incentives from Resilient Florida and IRA; b) additional staff (same as a)
  - e. Measurement: Number of sustainable and resilient buildings each year; Percentage of building permits complying each year increased year over year
- 2.2 Fund and prioritize existing CIP projects addressing legacy pollution such as septic tanks and infrastructure improvements (e.g., untreated drainage).
- 2.3 Enroll in and implement the PACE program (Property Assessed Clean Energy).
  - a. Lead: Public Works
  - b. Partners: CRO, CSO, Sewer and Water Authority, EQD

- c. How:
  - i. Reprioritize CIP
  - ii. Enroll in PACE program
  - iii. Implement PACE program
- d. Funding: Existing budget and future funding (general revenue); grants (e.g. Septic Tank Removal Program)
- e. Measurement: Number of septic tanks removed accelerated; number of projects that use PACE; number of CIP projects that incorporate resilient features

### Mid-Term (1-2 years):

- 2.4 Enhance and incentivize resilient requirements for all buildings including public and private sectors, using at least these suggestions.
  - a. Lead: Planning Department
  - b. Partners: DIA, DDRB, USGBC North Florida, NEFBA, ABC, AIA, FCMA, City Council
  - c. How:
    - i. Draft legislation and provide incentives for resilient design, construction, and operation
    - ii. Promote and implement legislation (Long: 2+ years)
  - d. Funding: Resilient Florida implementation grant
  - e. Measurement: Number of projects that utilize incentives
- 2.5 Create Resilience and Sustainability Hubs at existing community centers. Enhancements to our community centers could include electrical upgrades, adding generators, and improving HVAC systems to ensure these centers can serve as Resilience Hubs so that in the recovery phase of a hurricane, residents can use the facility to charge phones, access Wi-Fi, apply for benefits, or

contact loved ones. Furthermore, these facilities can act as distribution centers for sandbags, water, food, or other supplies and services for residents.

These centers are already used year-round as neighborhood centers for building social connectivity, community-building activities, fostering greater community cohesion and health, building trust with local government, and connecting neighbors.

- a. Lead: CRO, CSO, and COJ Parks and Recreation
- b. Partners: Other City departments and independent authorities and DCPS, JSO, City Council members
- c. How:
  - i. Identify locations
  - ii. Apply for funding
  - iii. Implement and construct
  - iv. Coordinate on use
- d. Funding: BRIC, Schools, IJJA, and IRA
- e. Measurement: Number of hubs established; Degree of utilization; Degree of accessibility

#### Long-Term (2+ years):

- 2.6 Implement legislation incentivizing resilient strategies for all buildings including public and private sectors using the aforementioned suggestions.

- 3. **Integrate education, promotion, and measurement of heat/ health management, county farming, social connectivity, and supply chain management** into a comprehensive plan for addressing mental and physical health, well-being, & food resilience.

#### ACTIONABLE ITEMS

##### Short-Term (Immediate to 120 days):

- 3.1 Strengthen and fund a heat health management plan that addresses heat- related illnesses, heat emergencies, public park infrastructure, health

education management (including education of health professionals and first responders), and public and employee health, and then implement the plan throughout the City.

- 3.2 Tackle extreme heat and heat island effect by developing and launching a cool communities initiative that provides a proactive plan for cooling communities. This plan may include painting streets with a reflective coating, installing awnings, planting trees, prioritizing green infrastructure where possible, and incentivizing reflective and green roads city-wide.
- 3.3 Identify public vacant land that could be used for urban and resilient agriculture.

##### Mid-Term (1-2 years):

- 3.4 Develop and launch an urban/resilient agriculture initiative to implement comprehensive policy, provide education and staffing support, facilitate enterprise development, ensure access to water and land, and foster partnerships with non-profits and businesses to promote urban agriculture and enhance community well-being.
- 3.5 Work with regenerative/resilient farming professionals, groups, enterprises, and community members to develop vacant land and build economic and ecological benefits within designs. Prioritize food deserts.
- 3.6 Allocate resources toward robust incentives that directly acknowledge and address mental health concerns, and alleviate anxiety and distress stemming from climate-related stressors and displacement caused by disasters or extreme weather events.
- 3.7 Foster robust ongoing social connectivity to improve mental health and well-being by utilizing street-level asset-based community development to facilitate social connectivity, placemaking, and neighborliness across the City, within and across neighborhoods and communities, and providing small matching grants to make our community better in the interest of supporting mental health and well-being.

- 3.8 Develop a resilient food supply chain that incorporates a social, economic, and infrastructural vulnerability assessment,



develop cooperative enterprise and a local food purchasing policy for city-wide authorities to facilitate collaboration among local food purveyors to decentralize primary production and enhance food system redundancy in the interest of strategic food security (e.g., SVI link, food desert map , etc.)

### Funding Needs

- Staffing in collaboration with Health Department and management
- Utility subsidies for water access
- Mini-matching grants for community initiatives
- Tracking data
- Resilient design

### Funding Opportunities

1. US Department of Health & Human Services
2. City farming: USDA, UF SeedIt Grants
3. ABCD (Asset Based Community Development), Florida Blue Foundation, Humana

### Who else needs to be involved:

- CRO & Chief Health Officer and Medical groups
- City Council members
- Duval UF/IFAS Extension
- Neighborhoods Department
- Private food supply chain: food distributors, grocers, etc.
- FDACS / USDA
- Feeding Northeast Florida and other similar groups
- COJ economic development, SBDC
- COJ Parks and Recreation Department

- Urban Forestry Department
- Regenerative farming/land use professionals and groups
- Regenerative Agriculture Development
- Savory Institute Regrarians

### Evaluation and Success:

1. Decrease heat-related illnesses, excess death/ER rates, hospitalizations
  2. Number of farms and crops in Duval using USDA census
  3. Number of neighbor-led community initiatives
  4. Industry-standard measure of food supply chain resilience
  5. Establish evaluation of current statuses to track and report today and for future uses
- 4. Ensure that the city's focus on resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship** includes environmental justice, equity, community engagement, and education (Government, corporate/business, community, and youth).

### ACTIONABLE ITEMS

#### Short-Term (Immediate to 120 days):

- 4.1 Apply a social justice and equity lens to all resiliency projects by employing a process like Equity Impact Assessment or other similar tools.

#### Resources:

- Equity Impact Assessment (Michigan Department on Health & Human Services)
- Equity Impact Assessment Tool Washington State University Vancouver
- State of Vermont Equity Impact Assessment Tool

- Flanagan et al. (2018), Measuring Community Vulnerability to Natural and Anthropogenic Hazards: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Social Vulnerability Index
- CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index (CDC/ATSDR SVI)

- 4.2 Expand collaborative and sustained engagement efforts that connect community-based organizations and local non-profits that support community-identified resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship needs.
- Create a process that incorporates and ensures broad public input into the planned revisions to the land development code and CIP prioritization process beyond minimum public meetings.
  - Implement a range of participatory strategies including but not limited to citizen panels, juries, and asynchronous commenting periods.
- 4.3 Include leaders and businesses from historically underrepresented black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities and low-income neighborhoods in decision-making processes.

#### **Mid-Term (1-2 years):**

- 4.4 Develop and implement a comprehensive community engagement plan that includes communications, outreach, engagement, and educational methods designed to inform decision-making related to mitigating and adapting to climate change, creating community resilience, and achieving the long-term sustainability of the region.
- 4.5 Create workforce opportunities and training programs in small and medium enterprises that enhance economic mobility and advance the just transition to a resilient city.

#### **Long-Term (2+ years):**

- 4.6 Implement an ongoing inter-agency evaluation and tracking methodology that includes environmental justice, community engagement, outreach, and education metrics.

#### **Funding Opportunities**

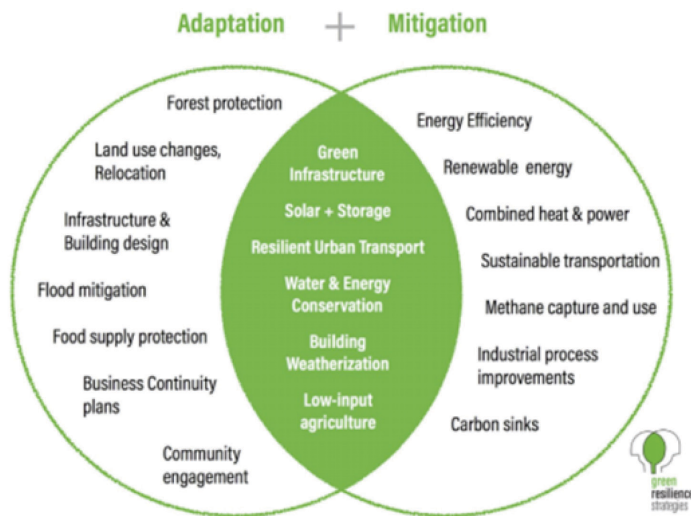
1. NOAA Climate Ready Workforce Development
2. EPA Inflation Reduction Act Environmental Climate Justice Program

#### **Who else needs to be involved:**

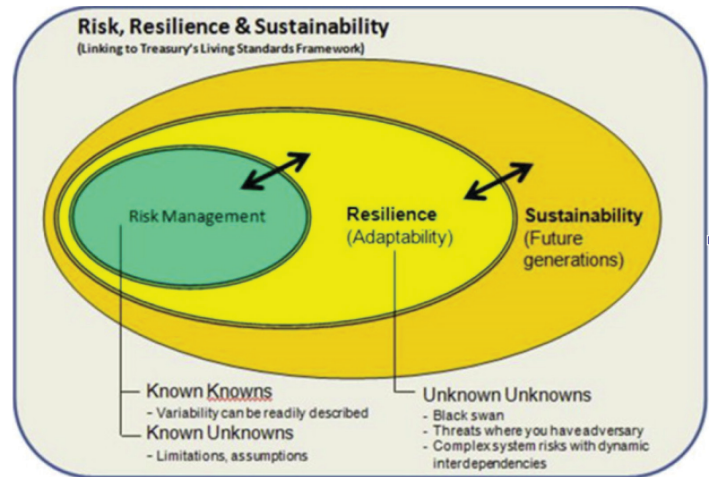
- City Council
- Independent agencies, City departments, and regional partners
- Non-profits and community-based organizations (BIPOC, NAACP, LIFTJAX, LISC, Kumpin for Success, etc.)
- Academic institutions
- Faith-based organizations
- Duval County Public Schools
- K-12 afterschool and out-of-school time organizations

#### **Evaluation and Success:**

1. Number of planned and executed meaningful and targeted community and educational programming events
2. Polling and surveying that demonstrates the change in public perception of the City's response to and citizen's personal capacity to meaningfully influence environmental decision-making
3. Implementation of tools and strategies that address equity in community engagement in environmental decision-making
4. Annual review of progress toward completing these recommendations



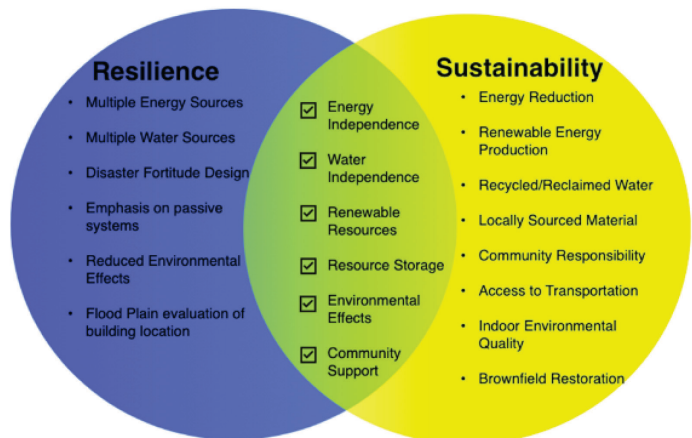
Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Synergies. Green Resilience Strategies (2017). Graphic concept modified with acknowledgment of David Macleod, City of Toronto.



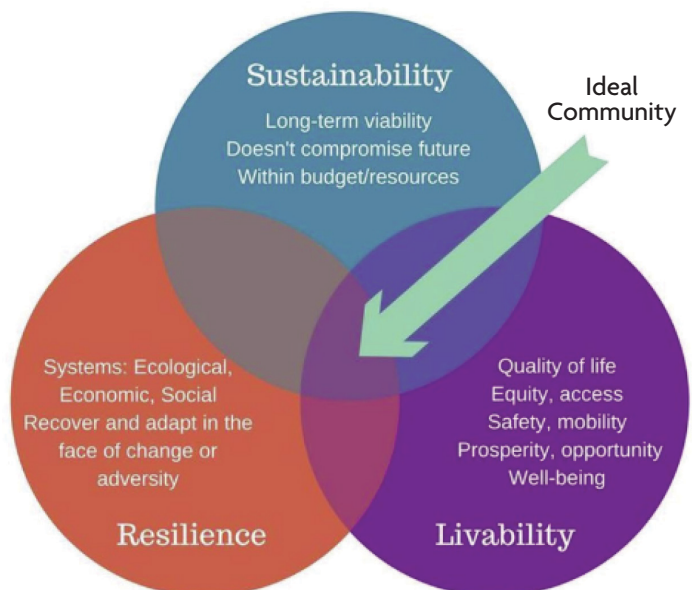
H. Blake, The treasury's higher living standards framework: update on the sustainability dimension, in: Proceedings of the Paper presented at the Sustainability Rhetoric: Facts and Fictions, 2013

## Key Takeaways & Conclusion

1. The Mayor should immediately set the framework vision for resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship in Jacksonville.
2. Resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship influence every City department and the entire community.
3. Need for a more holistic and expanded view of resilience, sustainability, and environmental stewardship in Jacksonville.
4. More staff, funding, and implementation authority for the CRO & CSO.
5. Implementation of the Resilient Jacksonville Plan, Climate Action Plan, and all of the other City plans that exist on the topic.
6. Need for better community engagement, education, and marketing.
7. Immediate investment is needed to reduce growing future costs.



Resilience versus Sustainability and the United Nations goals. Adapted from Echotape (2018)



Ideal Community image created by Jan Beange



## Index - List of Abbreviations

ABC	Associated Builders and Contractors
ABCD	Asset Based Community Development
AIA	American Institute of Architects
CIP	Jacksonville Capital Improvement Plan
CBO	Community-based organization
CHO	Chief Health Officer
CRO	Chief Resilience Officer
CSO	Chief Sustainability Officer
DDRB	Downtown Development Review Board
EJ	Environmental Justice
EJC	Ethics and Judicial Committee
EQD	Jacksonville Environmental Quality Division
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EWU	Edward Waters University
FCMA	First Coast Manufacturer's Association
FDACS	Florida Department of Agriculture and Customer Services
FSCJ	Florida State College at Jacksonville
IJA	Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act
IRA	Inflation Reduction Act
JSO	Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
JU	Jacksonville University
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NEFBA	Northeast Florida Builders Association
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PACE	Property Assessed Clean Energy
SBDC	UNF Small Business Development Center
UNF	University of North Florida
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USGBC North Florida	U.S. Green Building Council North Florida

## SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE RESOURCES (STATE & NATIONAL)

### Other Cities - Department Structure & Plans

#### Orlando Office of Sustainability & Resilience

<https://www.orlando.gov/Our-Government/Departments-Offices/Executive-Offices/CAO/Sustainability-Resilience>

#### Resilience Hub Website

<https://www.orlando.gov/Our-Government/Orlando-plans-for-a-future-ready-city/Transforming-Community-Centers-into-Resilience-Hubs>

#### Future Ready Plan

[https://www.orlando.gov/files/sharedassets/public/initiatives/final\\_futurereadycityplan-appendix.pdf](https://www.orlando.gov/files/sharedassets/public/initiatives/final_futurereadycityplan-appendix.pdf)

#### Tampa Office of Sustainability & Resilience

##### Green Tampa Website

<https://www.tampa.gov/green-tampa/climate-action-plan>

##### Resilient Tampa

<https://www.tampa.gov/sites/default/files/document/2021/Resilient%20Tampa.pdf>

##### Climate Action Plan

<https://www.miamigov.com/My-Government/ClimateChange/Climate-Change-Action/MiamiForeverClimateReady>

##### Fast-Track Permit for Green Construction

<https://www.tampa.gov/green-tampa/infofast-track-permitting>

#### Miami Office of Resilience and Sustainability

##### Website

<https://www.miamigov.com/My-Government/ClimateChange/Climate-Change-Action/GHGReduction>

##### Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan

<https://www.miamigov.com/My-Government/ClimateChange/Climate-Change-Action/GHGReduction>

##### Miami Forever Climate Ready

<https://www.miamigov.com/My-Government/ClimateChange/Climate-Change-Action/MiamiForeverClimateReady>

##### Climate Ready Strategy

<https://www.miamigov.com/files/sharedassets/public/miami-forever-climate-ready-2020-strategy.pdf>

#### Miami Dade County Office of Resilience

##### Website

<https://www.miamidade.gov/global/economy/resilience/home.page>

Resilient305

<https://www.miamidade.gov/global/economy/resilience/resilient305.page>

### **New Orleans Office of Resilience and Sustainability**

Website

<https://nola.gov/resilience-sustainability/>

Actions

[https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms\\_web&id=1Pj4OucmOaTLhUUmo0z9kX9bqKiOWo8eF](https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms_web&id=1Pj4OucmOaTLhUUmo0z9kX9bqKiOWo8eF)

### **Resilient DC**

Strategy

<https://resilient.dc.gov/>

2022 Progress Report

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jqA9yr9cgAn3eQXPpU7nZPjUL5hFZNGr/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jqA9yr9cgAn3eQXPpU7nZPjUL5hFZNGr/view?usp=drive_link)

### **Sustainable DC - Urban Sustainability Administration**

Website

[https://sustainable.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sustainable/page\\_content/attachments/SDC\\_CEDC\\_CRDC\\_ProgressReport\\_2023\\_Final.pdf](https://sustainable.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sustainable/page_content/attachments/SDC_CEDC_CRDC_ProgressReport_2023_Final.pdf)

Plan

[https://sustainable.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sustainable/page\\_content/attachments/SDC\\_CEDC\\_CRDC\\_ProgressReport\\_2023\\_Final.pdf](https://sustainable.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sustainable/page_content/attachments/SDC_CEDC_CRDC_ProgressReport_2023_Final.pdf)

2023 Progress Report

[https://sustainable.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sustainable/page\\_content/attachments/SDC\\_CEDC\\_CRDC\\_ProgressReport\\_2023\\_Final.pdf](https://sustainable.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sustainable/page_content/attachments/SDC_CEDC_CRDC_ProgressReport_2023_Final.pdf)

### **San Francisco Environment Department**

Website

[http://www.sfbaylivingshorelines.org/sf\\_shorelines\\_about.html](http://www.sfbaylivingshorelines.org/sf_shorelines_about.html)

Shorelines Project Climate Plan

<https://sfenvironment.org/climate>

### **NYC Mayor's Office of Sustainability, Climate & Environmental Justice GreenNYC**

Website

<https://climate.cityofnewyork.us/>

PlaNYC Report

<https://climate.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PlaNYC-2023-Full-Report.pdf>

### **U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit**

<https://toolkit.climate.gov/>

## **LOCAL RESOURCES & ARTICLES**

COJ Municipal Code

[https://library.municode.com/fl/jacksonville/codes/code\\_o](https://library.municode.com/fl/jacksonville/codes/code_o)

Jacksonville Climate Coalition Resilience Subcommittee Recommendations

[https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms\\_web&id=1XBwWrThGwCTzYV7jsG\\_M9ISau7a3bYoL](https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms_web&id=1XBwWrThGwCTzYV7jsG_M9ISau7a3bYoL)

St. Johns Riverkeeper Resilience Subcommittee Focus Area Recommendations

[https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms\\_web&id=1I9FBsDQCqQDUAjAsUzLg7tfTx\\_Fe48UK](https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms_web&id=1I9FBsDQCqQDUAjAsUzLg7tfTx_Fe48UK)

State of the River Report

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/580c46d6ca914d9984fa9a6525aa2360>

Center for Sustainable Agricultural Excellence and Conservation (CSAEC) – Logic Model Template

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/12GInKiT071dkXYNbSuAEuzOHAAwOWxr\\_f](https://drive.google.com/file/d/12GInKiT071dkXYNbSuAEuzOHAAwOWxr_f)

JTA

Move 2027 Plan

<https://www.jtafla.com/media/34fnjggbl/move2027.pdf>

Jobs for Jax

<https://www.jobsforjax.net/>

North Florida Clean Cities

<https://cleancities.energy.gov/coalitions/north-florida>

Jacksonville Trees to Offset Stormwater Case Study

[https://www.coj.net/getattachment/Departments/Public-Works/Urban-Forestry/Education/COJ\\_TreestoOffsetStormwaterCaseBook\\_highquality.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US](https://www.coj.net/getattachment/Departments/Public-Works/Urban-Forestry/Education/COJ_TreestoOffsetStormwaterCaseBook_highquality.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US)

JEA Recommendations for IRA (Joshua Melko, UNF)

[https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms\\_web&id=1qj9wZQ42z0buVdJIEVP4EOkU5qG19OgS](https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms_web&id=1qj9wZQ42z0buVdJIEVP4EOkU5qG19OgS)

Resilient Jax Policy Priorities before COJ adopted name

[https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms\\_web&id=13ThYM\\_uBNziA8IAkWLauWN5URgsiAxWH](https://drive.google.com/u/0/open?usp=forms_web&id=13ThYM_uBNziA8IAkWLauWN5URgsiAxWH)

Renew Jacksonville Campaign

<https://renewjax.org/>

Mark Gelfo designs critical facilities emergency power systems, PV systems and more;

<mailto:mark.gelfo@tlc-eng.com>



NativeJax  
<https://www.nativejax.com/>

## Articles & Videos

JEA HQ: Project Article

Video natural channel design as applied to McCoys Creek  
<https://youtu.be/v3NCuFLOYc>

Climate displacement/gentrification - JaxToday Article  
<https://jaxtoday.org/2022/07/28/jacksonville-named-at-risk-for-climate-gentrification-how-can-we-lesser-the-threat/>

Article: Groundwork Jacksonville awarded major grant for waterways restoration (Resident Community News)  
<https://residentnews.net/2023/01/03/groundwork-jacksonville-awarded-major-grant-for-waterways-restoration/>

Article: The Jacksonville environmental groups trying to tackle racial disparities (The Guardian)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/feb/17/jacksonville-florida-climate-environmental-groups-racial-disparities>

Article: J magazine: The St. Johns, a river in peril (Florida Times-Union)  
<https://www.jacksonville.com/story/opinion/columns/2020/08/07/reason-front/3320365001/>

Article: Jacksonville named at risk for climate gentrification. How can we lessen the threat? (ADAPT Florida)  
<https://jaxtoday.org/2022/07/28/jacksonville-named-at-risk-for-climate-gentrification-how-can-we-lesser-the-threat/>

Article: As seas rise, Florida will likely lose more coastal property value than any other state (ADAPT Florida)  
<https://www.wuft.org/news/2019/07/17/as-seas-rise-florida-will-likely-lose-more-coastal-property-value-than-any-other-state/>

FL Woman of the Year in Agriculture: Article  
<https://flaglerlive.com/angela-tenbroeck/>

Video  
<https://youtu.be/cgHbR9AdqK8>

Article: Food from Farms to Seniors  
<https://www.jacksonville.com/story/news/local/2020/04/10/coronavirus-farms-florida-blue-partner-to-get-food-to-seniors-needy-families/112259868/>

Video on how to address food deserts  
<https://fb.watch/lSw5ZWgvMj/>

LEED Gold cities like Miami lead on climate resilience  
<https://www.usgbc.org/articles/leed-gold-cities-miami-lead-climate-resilience>



GSA uses SITES to nurture the landscape and manage stormwater A look at resilience bills in Washington state  
<https://www.usgbc.org/articles/gsa-uses-sites-nurture-landscape-and-manage-stormwater>

Enhancing resilience through building information modeling PEER-certified airports in India take flight with power resilience  
<https://www.usgbc.org/articles/enhancing-resilience-through-building-information-modeling>

American Forests Releases Tree Equity Scores for 150K+ Neighborhoods in the U.S. Since When Have Trees Existed Only for Rich Americans?  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/06/30/opinion/environmental-inequity-trees-critical-infrastructure.html>

Local LEED projects  
<https://www.usgbc.org/community/north-florida?view=projects>

### Certification/Rating Systems

Resilient Guidelines + Certification (RELi) Website  
<https://c3livingdesign.org/reli/>

- Institute for Market Transportation Guidelines for Resilient Design & Construction  
<https://anyflip.com/zyqc/erii/>
- RELi Action List  
<https://online.anyflip.com/zyqc/ojoi/mobile/index.html#p=1>
- Other resources  
[https://c3livingdesign.org/?page\\_id=11817](https://c3livingdesign.org/?page_id=11817)

Sustainable Sites (SITES) Rating System  
<https://www.sustainable-sites.org/>

Performance Excellence in Electricity Renewal (PEER)  
<https://peer.gbci.org/>

USGBC Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Certification  
<https://www.usgbc.org/leed>

Adapt Action Guide  
<https://c3livingdesign.org/adapt/>

STAR Community Rating System Resilience Guide  
<https://1drv.ms/b/s!AklU3FZzEMaypXWoQqUSenqLEWNS?e=GdPGsJ>

Florida Green Building Certification  
<https://floridagreenbuilding.org/>

WELL Health Safety Rating  
<https://www.wellcertified.com/>

### Links from Credible Non-profits

U.S. Sustainable Directors Network

- USDN Resilience Hub website resources  
<http://resilience-hub.org/resources/>
- USDN Resilience Hubs Guidance Document  
[http://resilience-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/USDN\\_ResilienceHubsGuidance-1.pdf](http://resilience-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/USDN_ResilienceHubsGuidance-1.pdf)
- USDN Resilience Hub White Paper  
[http://resilience-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/USDN\\_ResilienceHub.pdf](http://resilience-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/USDN_ResilienceHub.pdf)

Making Sense of FL's New Resilience Act (Source: Florida Climate Center)  
<https://floridacclimateinstitute.org/resources/news-archive/3062-making-sense-of-florida-s-new-resilience-act>

US Green Building Council's Center for Resilience & Other Resources

- Profiles of Resilience: LEED in Practice highlights several LEED-certified projects that have exhibited exemplary resilience.  
<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/profiles-resilience-leed-practice>
- Resilient by Design: USGBC Offers Sustainability Tools for Enhance Resilience defines resilience in the context of green buildings and LEED, while also examining how USGBC supports resilient measures and supporting activities.  
<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/resilient-design-usgbc-offers-sustainability-tools-enhance-resilience>
- The LEED Climate Resilience Screening Tool for LEED v4 Projects offers a framework to help identify climate-related effects on projects, and to determine effective strategies for enhanced resilience.  
<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/leed-climate-resilience-screening-tool-leed-v4-projects>
- Green Building and Climate Resilience: Understanding Impacts and Preparing for Changing Conditions is a study of the impacts of climate change and examination of potential mitigation

strategies for the changing conditions that result. This study was completed by the University of Michigan in collaboration with USGBC.

<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/green-building-and-climate-resilience-understanding-impacts-and-preparing-changing-conditions>

- Voluntary Resilience Standards: An Assessment of the Emerging Market for Resilience in the Built Environment is a report by Meister Consulting Group that explores strategies and tools made available to facilities and managers in growing and implementing resilient buildings, including LEED, SITES, and PEER.  
<http://www.mc-group.com/voluntary-resilience-standards-an-assessment-of-the-emerging-market-for-resilience-in-the-built-environment/>
- Energy Transition Framework for Cities is a study conducted by DNV-GL that examines best practices for energy in cities, including how many are working to ensure resilient communities and reliable energy performance.  
<https://www.dnvgl.com/publications/energy-transition-framework-for-cities-113038>
- Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves is an interim report by the National Institute of Building Science that examines incentives for resilience tactics and discusses the value of mitigation funding in planning for potential disasters.  
<https://www.nibs.org/news/381874/National-Institute-of-Building-Sciences-Issues-New-Report-on-the-Value-of-Mitigation.htm>
- A study by University of Texas at San Antonio focuses on how LEED v4: New Construction specifically addresses building resilience by providing multiple credit-based opportunities for enhancement.  
<https://portal.nibs.org/files/wl?id=672qjV0PmTXTtR8SqPwPP2DYyh97RcXK>
- Water Conservation and Water Resource Management in California's Green Buildings: Insights and Opportunity is a USGBC analysis of how California's green buildings have prioritized water conservation and water resource management to enhance state and local resilience.  
<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/water-conservation-and-water-resource-management-californias-green-buildings-data-insights>

- Building a Healthier, More Resilient Future outlines an expanded suite of programs and resources focused on improving building and community resilience in the face of climate risks.  
<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/building-healthier-more-resilient-future>

- Measuring Resilience Guide  
<https://www.usgbc.org/articles/new-measuring-resilience-guide-released-cities-and-communities>
- My Green Doctor  
<https://mygreendoctor.org/>  
<http://www.mygreendoctor.es/> (en Español)

## NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

COMET-Farm (USDA)

<https://www.comet-farm.com/>

Climate Smart Restoration Tool

<https://climaterestorationtool.org/csrt/>

Climate Data Tool

<https://ccafs.cgiar.org/resources/tools/climate-data-tool>

EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJScreen)

<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>

EPA's Climate Resilience Evaluation and Awareness Tool (CREAT) Climate Scenarios Projection Map

<https://epa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=3805293158d54846a29f750d63c6890e>

CDC National Environmental Public Health Tracking Climate Change

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/topics/ClimateChange.htm>

United Nations Convention on Climate Change National League of Cities

<https://unfccc.int/blog/seven-ways-cities-can-take-climate-action>

Department of Energy

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/study-shows-carbon-emission-reductions-city-energy-actions>

Environmental Justice State by State:

<https://ejstatebystate.org/>

Post Carbon Institute

<https://www.resilience.org/>

International Coalition on Sustainable Infrastructure  
<https://sustainability-coalition.org/>

International Risk Governance Council – Resource Guide  
on Resilience / White Paper: Measuring Urban Resilience As  
You Build It - Insights from 100 Resilient Cities  
<https://irgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Flax-Measuring-Urban-Resilience-As-You-Build-It.pdf>

Resilience Rising (global consortium of NGOs and  
initiatives) – Resources / The Climate Resilient Infrastructure  
Report: A focus on implementation  
<https://resiliencerisingglobal.org/about/>

US Compost Council's new research on ROI for several  
project uses.  
<https://compostfoundation.org/Return-on-Investment>

Carbon credits and biochar:  
[https://www.carbon-standards.com/docs/transfer/36\\_400EN.pdf](https://www.carbon-standards.com/docs/transfer/36_400EN.pdf)

Restoration Agriculture Development: Redesigning  
Agriculture in Nature's Image  
<https://www.restorationag.com/>

Regregarians  
<http://www.regrarians.org/>

Permaculture Institute in North America  
<https://pina.in/>

Savanna Institute  
<https://www.savannainstitute.org/>

Geoff Lawton, The Permaculture Research Institute  
<https://www.permaculturenews.org/author/geofflawton/>

Holmgren Design  
<https://holmgren.com.au/>

Omaha Permaculture  
<https://www.omahapermaculture.org/>

## **KEY PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS COJ RESILIENCE PLANNING EFFORTS**

Resilient Jacksonville Draft Outline of Actions & Sub-actions  
for Review & Feedback Purposes  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gEieZa4JWLfr4RLFvsKkQiKz3nWMEWlU/view>

COJ Chief Resilience Officer  
<https://www.resilientjacksonville.com/>



July 21st Presentation Part 1  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1g\\_slk9qa5yqo0979utlQdNFsS-hboFE5/edit?usp=drive\\_link&oid=110628702067550146373&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1g_slk9qa5yqo0979utlQdNFsS-hboFE5/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=110628702067550146373&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Part 2  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LWcrbPYPSPKul0OyAMS37iEnMYhrvNCN/edit?usp=drive\\_link&oid=110628702067550146373&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LWcrbPYPSPKul0OyAMS37iEnMYhrvNCN/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=110628702067550146373&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Video on understanding natural channel design as applied to  
McCoys Creek:  
<https://youtu.be/v3NCuFLOYc>

2020-2021 COJ Special Committee on Resiliency Final  
Report  
[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/Final%20Report%20-%20Special%20Committee%20on%20Resiliency.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/Final%20Report%20-%20Special%20Committee%20on%20Resiliency.pdf)

Webpage (Presentations appear on the main page and under  
each subcommittee page)  
<https://www.coj.net/city-council/standing-committees/resiliency-special-committee>

2019 Storm Resiliency & Infrastructure Development  
Review Committee – Presentation  
<https://www.coj.net/sraidrc/docs/resiliency-presentation-6-19-19.aspx/>



## Webpage

<https://www.coj.net/sraidrc>

## 2019 Adaptation Action Area Working Group

<https://www.coj.net/departments/planning-and-development/community-planning-division/adaptation-action-area/>

## Recommendations

<https://www.coj.net/departments/planning-and-development/docs/community-planning-division/aaa-approved-recomendations.aspx>

## Report

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/AAA%20-%20Approved%20Recommendations%20-%20Final%20-%20ADA.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/AAA%20-%20Approved%20Recommendations%20-%20Final%20-%20ADA.pdf)

## Business Case for Resilience in Southeast Florida (2020 Urban Land Institute Report)

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/The%20Business%20Case%20for%20Resilience%20in%20Southeast%20Florida\\_reduced.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/The%20Business%20Case%20for%20Resilience%20in%20Southeast%20Florida_reduced.pdf)

## Climate Risk and Real Estate: Emerging Practices for Market Assessment

[https://knowledge.uli.org/reports/research-reports/2020/climate-risk-markets?utm\\_source=realmagnet&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=HQ%20A%20Knowledge%20Finder%2010%2E05%2E2020%20v2](https://knowledge.uli.org/reports/research-reports/2020/climate-risk-markets?utm_source=realmagnet&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=HQ%20A%20Knowledge%20Finder%2010%2E05%2E2020%20v2)

## Flood Funding Finder

<https://floodcoalition.org/resources/floodfundingfinder/>

## City of Jacksonville Storm Resiliency and Infrastructure Development Review Committee Presentation

<https://www.coj.net/sraidrc/docs/resiliency-presentation-6-19-19.aspx-presentation-6-19-19.aspx>

## American Flood Coalition

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/20201120%20%20American%20Flood%20Coalition%20presentation.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/20201120%20%20American%20Flood%20Coalition%20presentation.pdf)

## Financing the Flood Mitigation Project

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/20201120%20Financing%20Flood%20Mitigation%20-%20FMIA%20presentation.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/20201120%20Financing%20Flood%20Mitigation%20-%20FMIA%20presentation.pdf)

## Flood Mitigation Presentation

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/JACKSONVILLE%20PRESENTATION%2010-23-2020.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/JACKSONVILLE%20PRESENTATION%2010-23-2020.pdf)

## Smart Home America Presentation: Best Practices for Residential & Commercial Construction

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/10-23-2020%20Smart%20Home%20America%20COJ%20Resiliency%20Committee%20.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/10-23-2020%20Smart%20Home%20America%20COJ%20Resiliency%20Committee%20.pdf)

## Adaptation Action Area (AAA) Working Group Approved Recommendations - Dated 8/27/2019

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/AAA%20-%20Approved%20Recommendations%20-%20Final%20-%20ADA.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/AAA%20-%20Approved%20Recommendations%20-%20Final%20-%20ADA.pdf)

## Adaptation Action Area (AAA) Working Group Report and Recommendations Dated - 11/2019

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/Adaptation%20Action%20Area%20Report\\_Nov2019\\_FINAL%20-%20v2.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/Adaptation%20Action%20Area%20Report_Nov2019_FINAL%20-%20v2.pdf)

## Storm Resiliency and Hardening Workshop on Future Climate Scenarios Presentation by Jacobs - Dated 7/22/2020

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/Climate%20Scenarios%20Workshop.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/Climate%20Scenarios%20Workshop.pdf)

## JEA Resilience Plan Draft Report (Compressed) - Dated 5/8/2020

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/JEA%20Resilience%20Plan%20DRAFT%20REPORT%20-%20Compressed.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/JEA%20Resilience%20Plan%20DRAFT%20REPORT%20-%20Compressed.pdf)

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

### Mission & Charge

The Affordable Housing committee will provide research and data pertaining to rental housing increases and the impact on thousands of people on waitlist for affordable housing in Jacksonville. What resources are available that could impact positive outcomes, and what is the status of our city?

### CHARGE:

**The focus area will hold listening sessions with the Jacksonville Housing Authority, Jacksonville Finance Housing Authority, First Coast Apartment Association, LISC, Habijax, Jacksonville Community Land Trust, Northeast Florida Builders Association, Ability Housing, members of the recent Council CQLI Special Committee, and other housing-related organizations, as needed, to better ascertain past efforts, the current housing landscape, specific future solutions, and how to quickly implement those.**

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## MEMBERS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE - AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRANSITION SUBCOMMITTEE

Joshua Hicks | Committee Chairman  
*City of Jacksonville*

Alex Sifakis | Committee Vice Chairman  
*JWB Real Estate Companies*

Damita Chavis  
*Community Member*

Dr. Melissa Chester  
*First Coast Association of Realtist (FCAR)*

Dr. Irvin Cohen  
*LISC Jax*

Chris Crothers  
*Jessie Ball duPont Fund*

Diana Galavis  
*Northeast Florida Association of Realtors*

Steve Gilbert  
*Beaches Habitat for Humanity*

Curtis Hart  
*Hart Resources*

Michael Hodges  
*National Association of Residential Property Managers*

Shaun Jones  
*Monumental Realty Services LLC*

Patrick Krechowski  
*Balch & Bingham, LLP*

Angie McKee  
*Watson Realty Corp and National Association of Residential Property Managers*

Bryan Moll  
*Gateway Jax*

Shannon Nazworth  
*Ability Housing*

Robin Pfalzgraf  
*Jacksonville Community Land Trust*

Jessie Spradley  
*Northeast Florida Builders Association*

Garrett Dennis (Observer)  
*Infrastructure Transition Committee Chairman*

### A Note about Terminology & Tone

The subcommittee intentionally uses the descriptor “attainable housing” in place of “affordable housing” to avoid negative connotations and NIMBYisms<sup>18</sup> that have become associated with the term over time. Whether considered low income (less than 80% Area Median Income / AMI) or moderate income (80% - 120% AMI), Jaxons deserve access to safe, quality housing that is affordable<sup>19</sup> at their income level. Attainable housing encompasses diverse housing options that are accessible and realistic for a broad range of residents at risk of being priced out of the Jacksonville housing market, including those who earn a moderate income such as many teachers, police officers, and firefighters, among others. Our intent is to promote inclusivity and fairness in terms of suitable housing options for various professionals as well as those in vital need.

## Background: Setting the Stage

Jacksonville is grappling with a housing affordability crisis that has evolved over several decades. The local housing ecosystem has faced several challenges, including those caused by COVID-19, such as supply chain disruptions and increased material costs. Wage growth has not kept pace with rising rents and home prices. Hurricane destruction as well as significant housing investor activity have further complicated the situation. Furthermore, there has been a persistent lack of public will to prioritize, coordinate, and fund low- and moderate-income housing<sup>1</sup> development. As a result, a significant portion of the city's residents, including low- and moderate-income families and individuals, are struggling to find housing that is both affordable and adequate.

The housing market collapse and the resulting Great Recession had devastating effects on housing production between 2010 and 2020, reducing average monthly housing unit starts by 33% compared to the previous decade<sup>2</sup>.

As a result of these challenges and others, Jacksonville has a severe shortage of low- and moderate-income housing, which is leaving too many residents unable to secure safe, quality housing<sup>3</sup>. Notably, 40% of Jacksonville households (156,000) earn incomes below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), which is the threshold between low- and moderate-income housing<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, 147,200 households (38%) are currently on the Jacksonville Housing Authority's waitlist for subsidized housing<sup>5</sup>. Finally, as cited by the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida<sup>6</sup>, according to The National Low Income Housing Coalition, they estimate the Jacksonville area is currently short by more than 35,000 units of attainable housing, and that number is expected to grow.

Renters in Jacksonville are particularly vulnerable, as their median household income is about \$35,000 less than that of homeowners<sup>7</sup>. More than half of Jacksonville's renter households (52.6% or 88,000) are rent-burdened, spending more than 30% of their incomes on housing<sup>8</sup>.

Following the 22.5% rent increase in the U.S. since January 2020 and despite indications that annual rental price increases are slowing in some metro areas, Jacksonville rents continued to increase (7.5% year-over-year change) over the national average (2.4%) in 2023<sup>9</sup>.

The lack of low- and moderate-income housing options has led to a surge in homelessness and housing insecurity. Families are forced to allocate a disproportionate amount of

their income towards housing expenses, leaving little room for other essential needs such as healthcare, education, and savings. The cascading effect exacerbates existing economic disparities and negatively affects the overall well-being of the community.

The Affordable Housing Subcommittee was tasked with providing recommendations to Mayor Donna Deegan that can decrease housing burdens and increase the inventory of low- and moderate-income housing in Jacksonville. It is important to note that the subcommittee incorporated insights from various sources, including the Market Value Analysis, the Special Committee on Critical Quality of Life Issues, and the 2022 City of Jacksonville Affordable Housing Summit, among others<sup>10</sup>. The subcommittee believes the recommendations herein reflect and are aligned with key findings and suggestions from these reports, which have been thoroughly reviewed and developed by a wide range of housing advocates and stakeholders.

The housing crisis in Jacksonville is complex and requires a multi-faceted approach and sustained commitment from all stakeholders involved. By prioritizing this issue and implementing comprehensive measures immediately, the City can take significant steps toward ensuring safe, stable housing and housing that is affordable for all residents, fostering a stronger, more inclusive community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to effectively address the magnitude of Jacksonville's housing crisis, the subcommittee strongly encourages adopting a holistic approach and fidelity in terms of committing significant financial and human capital to the issue. To this end, the subcommittee recommends three parallel tracks:

- 1) Improve coordination and oversight of the housing ecosystem;**
- 2) Increase housing supply and production;**
- 3) Strengthen housing and resident stability.**

To achieve these goals, we propose a series of short- and medium- to long-term strategies for each, aimed at increasing efficiencies or addressing identified gaps and barriers.



## GOAL #1

### IMPROVE HOUSING ECOSYSTEM: EFFICACY, COORDINATION, AND OVERSIGHT

Oversight and coordination of the housing ecosystem will be the function and responsibility of the City of Jacksonville (COJ or the City). City department and leadership silos and the resulting lack of transparency, communication, and coordination, have created an unintended but dysfunctional environment that hinders developers, housing-focused community partners, and residents/workforce from producing, supporting, or benefiting from the needed diversity of housing affordability options.

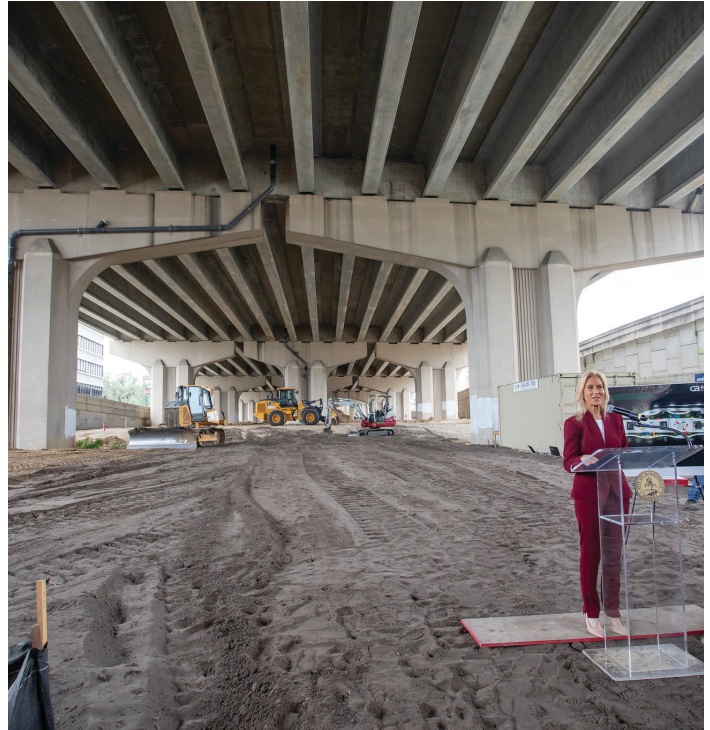
#### Short-Term Recommendations (0-2 years)

##### **Strategy A: Update the Housing Element of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan with subcommittee recommendations and develop clear policy goal directives with benchmarks and timelines.**

- It is our recommendation that Mayor Donna Deegan's administration develop clear policy goal directives for the next four and eight years on how the City of Jacksonville will handle the housing crisis moving forward, with actions prioritized and specific benchmarks and timelines announced. It is this committee's belief that the Administration is in a unique position to lead and coordinate efforts to tackle this crisis head-on.
- Establish a Chief Housing Officer within the Mayor's Office - a specialized position responsible for leading efforts specifically focused on solving the housing crisis. The subcommittee recommends that this position would chair the proposed Housing Oversight Committee and lead activities to highlight, promote, and implement the housing policies and plans for the Mayor's Administration; work with the City's housing department to ensure compliance; and collaborate with and convene community partners and stakeholders, developers, and nonprofits to achieve the City's housing goals.

##### **Strategy B: Institute a housing oversight committee.**

- Foster an environment of "Collaborative Housing Excellence" by establishing a Housing Oversight Committee. The Mayor's Office, in partnership with community leaders, developers, and nonprofits will be committed to shaping a dynamic and inclusive



housing landscape. One that ensures all residents have the opportunity to secure safe, affordable, and dignified housing and can benefit from a vibrant and inclusive city for generations.

Through transparent governance, innovative solutions, data-driven strategies, and stakeholder engagement, the Housing Oversight Committee will facilitate and advocate for the creation of equitable, accessible, diverse, and sustainable housing options for our community.

##### **Strategy C: Streamline the permitting process.**

- Adopt permitting recommendations made by the Economic Development Transition Committee. The goal is to reduce the permitting backlog and speed up the development process for housing, particularly for low- and moderate-income housing. This can be achieved by dissolving department silos and increasing collaboration, simplifying and digitizing application procedures and documentation, and providing transparent guidance.
- Support the creation of an ombudsman for the Planning and Development Department and the Building Department. The new position would serve as a neutral intermediary between residents / builders/ developers and the local government.

The ombudsman could address concerns, mediate disputes, and help navigate bureaucratic processes. The subcommittee suggests collaborating with community stakeholders to define the new position's scope, powers, and reporting structure, ensuring they have the resources to effectively serve the public.

**Strategy D: Scrutinize city policies and regulations that could negatively impact housing development.**

- The subcommittee supports increasing the supply of all types of housing in order to address the housing crisis. Therefore, the City should take steps to ensure policies and regulations would not have an adverse effect on the existing or future supply of housing.

**Medium- to Long-Term Recommendations (2+ years)**

**Strategy A: Code enforcement reforms.**

- Addressing code enforcement shortfalls requires a multi-pronged approach, including the following:
  - Allocate resources to hire and train additional qualified inspectors, as well as invest in technology that streamlines inspection processes.
  - Focus on preventive measures by educating property owners about regulations and maintenance (e.g., technical assistance program).
  - Enhance citation enforcement by: 1) establishing clear criteria for issuing citations along with creating a transparent appeals process; 2) investing in data analytics to identify high-priority areas for enforcement; 3) coordinating with local City departments and law enforcement agencies; 4) partnering with the Jacksonville Housing Authority and the Public Nuisance Abatement Board in order to use their subpoena authority and quasi-judicial hearings, respectively, to hold code violators accountable; and 5) allocating resources to enforce citations effectively, ensuring code compliance and improving overall community standards.

**Strategy B: Create a landlord registry.**

- A landlord registry should be implemented to ensure better rental property standards and support and educate landlords and tenants. The registry would create a rental housing rating system, managed by the City of Jacksonville that scores

properties, incorporating information from all departments (including code enforcement). To ensure participation, incentives should be offered to landlords/property managers who join the registry.

**Strategy C: Create a technical assistance program for landlords/property managers.**

- A technical assistance program for landlords/property managers would function in coordination with existing technical assistance providers to outline the expectations of the City of Jacksonville and offer guidance on property management, legal responsibilities, and maintenance standards. This would contribute to improved living conditions for tenants and create more informed landlords and property managers.

**GOAL #2**

**INCREASE ATTAINABLE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION**

Nonprofit developers, for-profit developers, and the Jacksonville Housing Authority will be crucial to increasing the supply of low-and moderate-income housing in the next several years, making up for the Lost Decade of housing production from 2010 - 2020. By overcoming identified financial barriers to housing development, as well as incentivizing the production of attainable housing, the City can expect an increase in production from local partners, as well as making Jacksonville more attractive to others seeking to expand their development operations.

**Short-Term Recommendations (0-2 years)**

**Strategy A: Expand and commit recurring, local funding aimed at filling identified capital stack gaps and building developer capacity in low- and moderate-income housing development.**

- Include a line item in the Mayor's Budget for approval by City Council dedicated for low- and moderate-income housing development.
- Housing acquisition / development and working capital should be invested in nonprofit developers/ CHDOs and the Jacksonville Housing Authority, and other partners committed to long-term and perpetual housing affordability for 1) renters earning under 80% AMI, and 2) homeowners earning under 120% AMI.

**Figure 1 Density Scenarios and Rent Affordability<sup>12</sup>**

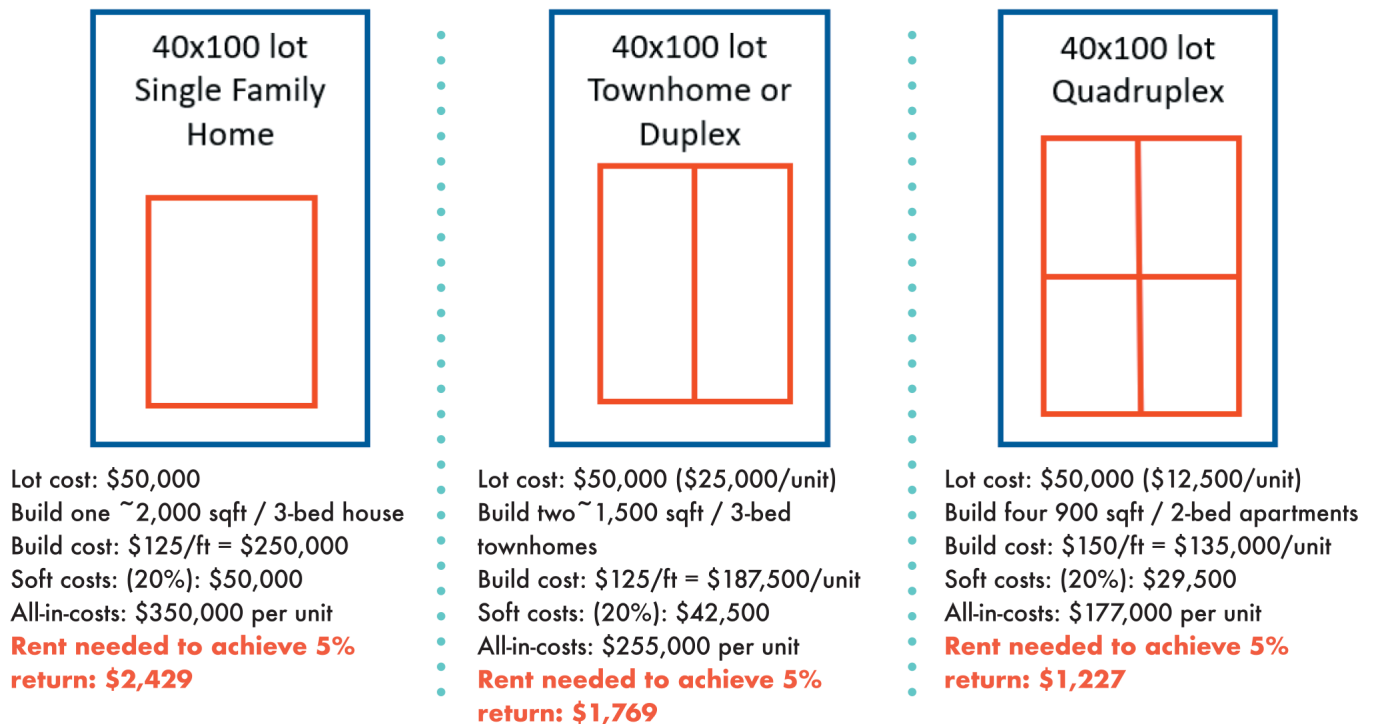


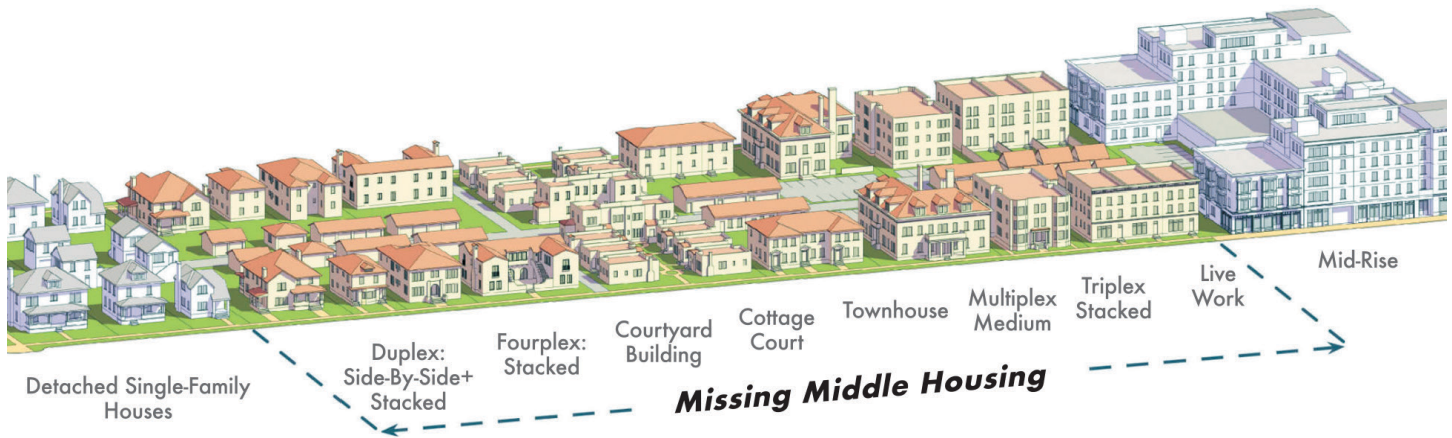
Figure 1 demonstrates the higher density concept with an existing infill lot; however, the premise is the same for newly developed lots.

- Co-invest in the proposed Jacksonville Attainable Housing Fund (JAHF) a shovel-ready public/private partnership designed to fill capital gaps in housing projects as identified by local low- and moderate-income housing developers. The JAHF will provide capital for acquisition and fill the ~20% financial gap in 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit deals (LIHTC), providing multifamily developers a financial resource similar to Florida's State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program. The JAHF anticipates leveraging up to 4X of project financing.
- Create a new, dedicated funding source for attainable housing (e.g., levy an additional ad valorem tax, issue municipal bonds, etc.).
- Commit additional funding to the Jacksonville Housing Finance Authority and Jacksonville Housing Authority, which have the ability to use municipal bonds dedicated to low- and moderate-income housing development to greatly leverage (10x - 20x) those dollars.
- Commit additional funding to the existing budget line item for the Jacksonville Community Land Trust (JCLT) an independent entity created by the City to receive city-owned and other properties that will be developed for long-term housing affordability. With additional resources, the JCLT will be able to acquire properties in low- to moderate-income areas with the greatest potential for gentrification or resident displacement.
- Dedicate City of Jacksonville staff to research and coordinate applications to increase the amount of grant dollars to the City of Jacksonville and community partners available from federal/state housing grants and programs.

**Strategy B: Promote the construction of Missing Middle Housing and increase the allowed density of future development through zoning reform: 1) Development Department policy changes, and 2) Ordinance changes.**

Economics 101: supply and demand affect pricing. When only considering apartment rental units in the Jacksonville MSA, data suggest the apartment unit supply gap is projected to be as high as 61,000 units by 2030<sup>11</sup>. This and similar indicators suggest that the City can expect continued high housing demand for the near future. If increased housing





Missing Middle Housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units-compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes-located in a walkable neighborhood.

affordability is the goal, the supply of housing must be significantly increased. To this end, higher-density housing development is a key element in the affordability equation. A housing unit situated on a large piece of land is usually more expensive for the market to produce than on a small plot.

Similarly, rising land costs make housing density a viable solution for developers to distribute the land expenses among multiple units, thereby increasing affordability in cases where it would otherwise be challenging to achieve.

Missing Middle Housing describes the increased unit density present in all of Jacksonville's pre-1950s neighborhoods, including San Marco, Riverside, and Springfield. While these neighborhoods are currently considered highly desirable, Missing Middle Housing is rarely built today because of current zoning code as well as pressure from homeowners rallying against higher-density projects in their neighborhoods. Today, the vast majority of housing built is typically single-family homes -which require considerable land and are largely unaffordable - or large apartment complexes.

Figure 2 shows Missing Middle Housing options that should be encouraged in Jacksonville. Recent strides have been made with the approval of Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs)<sup>13</sup> in all zoning districts and a recently proposed bill to allow cottage homes in Medium Density Residential areas (MDR)<sup>14</sup>

#### Missing Middle Recommendations (in order of priority):

- Create a planning department policy to support new development density twice that of the surrounding area but not to exceed the maximum density allowed in the land use area.

- The current COJ Low Density Residential (LOR) land use area allows up to seven (7) units per acre. However, most new developments are restricted to lot sizes that correspond to the area surrounding the new development, which compounds the existing unaffordability problem. For example, a new development in an LOR land use area surrounded by 90 foot lots - about two lots per acre-will likely be limited to 90-foot lots by planning department recommendation, although the LOR land use area allows a maximum of seven (7) units per acre.
- Double the amount of land zoned for multifamily housing in Jacksonville in the next two years. Currently, 91% of Jacksonville residential land is zoned for single family homes<sup>16</sup>, whereas comparable cities, such as Tampa, are zoned ~80% for single family homes. The subcommittee recommends: 1) this multifamily land be close to or along heavily trafficked corridors; and 2) the City hire a consulting firm to recommend approaches about how to achieve this goal.
- Allow dense, small lot single family properties to be built in MOR zoned areas.
- Extend the existing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance from only owner-occupied properties to all properties.
- ADUs exist throughout Riverside, San Marco, Springfield, among others, and are a critical component of Missing Middle Housing.
- Allow quadruplexes to be built on all existing Residential Medium Density (RMD) lots platted prior to 2000.

- Currently, quadruplex construction is limited by the lot size. For example, RMD-B requires ~.34 acres in order to build a quadruplex. In Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods, quadruplexes exist on smaller lots (.08 -.12 acres or ¼ to ½ the current RMD-B requirements).
- Change the side setbacks from ten feet to five feet for duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes, and townhomes in MOR areas.
- Create a new, streamlined process for developing small infill sites, specifically those less than 20 lots located on an existing road with existing utilities.
- Currently, developers interested in splitting one parcel into three lots on an existing road have to go through the same process as a brand new 1,000 lot greenbelt<sup>17</sup> subdivision on completely raw land.
- Allow corner lot duplexes in all zoning districts.
- Eliminate or reduce parking minimums on attainable housing developments.
- Create a Development Department policy supporting and encouraging By-Right development, which was recently enabled by the Live Local Act.

**Strategy C: Prioritize government resources to create housing affordable to those with the greatest need, including persons experiencing homelessness**

- When deploying the City's resources - including pass-through federal and state resources - prioritize the creation and preservation of housing that is affordable to households with incomes of 50% AMI or less.
- Incentivize developers of multifamily properties to target some units for persons experiencing, or are at risk of, homelessness who are working with a Homeless Continuum of Care partner organization.
- When funding large community projects, require housing affordable to households earning 50% AMI be included (either in the project or by providing funding to another organization to provide the housing).
- Implement recommendations for housing-related strategies identified by the Homelessness Subcommittee.

**Strategy D: Provide incentives to developers and community housing partners to produce low- and moderate-income housing.**

- Incentivize developers of all types of housing to focus on building low- and moderate income housing.
- Jacksonville urgently needs more developers building or rehabilitating low- and moderate-income housing units. Projects characterized by high and/or increasing development costs and low revenues generated by low- and moderate-income housing often do not pencil out for developers, disincentivizing them from taking on these projects. The subcommittee recommends incentivizing developers who commit to keeping projects or units within a project affordable for defined, extended periods by: 1) providing subsidies or no- or low-interest loans aimed at closing the gaps in the development capital stack, and 2) offering tax breaks and exemptions.
- Use the Jacksonville Market Value Analysis (MVA) to set the level of incentives, and to direct them to developers of low- and moderate-income housing who are working in identified priority geographies.

**Strategy E: Address tap and connection fee barriers to affordability.**

- Work with JEA to reduce the cost and impact of its recently increased tap and connection fees on low- and moderate-income housing projects. These dramatically increased tap fees exacerbate the ever-present capital gaps on attainable housing projects and disincentivizes developers from building new low- and moderate-income housing.
- Collaborate with JEA to secure a commitment for upfront tap fees, irrespective of the state of JEA infrastructure. Frequently, property owners face additional "special assessments," which can vary from \$10,000 to \$40,000, in addition to the standard tap fees. These assessments are imposed due to factors such as the condition and depth of the existing JEA infrastructure that serves the property.
- Work with JEA to allow property owners to connect to JEA's existing infrastructure. A significant issue exists regarding the presence of outdated 2-inch galvanized water lines in older, largely under-served neighborhoods. Despite these water lines being located right in front of newly constructed houses,

JEA prohibits their connection for these properties. Instead, property owners are compelled to opt for considerably more costly well installations, creating a notable financial burden.

- JEA should be responsible for replacing/upgrading its infrastructure to enable property owners to connect.

## **Medium- to Long-Term Recommendations (2+ years)**

### **Strategy A: Communicate and raise awareness of incentives.**

- Develop and regularly update communications, materials, and resources designed to promote incentives available to low- and moderate-income housing developers and landlords.

### **Strategy B: Allow multiplexes on all properties within the Urban Area.**

- A number of cities-Minneapolis, MN; Arlington, VA; Gainesville, FL; and Charlotte, NC - and States - Montana, Maine, Oregon, Washington, and California - have legalized Missing Middle Housing zoning. In Jacksonville, a more moderate proposal that would allow multiplex development on all properties within the Urban Area, could have a large positive impact on supply and affordability.

### **Strategy C: Convert city-owned commercial buildings to residential.**

- Assess existing city-owned commercial properties and provide incentives to support the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of these properties for the development of low-income and attainable residential units and/or mixed-use projects.

### **Strategy D: Understand the capacity of the non-profit development community and work to increase that capacity.**

- Nonprofits are a critical component of the ecosystem for providing low- and moderate-income housing. Nonprofits focused on homeownership assist homebuyers through the process and are often focused on additional community priorities, such as neighborhood revitalization, family wealth-building, crime reduction, etc.

Nonprofits focused on rental housing are creating housing that is affordable for its own sake not a means to other ends. For this reason, they will strive to retain affordability even after compliance restrictions terminate on a property. Additionally, providers focused on meeting the needs of special needs populations, including the homeless, have a mission focus and additional capacity to meet the specific needs of these households.

- The City should develop an intentional strategy to increase the capacity of existing local nonprofit developers, including dedicating resources to projects they develop and fostering the development of additional local nonprofit developers.
- The Neighborhoods Department should maintain a list of local non-profit developers and update their stated capacity yearly, in order to assess the total potential production capacity. The subcommittee recommends forming a public/ private partnership to provide support for technical assistance and operations/ staffing funding in order to maximize the production and monitor the progress of these developers.

## **GOAL #3**

### **STRENGTHEN HOUSING & RESIDENT STABILITY**

While increasing supply is part of the solution, Jacksonville and its residents will benefit from preserving and protecting housing that already exists and is affordable. To strengthen housing and resident stability, policies can focus on homeownership preservation, eviction prevention, job training, and social services to address underlying factors contributing to housing instability. Efforts to support and protect those at risk of displacement or losing their homes complement the supply strategy, and are often a fraction of the per unit expense of building and rehabilitating housing. Collaboration and coordination between government, non-profits, and the private sector can play a crucial role in creating sustainable solutions and resident stability.

### **Short-Term Recommendations (0-2 years)**

#### **Support and expand Jacksonville's eviction prevention programs.**

- We believe that implementing and expanding access and resources in support of eviction prevention programs is one way to help safeguard vulnerable populations and promote housing stability. A few programs that should be created or expanded are:



- Eviction Diversion programs can be effective tools for preventing homelessness and maintaining housing stability. These programs reduce instances of eviction and displacement by providing rental assistance, legal services, and mediation between landlords and tenants, among other resources and services.
- Expand Relocation Assistance Voucher program funding to support tenants forced to relocate due to rehabilitation or demolition.
- Increase Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funding.
- Create a Home Hardening program for home repair assistance for low- and moderate income housing tenants. This resource will benefit those who are dealing with unresponsive or unhelpful landlords but are unable to move.
- Allow residents on a waiting list first right of refusal for future low-income or attainable housing developments.
- Expand the Mortgage Credit Certificate program to include multifamily attainable housing units, and support further funding of Mortgage Relief Assistance programs.
- Increase funding for Utility Assistance programs and update eligibility criteria to include individuals and families facing temporary financial hardships.

#### **Strategy B: Launch a housing resource center.**

- Create a Housing Resource Center to serve as a hub for individuals and families seeking assistance, guidance, and information related to housing. The center will be a curated resource to promote housing opportunities, resources, and protections throughout the community.

#### **Strategy C: Support homeownership preservation strategies.**

- Promote and fund interventions that will help preserve homeownership and affordability, including heirs' properties, property tax relief, home repairs, home hardening and septic-to-sewer conversion programs, and unbiased home appraisal valuations.



#### **Medium- to Long-Term Recommendations (2+ years)**

##### **Strategy A: Support and coordinate with Jacksonville Transportation Authority on transit-oriented community developments.**

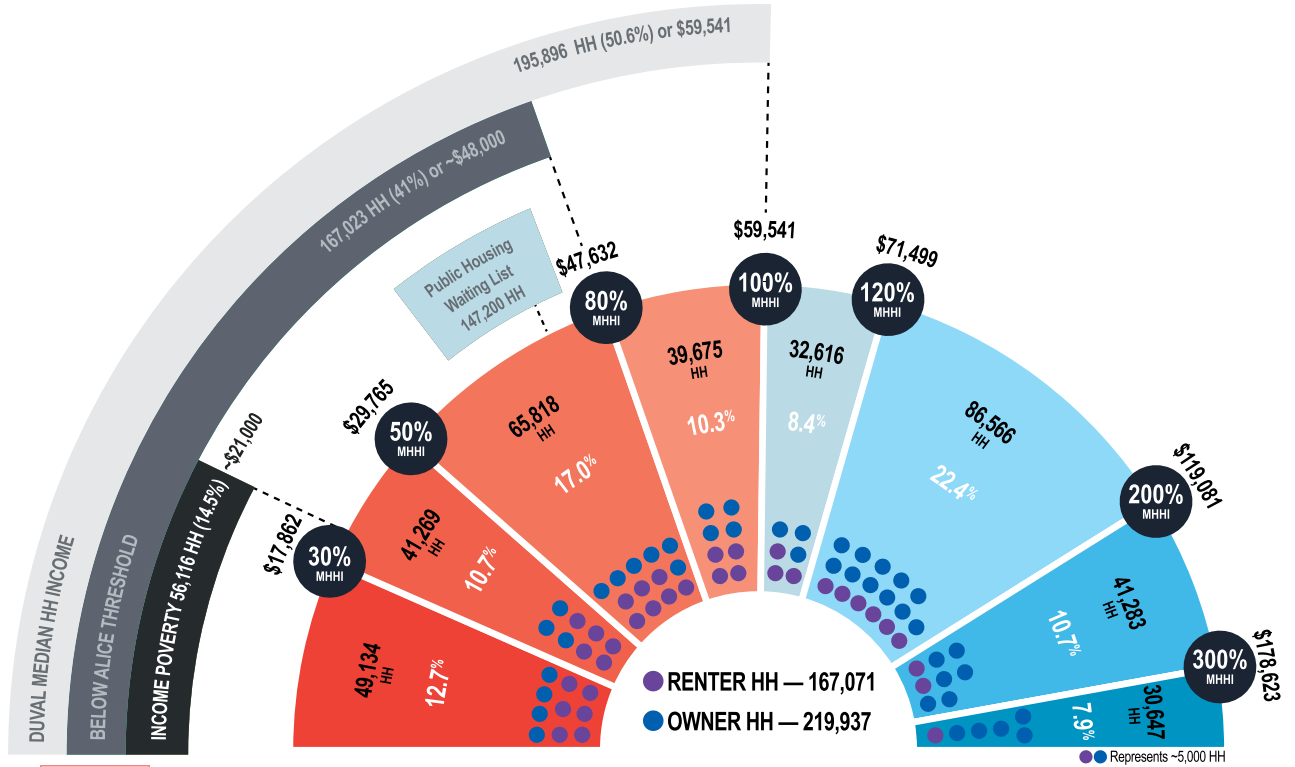
- Support, prioritize, and expand ongoing coordination between the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), Jacksonville Housing Authority (JHA), and other groups by continuing the focus on transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities throughout Jacksonville. TODs can contribute to economic growth, reduce traffic congestion, and improve quality of life by providing residents with easy access to public transportation, amenities, and a sense of community. These mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods center around public transportation and can revitalize forgotten communities and allow for additional low- and moderate-income housing developments.

## Endnotes

- 1 Low-income housing: affordable for households earning less than 80% AMI. Moderate-income housing: affordable for households earning between 80% AMI and 120% AMI. Attainable housing: affordable for households earning less 0% - 120% AMI.
- 2 Average monthly housing starts: 2000 - 2010: 1.5 million I 2010 - 2020: 1.0 million. Also, see Appendix 1, Figure G. Source: Census, HUD, and Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED).
- 3 See the Market Value Analysis Housing Affordability comparison 2018 to 2022: Appendix 1, Figure C. Source: Reinvestment Fund research contracted by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund.
- 4 See All Duval County Households (HH) for number of households by income level: Appendix 1, Figure A. Source: American Community Survey 2021 generated by Reinvestment Fund.
- 5 Jacksonville Housing Authority PowerPoint Presentation by Dwayne Alexander to the subcommittee slide number 15.
- 6 Sacerdote, Grace. "Impact Investing can Solve Jacksonville's Affordable Housing Problem The Florida," The Florida Times-Union, January 2023.
- 7 Duval County Median Household Income: Renter \$42,944 and Owner \$77,732. Source: American Community Survey 2021 generated by Reinvestment Fund.
- 8 See Housing Cost Burden on Duval Renters (Median HH Income - \$42,944: Appendix 1, Figure D.
- 9 Katz, Lili. "Rental Market Tracker: Rents Rose 2% in January-the Smallest Increase in 20 Months," Redfin, February 2023.
- 10 Links to these and other reports that informed the subcommittee can be found in Appendix 1 Figure H.
- 11 Data retrieved from Costar by the First Coast Apartment Association. PowerPoint presentation "Affordable/ Workforce Housing" p. 3.
- 12 Illustration of density and resulting rent costs. Source Alex Sifakis.
- 13 Florida Statutes (Section 163.31771(2)(a)) define ADUs as "an ancillary or secondary living unit that has a separate kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area existing either within the same structure, or the same lot, as the primary dwelling unit."
- 14 Jacksonville Code of Ordinances, Zoning Section, Section 656.306. "permits residential developments in a gross density range of up to 20 dwelling units per acre when full urban services are available to the site."
- 15 Illustration of Missing Middle Housing examples. Source: Opticos.
- 16 See Zoning Map in Appendix 1, Figure E Source: Florida Apartment Association - Scarcity Dashboard / Residential Zoning.
- 17 Safdie, Stephanie. "Greenbelt Policy Definition, Benefits and Examples," Greenly Institute.
- 18 NIMBY is an acronym for "Not in my backyard" often referring to opposition to something perceived by some as undesirable.
- 19 Housing is considered affordable if occupants spend no more than 30% of gross income on housing costs.

Figure A

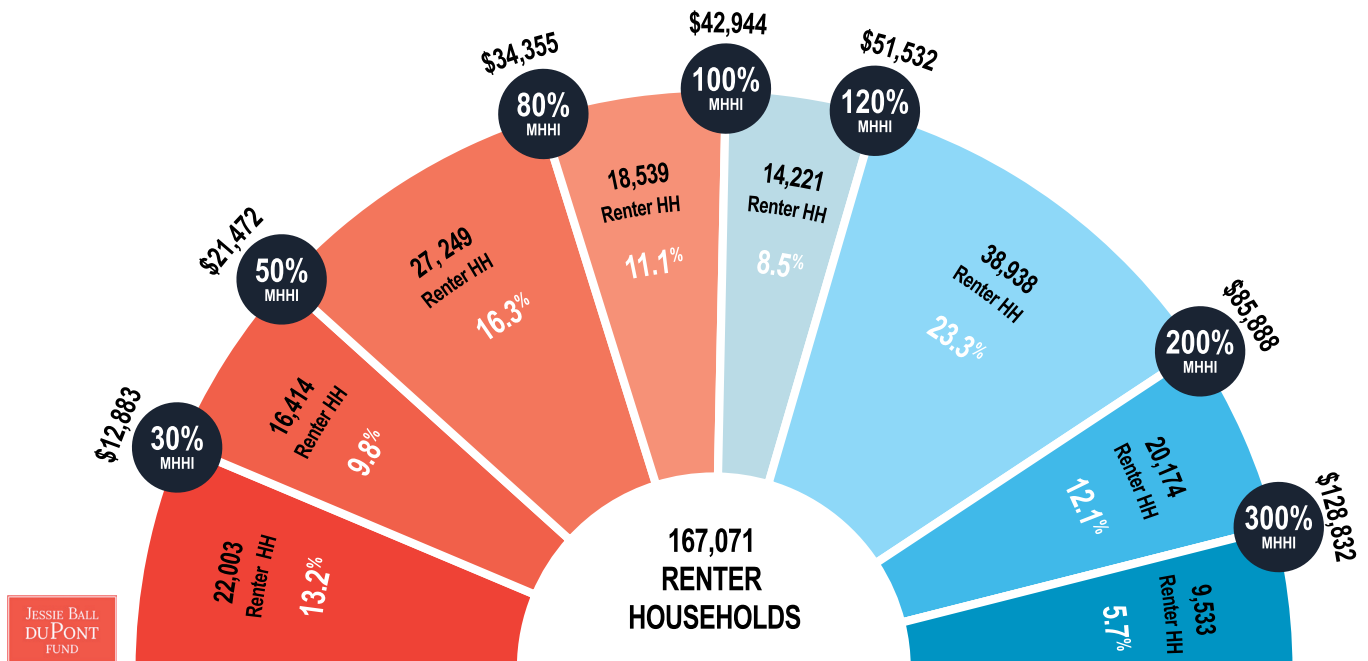
**ALL DUVAL COUNTY HOUSEHOLDS (HH)**  
2021 - 100% MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (MHHI) \$59,541



Data Sources: American Community Survey, 2021 5-Year Survey  
United Way's ALICE online report: Duval County 2021  
Extrapolated income poverty percentage using HH of three persons

Figure B

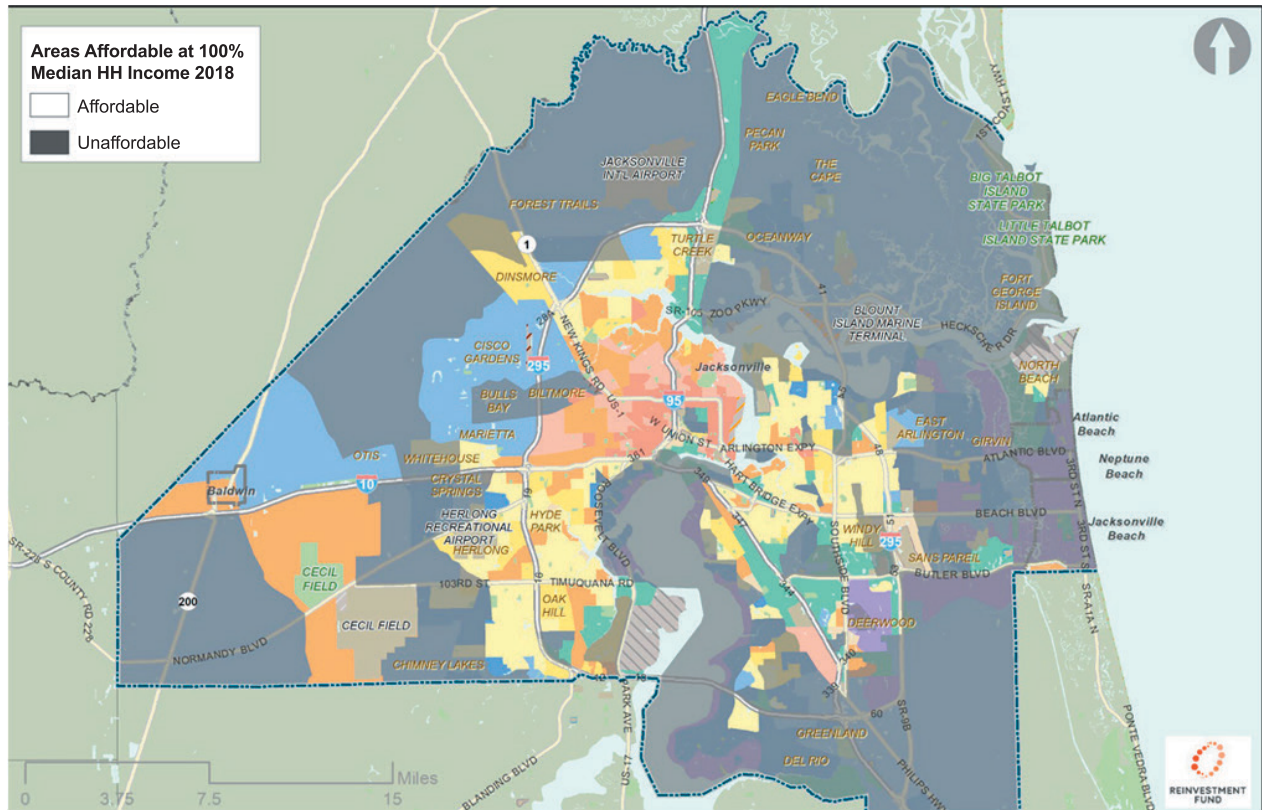
**ALL DUVAL COUNTY RENTER HOUSEHOLDS (HH)**  
2021 - 100% MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (MHHI) \$42,944



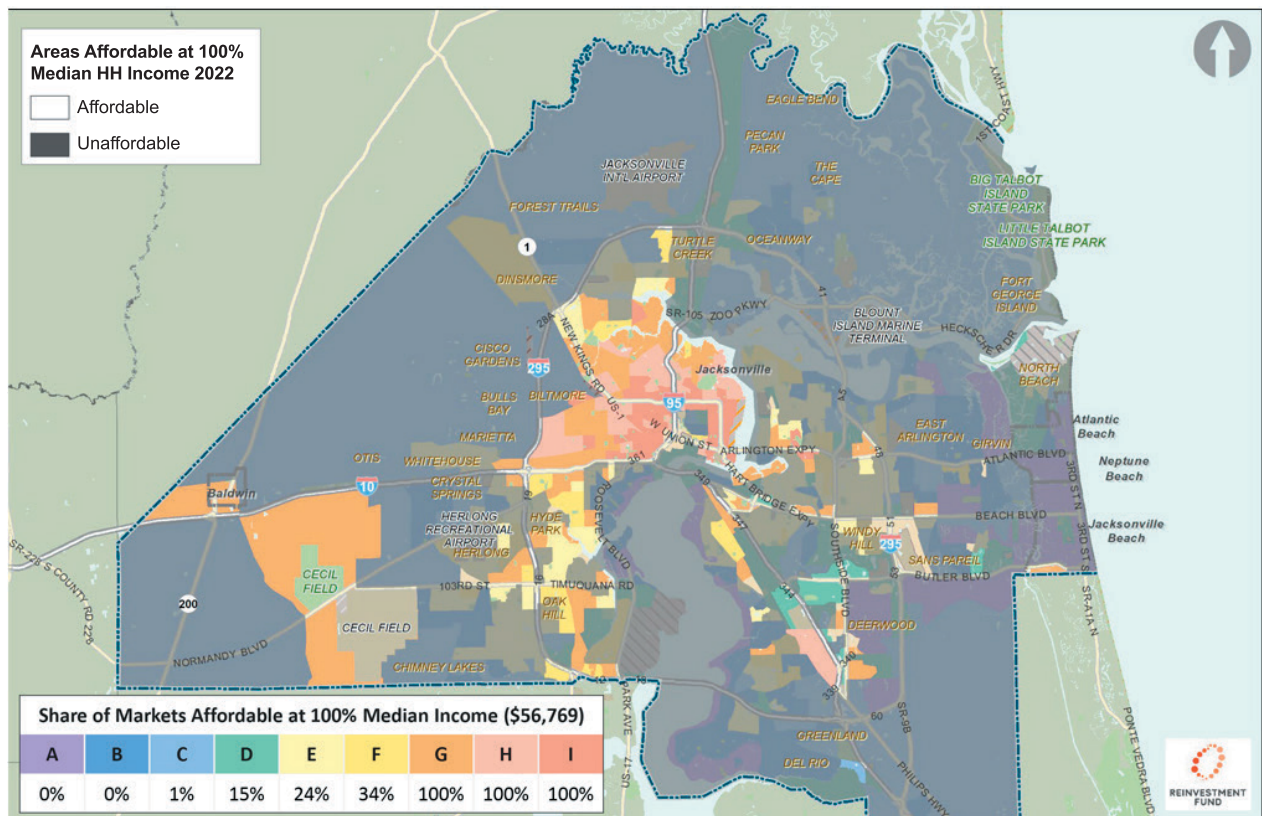
Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021 5-Year Survey



Figure C



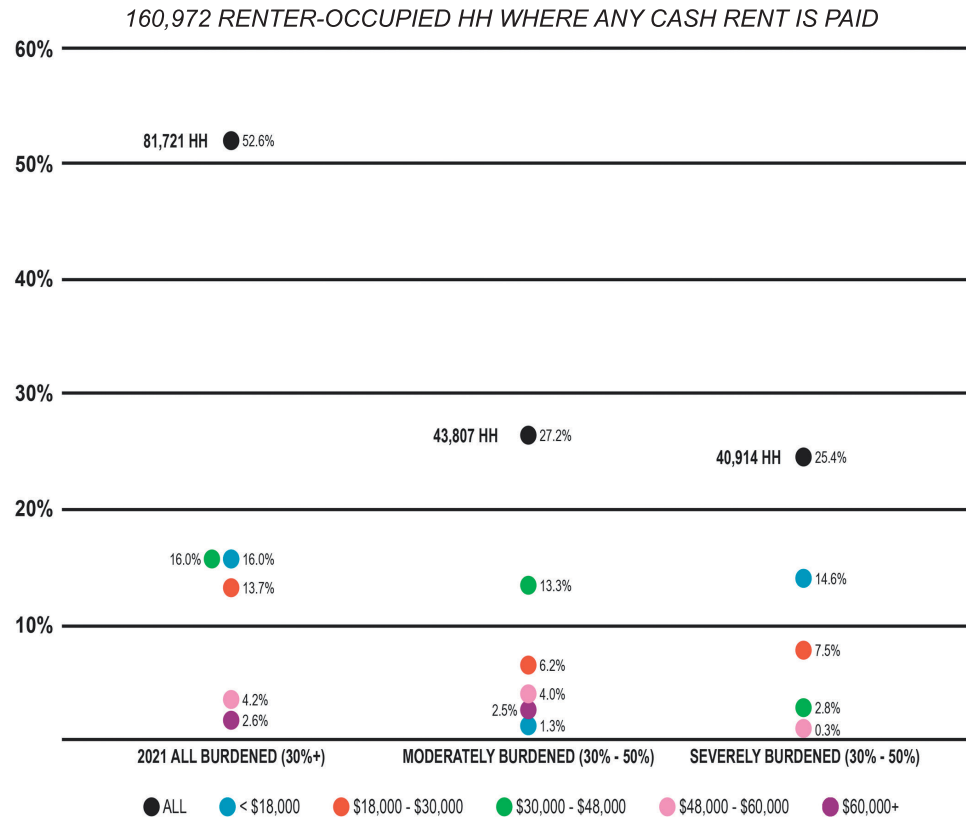
**HOUSING AFFORDABILITY FOR 100% MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2018 & 2022)**  
*SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF AFFORDABILITY IN JUST FOUR YEARS.*



Source: Reinvestment Fund - 2022 Duval County Market Value Analysis (MVA)

**Figure D**

## HOUSING COST BURDEN ON DUVAL RENTERS (MEDIAN HH INCOME - \$42,944)

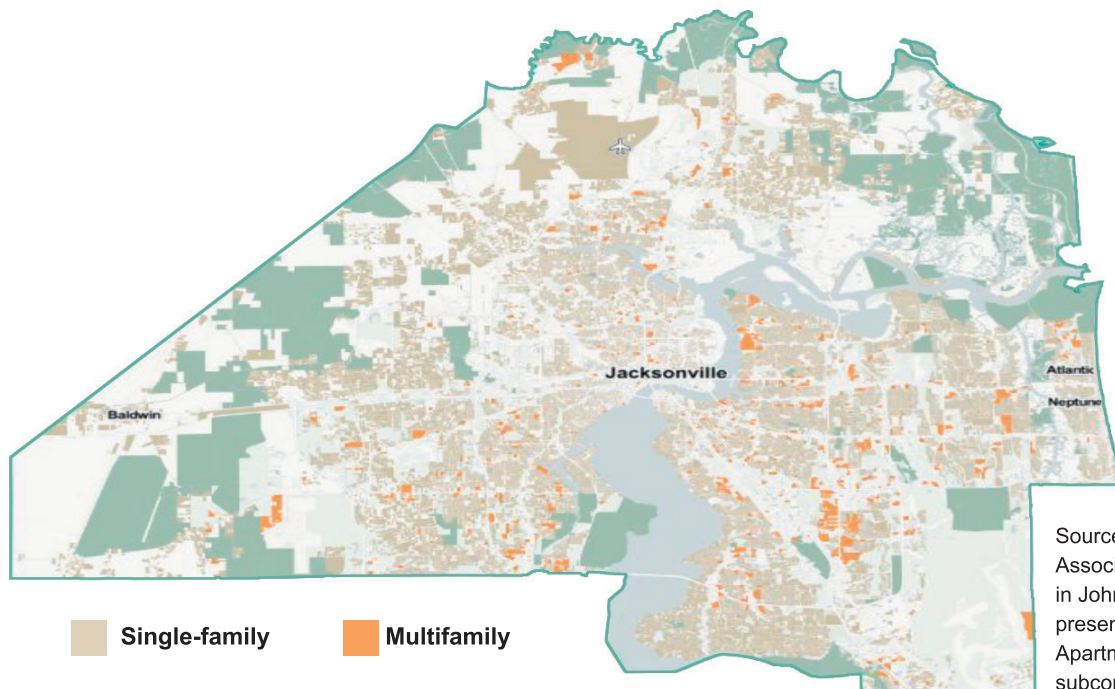


Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021 5-Year Survey

**Figure E**

## DUVAL COUNTY RESIDENTIAL ZONING

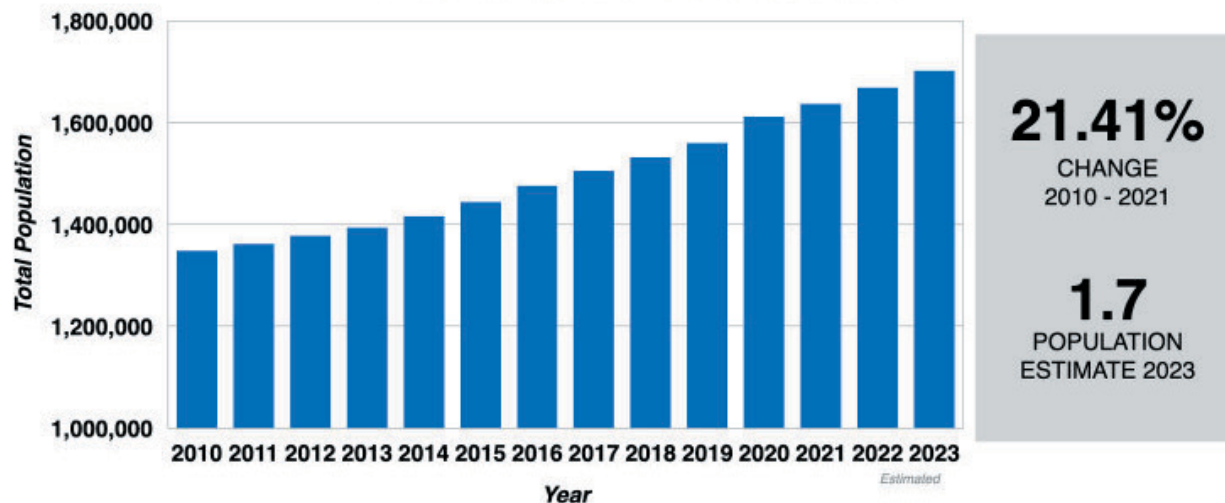
91% OF ALL DUVAL COUNTY RESIDENTIAL LAND IS ZONED AS SINGLE-FAMILY WHILE 9% IS AVAILABLE FOR APARTMENT HOMES.



Source: Florida Apartment Association. Graphic included in Johnmichael Fernandez's presentation of the First Coast Apartment Association to the subcommittee.

**Figure F** POPULATION GROWTH FOR JACKSONVILLE METRO (2010 - 2023)

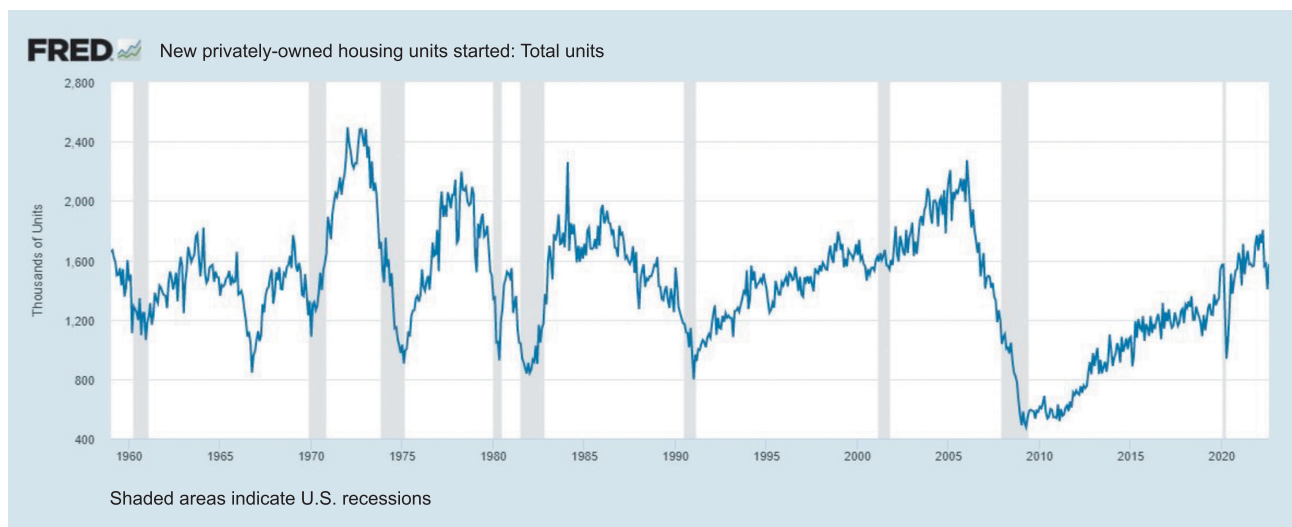
WHILE HOUSING PRODUCTION DIMINISHED, IN-MIGRATION HAS SURGED



Source: RealWealth - 2023 Housing Market Overview for Jacksonville Metro  
Graphic included in Director Bill Killingsworth's Presentation to the subcommittee

**Figure G** HOUSING MARKET COLLAPSE DURING THE GREAT RECESSION (2008)

33% FEWER HOUSING STARTS BETWEEN 2010 AND 2020 THAN PRIOR DECADE



Sources: Census, HUD, Federal Reserve Economic Data  
Graphic included in Director Bill Killingsworth's presentation to the subcommittee

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, RESEARCH, & REPORTS

2022 Jacksonville Housing Partnership Strategy Summit Report  
<https://nonprofits.coj.net/Docs/JHP/2022StrategySummitReport>

2022 Special Committee on Critical Quality of Life Issues Report  
[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/COJ%20CQLI%20Final%20Report%2012.16.22.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/COJ%20CQLI%20Final%20Report%2012.16.22.pdf)

JAX Rental Housing Project Report

<https://jaxrentalhousingproject.domains.unf.edu/jrhp-reports/>

2045 COJ Comprehensive Plan

<https://www.coj.net/departments/planning-and-development/community-planning-division/comprehensive-plan-elements>

2022 Market Value Analysis (MVA)

<https://www.dupontfund.org/news/jacksonville-market-value-analysis>





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## MEMBERS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE - HOMELESSNESS TRANSITION SUBCOMMITTEE

Dawn Gilman | Committee Chair

Katie Ross

Tom Daly

Julia Edwards

Cindy Funkouser

Paul Stasi

### Short-Term Funding

#### 1. Diversion/Problem Solving Pilot

**Goal** – Divert 10% of people seeking assistance out of the homeless response system and back to safe housing for a minimum of 90 days.

Many people show up at the front door to the homeless response system thinking they can't go back to where they stayed last night. The process of diversion is asking open-ended questions about where a person was, what other connections they have, and where they would feel safe going to. From the outside, this often looks like mediation. This is funding that can be used to immediately rehouse or address whatever issue is bringing a person to the front door. Not to be confused with prevention dollars, this is 'but for' money.

#### 2. Non-congregate Shelter Fund through Social Services Department

**Goal** – Don't overwhelm the shelters when households must move out of condemned/unsafe multi-family residential.

This City of Jacksonville Department has strong relationships with code enforcement, JDFR, and non-profit providers. They are usually the first to know that a large number of people will be made homeless due to safety concerns. They are in a unique position to be able to offer a limited number of days in a hotel, allowing the property owners to address the issues or find other housing options.

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: HOMELESSNESS

### Mission & Charge

The Homelessness Committee will quickly see that there are groups of people who experience homelessness in different ways, but all homelessness is characterized by either extreme poverty, health related, social issues, lack of services, at will, etc., for the most part, coupled with a lack of stable housing. How do we bridge the gap between homelessness and our local government, community, services, and faith outreach?

### CHARGE:

**This focus area will meet with the homeless shelters and non-profits who specialize in at-risk homeless to look at models moving forward to serve the community in a fair and equitable way that serves their needs as well as the surrounding community's. Additionally, the focus area will focus on steady funding sources for mental health and direct services, permanent housing sources, and workforce readiness.**

### 3. Fund the HUD CoC Bonus Project Match

**Goal** – Demonstrate coordination with and commitment from the City to secure new Federal funding.

The annual continuum of care grant competition is currently underway and our community will put forward new projects for consideration. These projects require a 20% match to be considered. A guaranteed match from the city would increase the likelihood of an award in this national competition.

#### Short-Term No/Low Cost

##### 1. Report to the Administration-

**Goal** – Provide a high-level cheat sheet of the homeless providers that are member agencies of the Continuum of Care operating in Duval County. This sheet should list the major wraparound services offered by each. Ensure that all community stakeholders understand the importance of funding not just the housing itself, but all the wraparound services required in PSH and other types of housing options. This includes but is not limited to; healthcare, (medical, dental, behavioral health), recovery programs, job training programs and education.

Each agency would provide: Contact information of the CEO; List of locations; Agency budget showing the breakdown of funding sources; Brief description of major programs/services provided; and any planned major changes over the next 2 to 5 years.

##### 2. Set goal, targets, and measurements of the reduction we want to see in homelessness

Homelessness is one of the most studied and reported upon issues in our community. We don't need any more studies.

We do need agreed-upon community goals, with clear targets and measurements and the resources to achieve those goals.

The cost of this work could be covered by the \$100,000 allocated through the CQLI into the upcoming budget year.

### 3. Develop a Homelessness and Extremely Low-Income Affordable Housing Task force

Continue the work of the homelessness transition team, parts of the affordable housing transition team and other stakeholders to continue the strategic work of fulfilling the recommendations in this report and the CQLI report.

#### Mid-Term - Estimate one to three years to accomplish

##### 1. Secure reoccurring funding needed to meet the goals, targets, and measurements established by the community

- Adopt draft legislation as proposed in the CQLI final report
- Food and Beverage Tax, i.e. Miami/Dade Homeless Trust
- Opioid Settlement Funding

##### 2. Legislation to increase deeply affordable housing

- Support the 'By Right' Zoning legislation as set forth in the Live Local Act that supports to drastically reduce the NIMBY issue which scuttle so many multi-family projects
- Require new large single-family developments to set aside a minimum of 10% of the units as multi-family

##### 3. Work with DuPont to fund the affordable housing trust that they have proposed - ongoing source of last-in money for developer of ELI Housing only.

##### 4. Housing Authority- encourage the HA to have a "homeless preference" like many other cities have -- really necessary to solve homelessness and will increase the likelihood of additional HUD awards to the CoC due to the demonstration of partnership and collaboration.

#### Long-Term

##### 1. Require any developer that is getting COJ Funding to have set-asides. Any developer seeking funding from the City for funding has to agree to set aside a minimum of 10% of the units as affordable housing or deposit an amount equivalent to 10% of the development costs into the COJ housing trust fund.

2. **Incentivize For-Profit Developers-bring more people into the market by providing special incentives to build ELI affordable housing or even mixed income housing including ELI.**
3. **Continue to Expand DuPont/COJ Housing Trust Fund.**

## Understanding the Issue

The homelessness subcommittee is focused on how to reduce the number of Jacksonville citizens who experience homelessness. The definition of homelessness used by the subcommittee is persons that are literally homeless or fleeing/ attempting to flee household/domestic violence. This is a general definition used by most of the local agencies working to end homelessness in Duval County. The definition is important as there are multiple definitions used by funders for specific grants. Appendix A is the definition from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Jacksonville has a well-developed and coordinated system of care addressing this issue. They broad categories of the system of care are:**

- **Outreach**
- **Coordinated Entry**
- **Emergency/Bridge Shelter**
- **Transitional Housing**
- **Rapid Rehousing**
- **Permanent Supportive Housing**

There are currently 3,000+ individuals on the community “By Name List”, the list of all known homeless individuals seeking housing. This list is updated weekly by outreach teams, navigation teams, and emergency shelter and transitional housing staff.

From 2019 through today the Jacksonville community has had a median utilization rate of 100% for both RRH and PSH. The everyday translation of this statistic is for the past 5 years every housing unit dedicated to homeless folks has been full.

The issue of homelessness is both separate and tied to the affordable housing crisis that our community is facing. Increasing the number of affordable units in northeast Florida may decrease the inflow of persons into the housing crisis system.



Without dedicating deeply affordable units to address homelessness, and providing funding for services, there will be no noticeable decrease in the number of persons experiencing homelessness.

### **RRH = Rapid Rehousing**

Rapid re-housing provides short-term rental assistance and services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self- sufficiency, and stay housed. It is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the needs of the person.

<https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/rapid-re-housing/>

### **PSH = Permanent Supportive Housing**

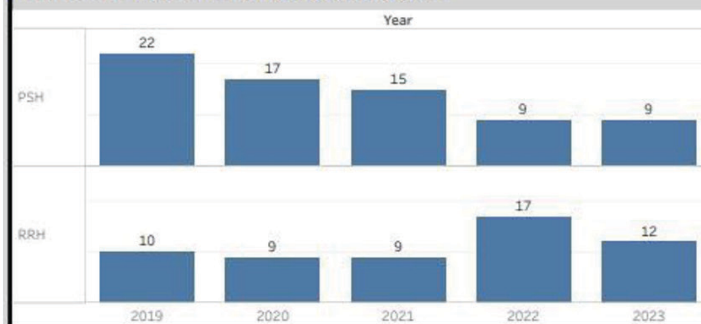
Permanent supportive housing is an intervention that combines affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services to address the needs of chronically homeless people. The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with community-based health care, treatment and employment services.

<https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/permanent-supportive-housing/>



## ES and TH Data (All projects grouped by project type)

Number of RRH and PSH projects by year



Average Utilization Rate % by project type

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PSH	99.05%	97.19%	95.71%	91.67%	98.44%
RRH	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Grand Total	99.34%	98.20%	97.39%	97.12%	99.33%

Total PIT by project type

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PSH	1,341	1,072	1,104	792	799
RRH	439	301	220	181	388
Grand To..	1,780	1,373	1,324	973	1,187

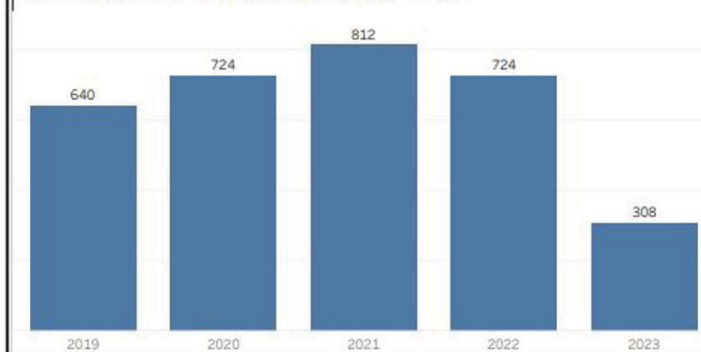
Median Utilization Rate by project type

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PSH	100.00%	100.00%	98.50%	100.00%	100.00%
RRH	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

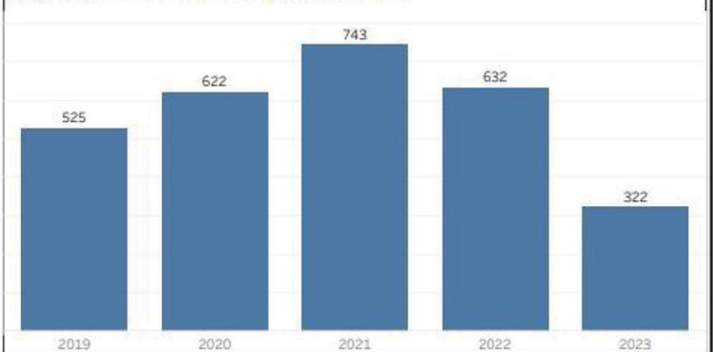
Total beds by project type

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PSH	775	568	681	803	812
RRH	414	301	220	181	388
Grand To..	1,189	869	901	984	1,200

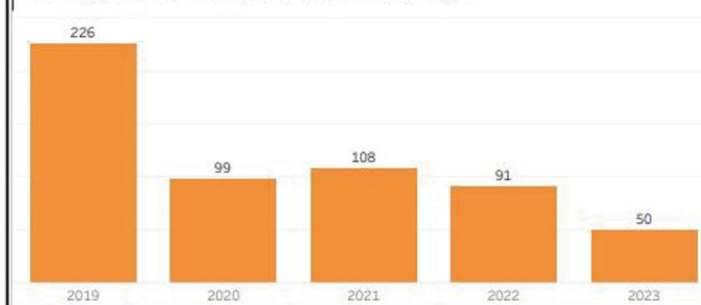
RRH Enrollments Head of Household Inflow



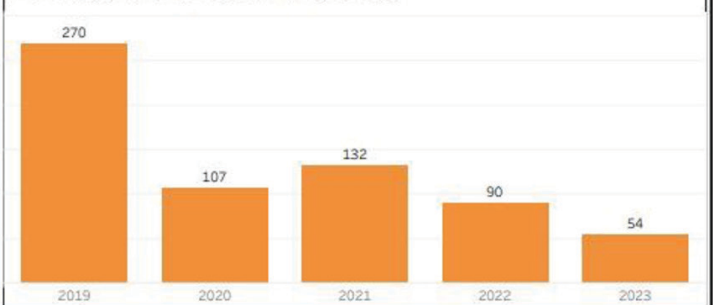
RRH Exits Head of Household Outflow



PSH Enrollments Head of Household-Inflow



PSH Exits Head of Household Outflow



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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: TRANSPORTATION

### Mission & Charge

To meet with traffic and transportation officials involved in planning future transportation projects, including new highways and roadways, improvements to waterways, transit, unmanned and electric vehicles, to determine what city policies need to be implemented for best practices and use. Discuss possible transit-oriented design (TOD) and transit adjacent development, and identify methods to enhance safety for all users based on Vision Zero principles.

**CHARGE:** To meet with traffic and transportation officials involved in planning future transportation projects, including new highways and roadways, improvements to waterways, transit, unmanned and electric vehicles to determine what city policies need to be implemented for best practices and use. Discuss possible transit oriented design and transit adjacent development.

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### MEMBERS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE - TRANSPORTATION TRANSITION SUBCOMMITTEE

Alan Bliss | Committee Co-Chair

Wiatt Bowers, AICP | Committee Co-Chair

Charles Garrison

Greg Grant, PE

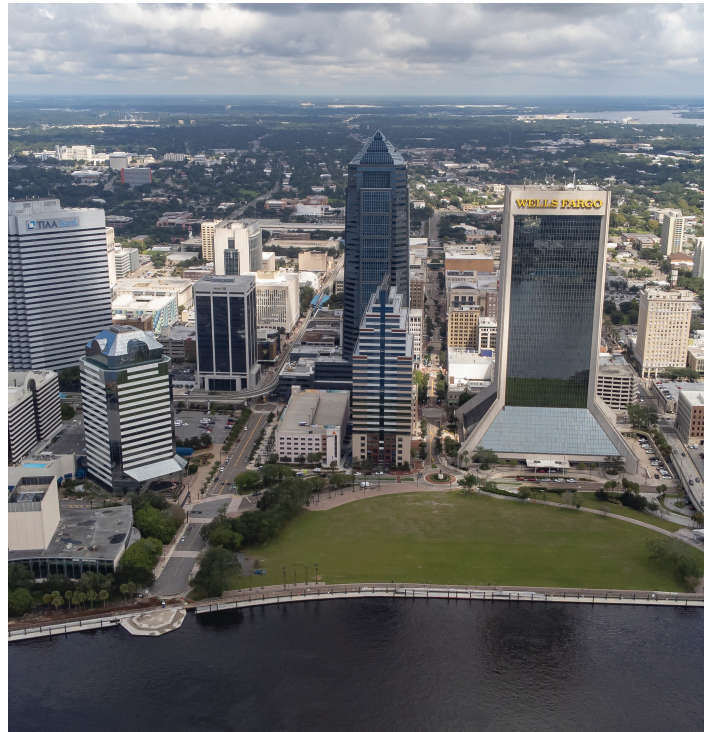
Clayton Levins

Matthew Maggiore, PE

Nashon Nicks

Larry Roberts

Ivan Rodriguez



### OBSERVATIONS

There are a number of agencies responsible for the planning, design, and implementation of transportation infrastructure and services in Jacksonville. These include COJ Planning, COJ Public Works, DIA, JTA, JAA, FDOT, and the North Florida TPO. Other agencies, such as JaxPort and JEA are also involved in transportation investments. While many of these agencies meet regularly as a group, a fully coordinated approach to decision-making is lacking. There remain silos that hamper collaboration. Furthermore, the City has the opportunity to “speak with one voice” with state and regional agencies (FDOT & North Florida TPO). This has not always been the case.

Another key observation of the committee relates to the lack of significant progress being made regarding safety in our transportation system, particularly for our most vulnerable users (bicyclists and pedestrians). We understand this is a priority of Mayor Deegan, and our committee fully supports this. We also understand that many of the crashes leading to severe injuries and fatalities occur on major roads in the city, which are predominantly under the jurisdiction of FDOT.

A third observation is that Jacksonville has the potential to be a leader in new transportation technologies, including connected and autonomous vehicles. JTA has been engaged in this arena for a number of years, and organizations such as Smart North Florida are advancing innovation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The subcommittee completed its work on August 11th, although several recommendations were approved at the August 4th meeting. The recommendations are divided into the three main areas mentioned above, including coordination, safety, and transportation technology. We believe these recommendations will yield more resilient infrastructure, promote healthy communities, and enhance economic development opportunities for all.

### Transportation Coordination

- Recognizing a need for more comprehensive coordination in transportation infrastructure planning and implementation, establish a Mayor's Mobility Committee. The various transportation infrastructure agencies shall meet monthly, at a minimum, as part of this committee. (APPROVED 6-0)
- Consider combining some functions of the Public Works and Planning Departments into a new Mobility Department. (APPROVED 6-0)
- The Mayor's Mobility Committee shall be charged with developing a comprehensive citywide plan focused on transportation mobility infrastructure. (APPROVED 6-0)
- Incorporate TOD land use areas and standards into the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code and consider potential incentives for development in these focus areas. (APPROVED 6-0)
- Support the Jacksonville Transportation Authority's (JTA) effort to deliver its 5-year strategic plan, known as the Mobility Optimization through Vision and Excellence 2027 (MOVE2027). These include items such as (APPROVED 6-0):
  - Support the full development and deployment of the Ultimate Urban Circulator, and integration of autonomous shuttles into the transportation network.
  - Support the full development and construction of the Emerald Trail.
  - Support efforts for a new vessel for the St. Johns River Ferry, and enhanced and expanded service.

- Support enhanced and expanded mobility services and projects in Jacksonville, and for regional connectivity.

### Transportation Safety

- The City of Jacksonville should join the National Association of City Transportation Officials <https://nacto.org/https://nacto.org/member-cities/> (APPROVED 7-0)
- The City should adopt a Vision Zero policy and become a member of the Vision Zero Network <https://visionzeronetwork.org/https://visionzeronetwork.org/resources/vision-zero-communities/> (APPROVED 7-0)
- The City should strengthen personnel and resources dedicated to addressing the chronic bicycle and pedestrian safety issues in Jacksonville (APPROVED 7-0)
- The City should focus on investments that support safe first/last mile travel to transit stops, and close gaps in the bicycle and sidewalk networks. (APPROVED 6-0)
- As more non-motorized facilities are constructed, more funding should be allocated to maintenance of these new facilities, as part of enhanced maintenance of the comprehensive mobility system. (APPROVED 6-0)

### Transportation Technology

- Advance a study of Urban Air Mobility and its integration and applicability in the region's transportation network. (APPROVED 6-0)
- Identify and invest in new technologies to assist with asset management. (APPROVED 6-0)  
These can include:
  - Developing scalable solutions for pavement resurfacing
  - Utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist in digitally cataloging and managing assets (signage, ped crossings, etc.)
  - Utilizing AI for curbside management practices, to maximize efficiency of parking and drop-off/loading zones.





- Implement the use of AI as a low-cost solution for analyzing problem intersections for enhanced safety and design methods. (APPROVED 6-0)
- Work with FDOT on pilot train-detection solutions. These collect and send data to dispatchers and others to inform about impending train arrivals and incidents. (APPROVED 6-0)
- We recommend that any adopted technologies and vendors abide by robust data privacy standards set by the various implementation agencies (APPROVED 6-0)
- We recommend the City pursue opportunities and incentivize expansion of the use of electric vehicles and sustainable charging networks, with prioritization focused on public assets, new developments, and under-resourced areas. (APPROVED 6-0)

#### SELECTED NOTES FROM PRESENTATIONS TO THE TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

**Fred Jones, a certified planner with Haskell**, spoke about the national “Complete Streets” coalition aimed at making streets safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. “Bike/Ped” safety was an issue that came up repeatedly during other presentations, as well. Jones pointed out that Jacksonville ranks 6th in the U.S. in pedestrian fatalities (Smart Growth

America’s Dangerous by Design report). This speaks eloquently to the urgency of adopting Vision Zero as a citywide policy and joining the international Vision Zero Network. Mr. Jones also noted the resources available through the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), and how the City can take advantage of their guides to rapidly implement changes to the City’s roadway design standards.

**Chris LeDew of the COJ’s Public Works Department, Traffic Engineering Division**, discussed that office’s portfolio which includes citywide transportation infrastructure, systems and operations. He observed that the staff of 36 is predominantly “complaint-driven,” responding to input from their data sources and the public. Mr. LeDew noted the need for more staff and additional funds to maintain signals, signs, and pavement markings.

**Laurie Santana, Chief of the Transportation Planning Division within COJ’S Planning Department** also made a presentation to the Subcommittee, noting issues having to do with ADA infrastructure and bicycle/pedestrian safety. In the latter concern, we learned that only one member of that Division’s staff is dedicated to bike/ped safety, which reinforced the Subcommittee’s recommendation to reinforce this function with additional staff and resources. Ms. Santana also noted the need for more funds for maintenance, and expressed a desire to expand the Venture Out Jax effort into a comprehensive citywide transportation master plan.



**Jeff Sheffield of the North Florida TPO** discussed that organization’s multiple planning initiatives, institutional relationships and funding. The TPO anticipates adoption of its 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) by November of 2024, making this mayoral transition an opportune inflection point for coordination with the City of Jacksonville. Mr. Sheffield also noted that COJ has 4 seats on the TPO Board (3 City Council Members + the Mayor), in addition to a representative from the Beaches communities and the various authorities (JTA, JAA, and JaxPort). It is worth noting that the Jacksonville Mayor usually cedes their seat to a Council Member, but the opportunity is there for the Mayor to sit on the TPO Board.

In the context of public procurement limitations, especially for smaller units of government, Mr. Sheffield described a nonprofit that the TPO and the University of North Florida helped launch, called Smart North Florida (SNF). SNF fosters creative/emergent smart technologies in the transportation sector. (The Executive Director of SNF, Clayton Levins, serves as a member of this subcommittee).

**Cleveland Ferguson, VP and Chief Administrative Officer at the Jacksonville Transportation Authority**, made a particularly thorough and comprehensive presentation touching on JTA’S ongoing role in various transportation modalities beyond just the transit system for which is most noted. JTA’s portfolio intersects with every other transportation agency and organization in the region. In that context, Mr. Ferguson clearly articulated the need for greater organizational coherence in management and planning for transportation infrastructure. This need emerged from nearly every presenter to the Subcommittee, and forms the basis for our recommendation that the Mayor charter a Mayoral Mobility Committee.

**DIA Executive Director Lori Boyer** reported to the Subcommittee on transportation elements of the DIA’s downtown plan. She placed special emphasis on downtown parking as a pertinent transportation issue that differentiates downtown from other Jacksonville neighborhoods, and called attention to the fact that parking ordinances are outdated and at times conflicting. DIA’s recommendations included revisions to various COJ parking ordinances, and although this was not a specific recommendation to the Office of the Mayor, the Subcommittee viewed this as an appropriate initiative deserving attention from the Mayor’s Mobility Committee.

**Jim Knight of the Florida Department of Transportation District Two Urban Office** discussed state and federal highways within the COJ’s jurisdiction, and explained the administrative apparatus through which State road projects are conceived, budgeted and prioritized by FDOT. As was noted by other presenters, the major source of funding for streets and highways continues to be the motor fuels tax, which is demonstrably unsustainable going into the future. Policy makers are widely aware of the urgency of identifying and implementing alternatives to so-called “gas taxes,” however no solutions are yet established in any form that appears likely to gain public support. Mr. Knight also noted the value in Jacksonville leaders “speaking with one voice” when working through the FDOT and North Florida TPO prioritization and funding processes.

# Health



**Carolyn McClanahan, M.D., CFP**

Health  
Transition Committee Chair

- ▲ Maternal & Children Health
- ▲ Primary Care & Dental Care Access
- ▲ Mental Health & Addiction Issues
- ▲ Elder Care
- ▲ Social Determinants of Health
- ▲ Health Care & Health Insurance



# Health

Maternal & Children Health | Primary Care & Dental Care Access  
Mental Health & Addiction Issues | Elder Care  
Social Determinants of Health | Health Care & Health Insurance

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## HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Health Committee transition team consisted of forty-eight members across seven groups, including focus areas of health insurance access, social determinants of health, maternal and child health, primary care and dental care access, mental health and substance misuse, and eldercare.

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## MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH TRANSITION COMMITTEE

### Health Programs Oversight Committee

Rogers Cain, M.D. | Committee Chair  
Valerie Feinberg  
Carolyn McClanahan, M.D., CFP®  
Tom Peters  
Pauline Rolle  
Paul Sapia  
Angela Strain

### Primary Care and Dental Access Committee

Mia Jones | Committee Chair  
Kimberly Barbel-Johnson, MD  
Tra'Chella Johnson-Foy  
Steven Nauman  
Antonio Nichols DA, MBA, FCCM  
Alexa Parsons  
Dennis Stone

### Mental Health and Addiction Committee

Elizabeth Anderson | Committee Chair  
Frank Emanuel  
Suzanne Mailloux  
LaTonya M. Summers, Ph.D., LCMHC, LMHC  
Vicki Waytowich  
Jeff Winkler  
Richmond Wynn

### Eldercare Committee

Tameka Gains Holly | Committee Chair  
Alison Bartfield, MD  
Susanna Barton  
Teresa Barton  
Carol Jenkins-Neil ARNP  
Kenyatta Lee MD, MHS  
Lauren Papalas

### Maternal Child Health Committee

Jeff Goldhagen | Committee Chair  
Bethany Atkins  
Megan Denk  
Donna Ghanayem  
Veronica Glover  
Faye Johnson  
Katrune Lukens

### Social Determinants of Health Committee

Jocelyn Turner | Committee Chair  
Nicole Hamm  
Laureen Husband  
John Longfield Smith  
Ann-Marie Knight  
Maira Martelo, Ed.D.  
Travis Williams

### Health Insurance Access Committee

Jerry McMillan, Sr. | Committee Chair  
Jennifer Cowart  
Marva Gelzer  
Susan Grich  
John Montgomery  
Kelli Tice

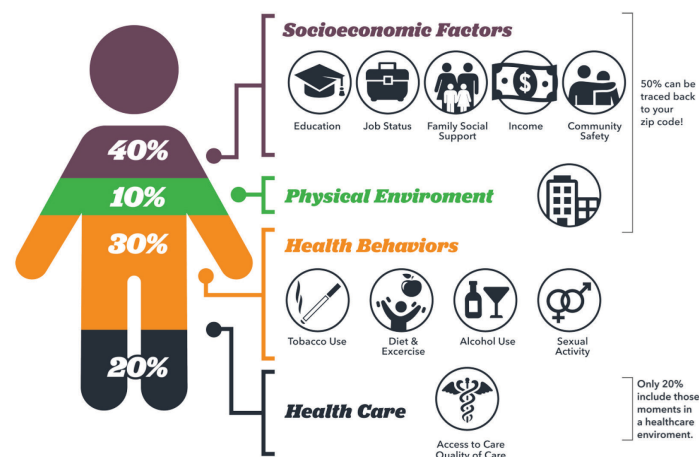
## HEALTH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A cross-section of health organizations both large and small were represented in each committee. Various members of the community also participated in the discussions. Jacksonville's new Chief Health Officer, Dr. Sunil Joshi, and the Executive Director of Health Programs, Lynn Sherman, were in attendance as well.

The groups were challenged with one main question – What can Mayor Deegan's administration do to improve health outcomes in the community? There was robust discussion about Jacksonville's health measures, programs and organizations attempting to impact those health measures, and the challenges those organizations face in making an impact. Multiple themes emerged, along with specific recommendations in each focus area. These will be covered in this report.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

The City of Jacksonville is home to state-of-the-art medical institutions and is a world-wide destination for people needing advanced medical care. But we are a tale of two cities – while providing some of the best health care the country has to offer, we rank poorly in numerous health measures, and access to appropriate health care for many citizens is a significant challenge.



Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)

## Duval County Health Profile

	Duval County	State of Florida	Duval Trend
<b>Select Cause of Death</b>			
Total Death Rate	1,067.2	802.9	▲
Cancer Death Rate	167.2	137.7	▲
CLRD Death Rate	41.8	30.7	▼
Diabetes Death Rate	32.7	24.2	▲
Stroke Death Rate	51.6	43.7	▼
<b>Reportable &amp; Infectious Diseases</b>			
AIDS Diagnosis	14.4	8.5	▲
HIV Diagnosis	30.2	21.4	▲
Bacterial STD Cases	1,326.0	753.5	▲
Congenital Syphilis Cases	204.8	82.7	▲
<b>Maternal &amp; Child Health</b>			
Infant Mortality Rate	6.7	5.9	▼
% of Births Without 1st Trimester Prenatal Care	38.7	26.1	▲
% of Births With Low Birth Weight	10.2	8.7	▲
<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Health</b>			
Overdose Death Rate	52.1	35.1	▲
Homicide Death Rate	13.6	7.3	▼
Suicide Death Rate	14.0	13.8	▼
	Duval County	State of Florida	Duval Trend

## Weight, Physical Activity, & Diet

% of Adults Consumed <1 Serving of Vegetables Per Day	16.2	21.2	▼
% of Adults Who Are Overweight or Obese	68.5	64.6	▼

(Duval Community Health Improvement Plan Meeting, March 8, 2023)

Only a portion of these issues are a result of inadequate access to health care. About 50% of health outcomes are related to the zip code in which a person resides. Another 30% are related to health behaviors. If we want to impact health in the community, we must address these underlying social determinants of health.

Multiple organizations have completed studies that show specific zip codes in Jacksonville face high hurdles in obtaining good health. These areas must receive aggressive attention if we want to improve overall health outcomes. Many organizations such as Blue Zones Project<sup>1</sup>, Agape Community Health Center, Inc.<sup>2</sup>, and Feeding Northeast Florida<sup>3</sup> currently receive support from the city to address these high risk areas and align with national prevention strategies.

Additionally, there are over 200 organizations that provide services related to health and social determinants of health, but receive no financial or logistical support from the city. Some operate in silos and would benefit from better collaboration with organizations tackling similar problems. A number of organizations also face challenges with funding, staffing, and bureaucracy in delivering their services.

Concurrently, many citizens in need of help do not know these organizations exist, and encounter barriers to accessing the services which are available.

The issues are not confined to one area or socio-economic status. Even citizens with moderate incomes are challenged with the rise in health insurance deductibles, out-of-pocket expenses, and lack of primary care. Substance misuse and mental health issues affect nearly every family in some form or fashion. New mothers often lack support, resulting in above average maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality.

Our elder population receives very little support to navigate the health and financial challenges of aging. Finally, the barriers to services are even higher for those in the disability community.

The systemic issues causing disparities are deep, and attempts are ongoing to stem the tide. Many solutions will take coordinated work on a federal and state level. Meanwhile, there are many community organizations ready to start the work locally, and looking forward to working with Mayor Deegan's administration.

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## UNIVERSAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations by each focus committee were universal. Each group felt that Mayor Deegan's administration is well positioned to foster collaboration to improve impact and reduce friction in delivering services, provide education and public service messages to the community, and assist with obtaining federal, state, and private grants to help community organizations advance their missions.

## Recommendation: Create permanent Focus Committees and a Health Programs Advisory Committee

To this effect, we recommend the formation of permanent focus committees to address each of the six focus areas. These committees will assist Mayor Deegan and her health care team in bringing the health care community together to explore the issues and formulate solutions to better impact community health.

The committees will consist of a total of up to seven representatives from diverse constituencies, preferably from a mix of not-for-profit organizations, for-profit providers, and individuals with expertise and passion in the areas of need.

One to two members of each committee will be replaced every year to provide fresh input and broader representation. This will allow rotation of the entire committee every four years, while maintaining institutional knowledge to consistently monitor progress.

In accordance with the Sunshine Law, their meetings will be open to the public, and attendance will be encouraged throughout the health care community.

### The Focus Committees will have the following functions:

1. Provide guidance to the Chief Health Officer and Executive Director of Health Programs to ensure success of the Mayor's health initiatives in the areas of need they are addressing.
2. The members as a group will provide the following:
  - a. Track issues in the identified area of need.
  - b. Maintain an inventory of programs providing health services in the respective focus areas.
  - c. Investigate the barriers and bureaucratic burdens these organizations face in providing services.
  - d. Investigate the barriers and bureaucratic burdens the beneficiaries of these organizations face in accessing services.
  - e. Make recommendations for improvements to reduce barriers and bureaucracy for both the organizations and beneficiaries of services.
  - f. Recommend grant opportunities to the city grant team.
  - g. Create accountability measures for the organizations that receive city funding.





3. The members of the committee will use their connections in the community to help implement and promote initiatives that spring up from the committee.

**The Health Programs Advisory Committee has the following roles:**

1. Will provide guidance to the Chief Health Officer and Executive Director of Health Programs, ensuring success of the Mayor's health initiatives.
2. Each committee member other than the Chair will serve as liaison for one of the six focus area committees: Health insurance access, social determinants of health, maternal and child health, primary care and dental care access, mental health and substance misuse, and eldercare.
3. The members of the committee will use their diverse experience to provide continuing input on the Mayor's health initiatives.
4. The members of the committee will use their connections in the community to help implement and promote the Mayor's health initiatives.
5. The committee will consist of a total of seven representatives from diverse constituencies:

- a. Small to medium not-for-profit health organizations
- b. Public health providers
- c. Physician, nursing, or other health care organization representatives
- d. Large health organizations such as hospitals and insurers

One to two members of the committee will be replaced every year to provide fresh input and broader representation. This will allow rotation of the entire committee every four years, while maintaining institutional knowledge, to consistently monitor progress.

By forming permanent committees, the Mayor will have the benefit of ongoing communication and advice from constituents providing services on the ground floor. This continuous collaboration will improve services, reduce cost and bureaucracy, and ideally result in long-term improvement in Jacksonville's health measures.

**Recommendation: Survey all organizations addressing health in the community**

Organizations face many challenges in delivering services to their beneficiaries and, likewise, many beneficiaries face unwarranted bureaucracy in accessing help. Many of these

issues are the result of unintended consequences from policies put in place long ago, or a misunderstanding of the policies that are now in place. Additionally, organizations operating through multiple grants face reporting requirements, resulting in loss of time and resources meeting those grant reporting requirements.

We recommend the city survey each organization about the services they deliver, the challenges faced by the organization and their beneficiaries, and what could be done to address those challenges. These surveys should be tailored to the focus areas involved. Likewise, a survey of the public to identify their perceptions of access and the challenges they face in obtaining services should also be undertaken. The administration can collaborate with local universities and other organizations to complete these surveys.

This information can be used to create an information hub and “eligibility matrix” where the public can easily determine what services are available to address their needs. It can also be used to collaboratively work with organizations to smooth out the barriers that are faced in delivering services.

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## EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGING

The Mayor’s office has the reach and capability to promote the importance of accessing regular physician check-ups, and of taking a proactive approach around health. This includes informing citizens about resources available in the community that will impact health and to help raise awareness of health education and events, and informing providers about resources available to their patients.

**Recommendation: Dedicate and maintain a section of the city website to serve as a hub of information on available health services in the city, including those addressing social determinants of health.**

There is no central repository on the city website of the multitude of organizations addressing health needs. The city’s current website has a smattering of health information that is very difficult to find.

The administration could partner with a community resource directory such as Findhelp.org<sup>4</sup> (Aunt Bertha) to serve as the hub. Many smaller organizations are not represented on the site, and the administration could assist those organizations to help get them listed. With respect to free health insurance enrollment, 123covered.org<sup>5</sup> provides personalized and unbiased coverage options based on individual and specific needs.

The focus committees will assist the administration with keeping up to date on the status of new organizations, changes in eligibility, and organizations that no longer exist. The administration should develop an ongoing public relations campaign to educate the citizens and health care providers about this resource.

**Recommendation: The administration should partner with local organizations to promote physical and mental health.**

Mayor Deegan has a wide reach in the community – she knows how to make the news! Her talent and voice can significantly elevate the awareness of health services available in Jacksonville, inform the public about specific health issues, and create a unified message around health events. She and her team should partner with community organizations to bring attention to health education and events.

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## ASSIST WITH OBTAINING FEDERAL, STATE, AND PRIVATE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

As Mayor Deegan consistently noted throughout her campaign, many grant opportunities go untouched due to lack of city involvement. The city provides funding to several local health organizations, but there are many organizations which receive no assistance and do not have the human capital needed to apply for multiple grant opportunities.

It was also noted that under the City Public Service Grant Program, the annual contract awarded is for services delivered from 10/1 to 9/30 (the City’s fiscal year). Contracts are typically signed late October/early November. However, the nonprofits who are awarded these grants and appropriations do not receive any funds to run these programs up front. Rather, they must expend funds for the services contracted and request reimbursement. For the last few years, the first payments have typically been made in February or March – a full 4-5 months into the contract. For smaller nonprofits carrying out vital services for the City under these programs, this lag can be a significant cash flow challenge, and may mean fewer eligible organizations apply.

**Recommendation: Utilize the city’s grant writing team to directly apply for grants; assist organizations with the grant application process.**

**Recommendation: Improve the timeliness of contract execution for City grantees and provide a deposit for contracted services at award.**

This change will improve the cash flow challenges of organizations addressing safety net services and will encourage more organizations to apply for funding.

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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH**

### **CHARGE:**

**Develop a top-down assessment of the issues in maternal/child health, along with a status of the organizations in the community that are serving these areas. Address the abysmal maternal/child morbidity and mortality statistics in Duval County.**

The Maternal and Child Health statistics in Duval county are gut-wrenching. Total infant mortality in Duval County is higher than that of state and national measures, and Black infants die at twice the rate as White infants in our county. The same is true for maternal mortality with twice as many maternal deaths among Black women in comparison to White women. Child health statistics related to non-communicable disease outcomes demonstrate the same patterns—in particular as they relate to violence, psychological trauma, and behavioral health.

We are now fortunate to have a mayor with the political will to engage and integrate the resources in our community required to develop and implement well-documented strategies that address the inequities and loss of life. The first order of business is to establish the infrastructure, principles, standards, norms, and strategies to enable our community to implement cutting-edge and evidence-based transdisciplinary approaches to Maternal Child Health that have helped other communities in the US and abroad succeed.

It is also important for the Maternal Child Health Committee to maintain a focus on child development and its impact on health and well-being across the life course. Adolescent health must also be made a priority, with a particular focus on violence and reproductive health. The Maternal and Child Health committee will need to work with other committees convened by the Mayor to address this and other Maternal and Child Health issues.

Toward these ends, the Maternal and Child Health Committee proposes the following initiatives – recognizing there is much that can be accomplished in the short-term, but fundamental changes in the infrastructure, programs, systems, and policies will require time to fully implement.

### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. Total infant mortality in Duval County is higher than that of state and national statistics, and Black infants die at twice the rate as White infants in our county.
2. There are twice as many maternal deaths in Duval County among Black women in comparison to White women.
3. There is a lack infrastructure, principles, standards, norms, and strategies to enable our community to implement evidence-based transdisciplinary approaches to Maternal Child Health that have helped other communities in the US and abroad succeed.

### **Recommendation: Establish a sustainable infrastructure to improve Maternal and Child Health outcomes.**

This should be done under the Partnership for Child Health. The partnership should also be expanded to include critical stakeholders in maternal and child health. To do this, the partnership should be provided funding for administrative support.

### **Recommendation: Partner with local organizations to reestablish Jacksonville as a “Child Friendly City” in collaboration with other U.S. cities.**

The Child Friendly City Movement<sup>8</sup> was started by UNICEF in 1996 to make sure every child has the right to grow up in an environment where they feel safe and secure; has access to basic services and clean air and water; can play, learn and grow; and where their voice is heard and matters.

The movement was spurred in the United States years ago by Dr. Jeffrey Goldhagen, with Jacksonville being named the second Child Friendly City in the United States. Due to a confluence of factors, Jacksonville no longer has that designation. The Maternal and Child Health Committee would like the administration to partner with local organizations to reestablish Jacksonville as a “Child Friendly City” in collaboration with other U.S. Cities.

### **Provide four community health workers to Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition. This will expand reach to reduce infant mortality.**





## Support Children with Mental Health

Children with mental health conditions who have Medicaid are limited because reimbursement by Medicaid for coordination of care, home evaluations, and follow-up services is inadequate, and as a result, mental health providers are choosing to work for large hospital systems or a fee for service practice.

## Community Achievement Center Support

This will house a pediatric care clinic staffed by Sulzbacher Health Center and accept most insurance plans. For children without insurance, they will offer a sliding fee income-based discount and will assist families in enrolling in insurance through Florida KidsCare. Located in Health Zone 1, the center will also house Leadership training, Life Skill training, Financial Literacy, Physical/Mental Health Education and Information Technology. We challenged them to add Job Skills training at the location in collaboration with an intermediary organization such as CareerSource.

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: PRIMARY CARE AND DENTAL CARE ACCESS

### CHARGE:

**Develop a top-down assessment of the issues in primary care and dental access, along with a status of the organizations in the community that are serving these areas. Address the lack of primary care and dental access in the community.**

Primary care is the backbone of health care services. Primary care providers are trained to manage most health care problems, and to utilize a whole-person orientation to care. Continuity of care from one trusted provider can help the patient better attain health goals and reduce the severity of illness in the future.

In the Affordable Care Act, it was recognized that a stronger primary care and community health system was vital to improving health care access in this country. Because of suboptimal implementation of the ACA, the goal of strengthening primary care has not been realized.

Lack of affordable dental care is another serious issue. The historical severance of dental care from whole-person care prevented the inclusion of dental care in traditional insurance coverage. The lack of insurance coverage, sparseness of providers who accept Medicaid, and shortage of providers in low-income areas have resulted in a dental crisis in this country. Non-traumatic dental emergencies resulted in over 9,000 emergency department visits in Duval county in 2021, costing an estimated \$13 million.

Preventive care and easier access to dental care is much more cost effective than an emergency room visit.

In Duval county, there are several organizations providing primary care and dental care to the uninsured population. They are supported through a variety of methods and serve various groups. They face challenges in funding, staffing, and administrative burdens. Many potential beneficiaries don't realize these services are available and often have challenges connecting and qualifying for these programs or accessing care due to transportation issues and limited hours of operation.

Thankfully, progress has been made in primary care access through JaxCareConnect<sup>9</sup>. This organization assists uninsured adults making income under 250% of poverty level in finding a primary care medical home, and with navigating services in the community. Being a relatively new organization, they need assistance getting the word out.

There are a few free or low-cost dental clinics serving Duval County. There is no one-stop resource on how to find these clinics. There can be a significant waiting period for services and, just like in the primary care clinics, beneficiaries often have challenges qualifying for these programs or accessing care due to transportation issues and limited hours of operation.

As discussed in the universal recommendations, this committee also stressed the need for collaboration, communication, education, and funding. The members especially emphasized the need for organizations to collaborate to streamline eligibility verification and services. Also noted was the need to expand the city service contract with UF Health to a one-year eligibility period for beneficiaries.

### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. There is a significant lack of primary care and dental care access in the community.
2. JaxCareConnect assists uninsured adults under 250% poverty level in accessing care and needs assistance in getting the word out about their services.
3. There are no resources on how to find low-cost dental clinics, and there is a significant waiting period for dental services.

#### **Recommendation: Promote and educate the public about JaxCareConnect, City Contract, and dental services.**

Information about JaxCareConnect, City Contract, and dental clinics can be included in the website of available health services in the community. Information about these services needs to be shared in consistent public service announcements.

**Recommendation: Educator to train community health workers - this will allow us to increase the number of these valuable individuals through basic training to be a community health worker; We can acquire more specialized training focused on the elderly community, maternal infant health, mental health, etc. CHWs have been shown to help improve patient knowledge, access to care, health behaviors and increase preventive care. They can also help a community increase breastfeeding, and improve infant mortality. The plan would be to train up to 180 community health workers:**

People who have challenges with communication and technology, or who have low medical literacy, often have difficulty accessing care. Additionally, those with serious or complex chronic illnesses often do not have the ability to navigate the health care system. These people should be connected with community health workers or patient advocates to effectively get the care they need. This will improve health conditions and reduce unnecessary hospitalization.

A formal city-wide program could contribute to the promotion of existing health resources, such as JaxCareConnect and City Contract. A comprehensive community health worker model could also serve to help reinforce health information in support of increasing awareness and action regarding chronic health diseases.

#### **Recommendation: Fund Telescope Health/Telehealth Safety Net Clinic to provide virtual access to care for those that are uninsured.**

They have a 24-hours a day; seven days a week care navigation hotline with on demand virtual visits and they will provide a mobile unit with Para-Medics to enter underserved areas.

#### **Recommendation: Work with organizations to provide free health education to all citizens about primary care, and especially for common chronic conditions such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and chronic lung disease.**

More people are facing challenges with health care costs and access, while the percent of people with common chronic disease continues to rise. The city should partner with local organizations to offer free, culturally sensitive educational programs to help patients effectively engage in their care and better manage their health conditions. There should be ongoing public service announcements targeting health care providers and the public about the availability of these programs.

#### **Recommendation: Bring the dental care community together to solve the problem of access to affordable dental services and to encourage participation in Medicaid and other programs that provide dental services to underserved populations.**

This may include future establishment of mobile dental clinics, tele-dentistry, and outreach programs.

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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

### **CHARGE:**

**Develop a top-down assessment of the issues in mental health and substance misuse, along with a status of the organizations in the community that are serving these areas. Address the lack of mental health care and substance misuse treatment in the community.**

Despite significant effort and attention through many years, Duval County continues to score poorly on mental health measures and substance misuse statistics. Funding for treatment and counseling is substandard despite the magnitude of the problems faced in our community. The cost of care is a challenge as most providers don't accept Medicaid and many providers don't accept any insurance at all. Additionally, there is a serious shortage of mental health care providers.

There have been many studies examining the issues and offering solutions over the decades, yet the issues only continue to worsen. More recent studies include the Community Health Needs Assessment<sup>10</sup> completed as a requirement of the ACA every three years, the Duval County Health Improvement Plan<sup>11</sup> conducted by the Florida Department of Health, and the "Trauma Informed Work in Jacksonville, Florida" publication commissioned by the Partnership for Child Health. Each makes similar observations and recommendations to address the issues.

The Mental Health and Substance Misuse Committee concurred with the universal recommendations made at the beginning of this report. They highlighted the need for care navigators and simplification of the processes to qualify for services. They also stressed the need for public education about the resources available in the community.

### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. Duval County has continuously scored poorly on mental health measures and substance misuse statistics.
2. Funding for treatment and counseling is substandard despite the magnitude of the problems faced in our community.
3. The cost of care is a challenge as most providers don't accept Medicaid, and many providers don't accept any insurance at all. Additionally, there is a serious shortage of mental health care providers.

**Recommendation: Provide ongoing education and public relations campaigns to reduce the stigma of mental health care.**

Despite long-term education to normalize conversations about mental health and substance use disorders, significant stigma remains in accessing help, especially in minority and high-risk populations. Mayor Deegan could use her voice to reduce the stigma and encourage people to seek help.

**Recommendation: Educate and inform the public about the 988 Crisis and Suicide Lifeline for mental health crisis help and resources. In addition, provide support for two additional crisis managers.**

Early identification of Mental Health Disorders through comprehensive and informed assessment can identify mental health disorders, which, left unaddressed, may contribute to crime, homelessness, or other negative outcomes. Integrating mental health assessments for adult and juvenile services can help first responders, law enforcement, legal professionals, and other stakeholders develop appropriate and individualized care that promotes rehabilitation and reintegration.

Additionally, early identification of mental health disorders leads to cost savings in the long run by reducing the likelihood of relapse, recidivism, and re-arrest, resulting in fewer future legal interventions and associated expenses. Mitigating these risks and improving safety can contribute to safer communities and better outcomes for both the young people and adults struggling with mental illness and addiction.

**Recommendation: Promote, measure, and elevate Mental Health First Aid training (both adult and youth) across the community, expanding to more businesses, schools, community centers, and faith communities.**

The Mayor is uniquely positioned to champion the good work already being done and to advocate for its expansion, longitudinal tracking, and funding support to make Jacksonville a more prepared and compassionate community.

**Recommendation: Partner with city and local organizations to create a cohesive process across all organizations for addressing mental health and substance misuse issues.**

**This recommendation includes:**

1. Enhancing the implementation of the crisis response team in response to calls made to the 988 Crisis and Suicide Lifeline



2. Coordination of services
3. Development of a shared HIPAA consent form to allow better communication about individuals needing mental health care or medical assistance
4. Development of best practices around mental health and criminal justice
5. Training across all organizations to share processes and procedures

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: ELDERCARE

### CHARGE:

**Develop a top-down assessment of the issues in eldercare along with a status of the organizations in the community that are serving these areas. Address the issues with eldercare in the community.**

The aging population confronts many challenges – loss of mobility and independence, possible cognitive decline and dementia, declining health, potential loss of financial security, and higher risk of fraud and abuse. Additionally, with families becoming smaller and more spread out, the older adults often face these challenges in isolation.

Helping older adults requires a community approach, and Jacksonville is fortunate to have outstanding organizations answering the call. However, as with some of the other focus areas, the needs are much greater than the resources available. There is inadequate funding, significant bureaucracy for providers and beneficiaries, and lack of coordination of the services available.

This committee concurred with the universal recommendations. Specifically, they would like to see Mayor Deegan collaborate with organizations to streamline qualifying for services. They would also like the city to provide more extensive education to the public, and to health care providers about available resources.

### THREE KEY FINDINGS:

1. There is a significant shortage of resources to help people facing the challenges of aging – for example, there are 1,000 individuals on a waiting list for meal assistance.
2. Qualifying for services is a cumbersome process that many elderly people do not have the ability to navigate.



3. Many families do not know about the resources available to help the elderly age in place.

**Recommendation: Work with organizations to develop navigator and community health worker programs to help the aging population obtain the services they need to safely age in place.**

Community health workers have been shown to reduce health care expenditures, improve the social determinants of health, and improve mood and functional outcomes. This would improve quality of life and reduce costs of care in our aging population.

**Recommendation: Create a learning collaborative to improve eldercare and move Jacksonville forward as an “age-friendly city.”**

The aging community would benefit from better integrated care and support. The administration could sponsor a one-year learning collaborative inviting key stakeholders in the eldercare area to optimize services to the aging, encourage organizations to adopt value-based care models, and work to move Jacksonville towards being an “age-friendly city.”

These organizations include, but are not limited to Aging True, ElderSource, Meals on Wings (UNF), local Restaurant Association, Jax Chamber, Feeding Northeast Florida, Farm Share, United Way, Elite Transportation, and JTA to provide one hot meal a day to the Aging population in need.

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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

### **CHARGE:**

**Develop a top-down assessment of the issues in social determinants of health along with a status of the organizations in the community that are serving these areas. Address factors that could improve social determinants of health in the community.**

Inadequately addressing the social determinants of health is the underpinning of most poor health outcomes. Issues such as lack of access to healthy food, inadequate transportation, poor housing conditions, and lack of safe places to live and play are woven through other disciplines addressed in this transition report, such as housing, infrastructure, economic development, and public safety.

The committee acknowledged that the needs are immense, and many organizations are trying to address the shortfalls. The need for collaboration, communication, education, and funding as discussed in Universal Recommendations were big components of the recommendations by this committee.

The specific challenge discussed in qualifying for services was the bureaucracy. Many organizations and city programs have different qualifications which beneficiaries need to meet to receive assistance. This places an undue burden on those who are least able to handle the challenges of qualifying.

### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. Issues such as lack of access to healthy food, inadequate transportation, poor housing conditions, and lack of safe places to live and play weave through other disciplines addressed in this transition report such as housing, infrastructure, economic development, and public safety.
2. Inadequately addressing the social determinants of health is the underpinning of most poor health outcomes.
3. Many organizations and city programs have different qualifications beneficiaries need to meet to receive assistance. This places an undue burden on those who are least able to handle the challenges of qualifying.

**Recommendation: The city and organizations providing services should collaborate to create a “one stop” qualifying process to reduce the burdens placed on beneficiaries who need services.**

By simplifying the qualifying process, organizations can save time and human resources in qualifying individuals for services. This will result in improved productivity for both the organization and beneficiary needing help. It was particularly noted that the qualifying process for transportation through Jacksonville Transportation Authority can be onerous for potential beneficiaries.

**Recommendation: Work with City Council to implement the recommendations made in their “Special Committee on Critical Quality of Life Issues” Report<sup>7</sup> and with city departments that address areas related to social determinants of health.**

The City Council report addressed housing and access to health care issues and had many good recommendations.

In addition, many city departments are dedicated towards improving quality of life in Jacksonville, such as Planning and Development, Neighborhoods, Office of Economic Development, Parks, Recreation, and Community Services, and Public Works. These departments should have a dedicated focus and communication on improving social determinants of health, especially in areas with high health disparities. They could also address problems with housing among the aging population as the Critical Quality of Life Issues did not address this in their report.

**Recommendation: Fund Overflow Health Alliance to provide access to basic primary care and wrap-around services to address the social determinants of health, including addressing food insecurity, paying for health insurance premiums (of those who can’t afford it), for transportation to and from doctor appointments, and providing job training for those who are unemployed.**

**Recommendation: Adopt a “Health in All Policies” approach that incorporates health considerations into policymaking across sectors.**

Population health and community wellness are influenced by many factors beyond healthcare and traditional public health activities. Evaluating all public policies within the framework of health delivers equitable outcomes for all populations.

**Recommendation: Mayor Deegan should ensure that organizations that receive city contracts or incentives have the following characteristics:**

1. A majority of their employees should be Jacksonville citizens.
2. As part of the bid process, employers providing health coverage opportunities and other benefits to employees and subcontractors should weigh as a factor in awarding city contracts.
3. Companies receiving city incentives should be required to do set-asides to address the unhoused.

**Recommendation: The administration should spearhead collaboration with the JTA and other transportation providers to address barriers to efficient transportation for individuals challenged with this need.**

This was identified as the most pressing barrier to people receiving services. The current system results in unintended consequences that impede patients getting to appointments. This reduces the patient's and provider's productivity and the patient's quality of life.

**Recommendation: Support existing work to expand broadband services and telehealth.**

Health care should be patient-centered, and effective delivery of health care includes flexibility for people unable to access care during normal working hours or who have transportation issues. Improving broadband services to allow wider use of telehealth will greatly improve care in this population.

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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: HEALTH CARE AND HEALTH INSURANCE**

### **CHARGE:**

**Develop job descriptions and review candidate for Chief Health Officer (CHO) and Director of Health Program Coordination (DHPC). Build a Health Care Committee to advise the CHO and DHPC.**

According to the Census Bureau<sup>6</sup>, approximately 13.8% of the population under 65 in Jacksonville remains uninsured as of July 1, 2022. This equates to about 119,000 people. Certain areas of the city have uninsured rates from 24% to 41%. These numbers are expected to rise with the end

of automatic Medicaid re-enrollment instituted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of the Medicaid disenrollments are due to procedural reasons, such as being unable to contact the beneficiary. Some of those who were disenrolled may be working and qualify for insurance under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Others may requalify for Medicaid.

Some individuals remain uninsured because they do not understand the need for insurance or how to purchase coverage. Many are unaware of the tax credits available to significantly lower the cost of coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

The city spends about \$40 million to provide care for the uninsured, and many health care organizations absorb the cost of uncompensated care that is not reimbursed by the city. By our calculations, reducing the uninsured rate by just 10% would save the city over \$4 million each year directly. This money could be reallocated to programs dedicated toward improving health, instead of taking care of problems after they occur. Also, improving insurance coverage would reduce uncompensated care and likely improve the economics of our community. In addition, there are significant issues with provider availability due to limited networks in managed Medicaid programs, Medicare Advantage, some ACA plans, and for members of the military with TRICARE coverage who need to access care outside the military health system. This decreases access to care and can create worsening health situations for people covered by those programs.

### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. Approximately 13.8% of the population under 65 in Jacksonville remains uninsured as of July 1, 2022. This equates to about 119,000 people. Certain areas of the city have uninsured rates from 24% to 41%. These numbers are expected to rise with the end of automatic Medicaid re-enrollment instituted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some individuals remain uninsured because they do not understand the need for insurance or how to purchase coverage. Many are unaware of the tax credits available to significantly lower the cost of coverage through the Affordable Care Act.
2. The city spends about \$40 million to provide care for the uninsured, and many health care organizations absorb the cost of uncompensated care that is not reimbursed by the city. By our calculations, reducing the uninsured rate by just 10% would save the city over \$4 million each year directly.



3. There are significant issues with provider availability due to limited networks in managed Medicaid programs, Medicare Advantage, some ACA plans, and for members of the military with TRICARE coverage who need to access care outside the military health system. This decreases access to care and can create worsening health situations for people covered by those programs.

**Recommendation: As soon as possible, provide free and unbiased education to the public about the 2023 ACA open enrollment period, and year-round enrollment for those people with income between 100% to 150% of poverty level; also support programs and events to enroll eligible citizens.**

The city can engage the media and partner with hospitals, insurance agents, and insurance providers to raise awareness about obtaining health insurance through the ACA. They can also collaborate with the Health Planning Council Navigators Program and insurance agents and brokers to ensure that technology and assistance is available for ACA insurance signup. In the interest of time and impact, it is recommended that resources be concentrated in areas with high uninsured populations for the 2023 open enrollment season.

Going forward, there should be ongoing education about the need for insurance, and follow up with enrolled individuals to make sure they maintain their coverage. Programs to improve ACA signup should eventually be expanded to the entire community.

**Recommendation: Organize a collaborative effort with insurers and providers to discuss network expansion for those facing limited network issues.**

Mayor Deegan can bring insurers and providers to the table to encourage collaboration that could help solve the network issue. This will result in better care for our military, elderly, and vulnerable populations on Medicaid or ACA plans with small networks.

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## SUMMARY

This transition report is only the beginning. The healthcare community is passionate and excited to have a mayor who is making health one of her signature initiatives. One committee member poignantly stated, “We participate in study after study and report after report. We are tired of reports and are ready for action.” Every committee member has volunteered to continue the work and make these

recommendations a reality. Their goal is to make this work so valuable that a continued focus on health will be a part of every administration in the future.

The committees recognize the constraints in budget, manpower, and available community resources. With the help of the city grant department, we expect to obtain millions of dollars to support programs and organizations doing the good work of improving the health of the community. These formidable forces, together with a mayor deeply invested in the health of Jacksonville, will provide an extraordinary return, both in the health and economics of this great city.

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## INDEX & LINKS

- <sup>1</sup> Blue Zones Project

<https://bluezonesprojectjacksonville.com/blueprint/>

- <sup>2</sup> Agape Community Health Center, Inc.

<https://agapefamilyhealth.org/>

- <sup>3</sup> Feeding Northeast Florida

<https://feedingnefl.org/>

- <sup>4</sup> Findhelp.org,

<https://www.findhelp.org/>

- <sup>5</sup> 123covered.org

<https://www.123covered.org/>

- <sup>6</sup> Census Bureau

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/jacksonvillecityflorida>

- <sup>7</sup> Special Committee on Critical Qualify of Life Issues Report

[http://apps2.coj.net/City\\_Council\\_Public\\_Notices\\_Repository/COJ%20CQLI%20Final%20Report%2012.16.22.pdf](http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/COJ%20CQLI%20Final%20Report%2012.16.22.pdf)

- <sup>8</sup> The Child Friendly City Movement

<https://www.childfriendlycities.org/>

- <sup>9</sup> JaxCareConnect

<https://jaxcareconnect.org/>

- <sup>10</sup> Community Health Needs Assessment

<http://www.hpcnef.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Final-2021-NE-FL-CHNA-Cumulative-Report.pdf>

- <sup>11</sup> Duval County Health Improvement Plan

[https://duval.floridahealth.gov/\\_files/\\_documents/2017-2022-duval-chip-revised-march-2020.pdf](https://duval.floridahealth.gov/_files/_documents/2017-2022-duval-chip-revised-march-2020.pdf)

# Economic Development



**Ed Randolph**

Economic Development  
Transition Committee Chair

- ▲ Permitting
- ▲ Small Business Ladders
- ▲ Talent Development
- ▲ Downtown Development
- ▲ Economic Development Projects

# Economic Development

Permitting | Small Business Ladders | Talent Development  
Downtown Development | Economic Development Projects

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## THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRANSITION COMMITTEE IS MADE UP OF TEN INDUSTRY LEADERS.

Economic Development (ED) is one of Mayor Donna Deegan's priority focus areas. Under the umbrella of Economic Development are five primary topics of discussion: Small Business Ladders, Downtown Development, Permitting, Talent Development and Economic Development Projects.

All ED Transition Committee meetings will be held in the Multipurpose Room (located in the Conference Center) of the COJ Public Library-Main Library/Downtown located at 303 North Main Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202.

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## MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Ed Randolph | Committee Chair  
*Economic Development Transition Committee*  
Economic Development Projects Lead

Dr. Carlton Robinson  
*Chief Innovation Officer, JAX Bridges*  
Small Business Ladders Lead

Tony Allegretti  
*Entrepreneur/Past CEO of Jacksonville Cultural Council*  
Downtown Development Lead

Jake Gordon  
*CEO, Downtown Vision, Inc.*  
Downtown Development

Allan Iosue  
*Director of Strategic Accounts, Haskell*  
Permitting Lead

Anna Lebesch  
*Senior Vice President of Strategy and Talent Development, JAXUSA*  
Talent Development Lead

Monica Hernandez  
*President, First Coast Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*

Shannon Denson  
*President, Jacksonville Black Chamber of Commerce*

Pat Gillum Sams  
*Founder/CEO, The Sistah Covenant*

E. Shawn Ashley  
*Broadline Distributor & 3rd Party Logistics Provider, EDC3*

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## SUMMARY OF ED TRANSITION COMMITTEE WORK TO DATE

The ED Transition Committee agreed to address each of the five primary ED Transition Committee topics in separate, stand-alone, meetings. Each meeting is scheduled to be approximately four hours in length. Mr. Randolph, the ED Transition Committee Chair, worked with individual members of the committee to help identify and assemble the subject matter experts needed to help explore the specific areas of interest put forth by Mayor Deegan. Each meeting has been structured to allow 10-15 minutes on average for each subject matter expert to express what role their organization/constituency group/business has in whatever area is being discussed that particular day.

At the time of submission of this report, the Economic Development Transition committee has held one workshop and three structured meetings.

- 1. Economic Development Transition Committee**  
Hybrid/Virtual Workshop  
Friday, June 23, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.  
ED Transition Committee Workshop Meeting  
Minutes (Exhibit A)
- 2. Small Business Ladders**  
Thursday, July 20, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
ED Transition Committee Small Business Ladders  
Meeting Minutes (Exhibit B)



### 3. Downtown Development

Monday, July 24, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
ED Transition Committee Downtown Development  
Draft Meeting Minutes (Exhibit C)

### 4. Permitting

Tuesday, August 8, 2023 from 1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The Talent Development and Economic Development Project focus areas are scheduled to meet on Thursday, August 17, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and Monday, August 21, 2023, respectively. Those meetings will also include a series of subject matter experts who will address how they see the challenges and opportunities that exist in their respective areas. It should be noted that each meeting consists of a lengthy public comment period at the end. Committee members can take action on any of the ideas and suggestions that come out of those conversations.

Additionally, everyone interested in the process was encouraged to provide presentations, white papers, suggestions for improvement, etc., to the specific focus areas, and to send their information to Mr. Randolph to be considered for inclusion in the final ED Transition Committee Report.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRANSITION COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

On Friday, June 23, 2023, the ED Transition Committee held a workshop. Committee members were introduced. Mr. John Sawyer with the Office of General Counsel has been assigned as the attorney to the ED Transition Committee. Mr. Sawyer provided a high-level overview of the Florida State Sunshine Law and Public Records Law.

Mr. Randolph advised that a quorum of six members present in-person is required to establish a quorum for voting purposes.

All committee members were sent an email advising them of four available one-hour interactive training sessions (in-person or via Zoom) offered by the City's Ethics Office. The training provided will help answer any questions committee members may have, and introduce the Ethics Office that assists City boards and committees during their service.



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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: PERMITTING

With the many up-and-coming entrepreneurs in Jacksonville, the City's building department processes need to be streamlined to ensure that business will be able to open their doors as soon as possible. This committee will research the policies and procedures for permitting, have conversations with business owners, and make recommendations. An efficient permitting process will not only help businesses, but could curtail construction safety and delays.

### CHARGE:

**This focus area will seek input from the COJ planning department, small businesses affected by permitting delays, and representatives from permit-intensive industries to identify technology, process, and staffing improvements that will simplify, streamline, and drastically speed up the permitting process in our fast-growing city.**

On Tuesday, August 8, 2023, the ED Transition Committee Permitting focus area held a meeting. Allan Iosue aided the Economic Development Transition Committee with securing Subject Matter Experts regarding the permitting process in Florida, specifically Jacksonville and its surrounding areas. Subject Matter Experts garner experience from private sector experience as well as their public sector permitting involvement.

A common narrative throughout the committee meeting was the need for a more efficient and expedited permitting process. All speakers spoke to the process as synthesized. The group expressed how there is no substitute for having engineers and architects to sit down with, during the early design development stages of a project (10-30% design) to talk about code interpretations, design complexities, and overall project approach (per discipline).

These cities usually have a set time of the month when these meetings can occur, and you have to file your project (for a fee) to get on their agenda. Engineers from all of the sectors represented emphasized the current need for pre-application meetings and how valuable front-end communication is in the permitting process.

## **AREAS OF FOCUS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **SHORT-TERM:**

Existing staff would greatly benefit from more training and availability of updated information. Small business owners require more education of the permitting process to ensure that they are in compliance and can continue or start up business procedures.

### **MID-TERM:**

Revision of existing code to streamline the permitting process and minimize the completion time for applications. Presenters to this meeting state that autonomy within the permitting process would allow for a quicker turnaround for applicants and less strain on staff.

### **LONG-TERM:**

Clear communication throughout the permitting process between the permitting department and applicants to ensure the quickest turn-around for incoming projects to the City.

### **ISSUES:**

- Limited communication within the Permitting department due to inefficient organizational structure
- Permitting review times are 2x-3x longer than usual
- Literal application of Jacksonville Code vs. applying the code to real work situations
- Redundant processes
- Obsolete land development procedures manual

- CIP Projects Impacted
- Incomplete submittals by consultants: deadlines, civil input, building development input
- Lack of consultant experience; consultant training needed
- Repeated permitting input regarding comments and rejections that aren't applicable or relevant to code
- Limited flexibility in review stage; include updated technology and/or photography to avoid having inspectors from having to make multiple visits, for minor issues flagged for non-compliance
- Construction planning nearly impossible, exacerbated by supply chain
- Significant delays for every project
- Under-the-table renovations
- Commercial delays cause penalties, evictions, loss of income, and disruption of business
- Regulation and administrative residential delays account for 24% of total cost
- Under-the-table construction impacts property tax burden and create unsafe buildings
- Permitting delays impact Jacksonville sales tax revenue on commercial construction revenue
- Frustration from small business owners, engineers and architects with the redundant nature of the process, the inefficiency deters city stakeholders from abiding with city code
- Systemic miscommunication between architects/ engineers and permitting staff on code and application of design plans

### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. **Staffing limitations** - As our city has seen more growth, the number of staff committed to the permitting process has not kept up. Due to this, our staff knowledge appears to have been affected and causes lack of uniformity in comments during reviews. We have seen the private consulting firms hire away staff for higher salaries. The structure of the permitting groups needs to be revised.

2. **Time to permit** - a direct effect of staffing limitations and the process for review of submittals causes our time to permit to be lengthened.
3. **Communication** - There is an overall lack of communication during the process in order to address concerns early and often to expedite permits.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **In order to keep up with demand, the city should consider the following**
  - a. Hire more permitting staff
  - b. Increase salaries to be competitive and to retain talent
  - c. Hire an outside consultant to review permitting department and processes, and re-align certain functions if found necessary
2. **Create a system for different levels of permitting**

- a. Large Project vs Small Project

#### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Reorganize organizational structure to give Public Works autonomy over permitting
- Hire outside consultants to identify the portions of the permitting process that are redundant
- Standardize template summaries for Code Review and Permit Questionnaire
- Identify permitting thresholds and documentation
- Permitting staff should possess the autonomy to approve design solutions in literal application and approved “as noted” options
- Permitting process must allow for field changes without the need to re-permit existing plans
- Institute audit process for checks and balances to introduce private plan review
- Include preferred consultant status for submittal grading system



- Implement system to aggregate complaints or ombudsman
- Pay permitting staff higher wages to attract and keep employees
- Empower planning department to support projects it deems a community good
- Refocusing CPACs on original mission, training, and term limits.
- Customer service personnel to help small businesses navigate the building department
- Establish COJ Ombudsman to advocate for the construction business community
- Establish a public- private board that oversees the planning and building inspection division
- More training for BID personnel
- Jacksonville needs more staff to process and review plans
- Outsource plan review to third parties to allow ability to issue permits
- Ability to meet in person would provide quicker result to allow for improved communication



- Shorter required timeframes to approve permits with holds
- Private plan review should require less time than the average of 20 days
- Enhance the private provider process for plan review and inspectors
- Expedited permitting for large & mega projects: Projects can choose an option to pay a significant fee of several thousands of dollars to move permitting at a much faster pace.

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### **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: SMALL BUSINESS LADDERS**

As much as “climbing the corporate ladder” is conceptualized as being successful and working toward upper management, we must focus on our small business ladders as well. Small businesses are the backbone of city. Opportunities must be provided for small businesses across the spectrum to succeed with access to funding.

#### **CHARGE:**

**Review the City’s current permitting, zoning, procurement, and bid processes to determine efficiency and/or opportunities for small businesses with an emphasis on inclusion.**

#### **CHARGE:**

**The Startups, Incubators, and Small Business Subcommittee will meet publicly with the Jax Chamber and appropriate directors in planning, zoning, and licensing to determine how best to create the most welcoming and nurturing municipal environment for small businesses in the Southeast. They shall be given a complete list of all properties held or owned by the city to determine:**

- 1. Potential sites for Small Business incubators throughout the city**
- 2. Potential buildings and properties for lease or sale to small businesses**
- 3. Recommendations on efficient ways to communicate available services to small businesses across the entire city**

**They shall meet with the director of purchasing to discover how best to make the City’s vendors list process available to all small business throughout the city,**

**Finally, the committee will hear from small business groups and emerging networking groups for feedback on the users experience of city services and fees.**

#### **CHARGE:**

**The BIDMA Subcommittee will meet publicly with the General Counsel’s office to determine best practices in helping the city’s many merchants districts and commercial areas form voluntary BID structures in order to help fund improvements and various programs allowed under BIDS all over the city.**

#### **CHARGE:**

**This focus area will meet publicly with representatives from the Small Business Development Center directors from UNF, and the Urban Enterprise Center to discuss restoring outreach of programs stimulating business development interest and education throughout area schools and continuing education programs. The committee will explore what kinds of resources and strategic partnerships are necessary to extend the services offered by the Small Business Administration at UNF to the City’s North, West, and Northwest Quadrants including groups that guide startups and small businesses through the process of obtaining investments, loans and financing.**

On Friday, July 21, 2023, the ED Transition Committee Small Business Ladders focus area held a meeting. Dr. Carlton Robinson assisted with gathering various individuals that work in the Jacksonville Small Business Ecosystem, including small business owners and individuals that represent government and non-profit entities that aid small businesses.

Dinah Mason, who currently oversees the city’s Jacksonville Small and Emerging Business (JSEB) Program, provided an overview of how the JSEB Program is organized, and the changes it has seen over the past 10-15 years. Dinah also provided the committee with some suggestions that she believed could help make the program more efficient. Those suggestions are found in the presentation she provided to the committee.

Panelists spoke to the difficulties of the permitting process, and the division of utilization and implementation of the various checks and balances that are a hinderance to their businesses and the community at large. Several panelists

stated that the Jacksonville Small Business Ecosystem is primed for growth and attracting small businesses, but is lacking investment equity and is challenged by the funding infrastructure.

## **AREAS OF FOCUS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **SHORT-TERM:**

The entrepreneurs present during the topic meeting overwhelmingly agreed that most welcome the small business community into conversations surrounding economic growth. Entrepreneurs recommended that economic development should begin by studying business-forward cities to evaluate the models that have served other small businesses, and to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion practices among other city's programs and incentives.

### **MID-TERM:**

Small Business owners throughout Jacksonville must be educated on the JSEB Program: Incentivize small business owners locally and attract franchise owners.

### **LONG-TERM:**

To ensure a lasting impact in the community, assemble a taskforce regarding the Small Business Ladders topic to address the difficulties of emerging Jacksonville businesses.

### **ISSUES:**

- Access to Capital is currently run by COJ staff who work with OGC to draft contracts and act as a closing agent.
- Clarity is needed in the certification and recertification process, which is very confusing to the applicant.
- There is a limit on the time a business can stay in the program.
- Difficult to find projects available for bid in the city
- Expand the counties where projects are available for bid.
- Requirements (43) for certification is lengthy and burdensome.
- Eliminate the applicant's net worth requirement.



- Clarity needed on how we define and measure success of the program. Program should be measured by the success and growth of a particular business, and not the number of businesses certified. Not all certified JSEBs actively participate in the program.
- Program should be measured based on quality of contracts completed, and not quantity of contracts awarded.
- Some small businesses do not participate because the program is overwhelming and intimidating.
- If there are 300 in the program now, should that be three times or four times that number? Change dynamic to pull in more small businesses.
- Needs to be more competition within the program.
- How many opted to not be a JSEB but choose OBE. Forced to make a choice.
- Value should not be based on the value of contracts awarded. You could have three businesses with \$250,000 contracts each, which is not comparable to one business that has a \$450,000 contract.



- Currently you have to be a JSEB and then receive the educational piece. The education component needs to be on the front end.
- Set up what the success ratio looks like. What percent of JSEBs do we want to have contracts?

The current JSEB Special Committee is ineffective. They never have a quorum (enough committee members appointed). They are defined by ORD, which the committee does not follow. Need to redefine the committee and its purpose.

### THREE KEY FINDINGS:

Within the framework of the Jacksonville small and emerging business landscape, a comprehensive analysis reveals three prominent opportunity findings that hold the potential to significantly enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

#### 1. **A pronounced potential lies in the refinement of unitization within community leadership.**

This entails the collaborative synergy among diverse stakeholders, such as city government, local agencies, educational institutions, financial entities, and established corporations. By fortifying this cohesive approach, the community can foster a more conducive environment for small and emerging businesses, facilitating their growth and success.

2. **A compelling avenue for advancement centers around the augmentation of programs aimed at facilitating access to capital.** The lack of adequate financial resources often stands as a formidable obstacle for these businesses. By implementing robust and tailored systems that facilitate capital acquisition, the small and emerging business sector can be propelled towards greater resilience and growth. This encompasses not only securing initial funding but also providing ongoing financial support to sustain operations and foster expansion.

#### 3. **A noteworthy opportunity for refinement pertains to the accessibility of procurement education.**

The complexities of navigating procurement processes can be daunting for small and emerging businesses. By enhancing educational resources that elucidate the intricacies of procurement procedures, these businesses can be better equipped to compete and secure contracts at various levels including city, state and federal. This, in turn, contributes to their overall growth trajectory and economic impact.

By strategically addressing these three key areas, stakeholders can collectively cultivate an environment that empowers small businesses to thrive, fostering economic vitality and sustainability.



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

To address the identified opportunity findings within the Jacksonville small and emerging business landscape, it's crucial to devise comprehensive solution recommendations that effectively enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem. These recommendations are designed to foster collaboration, provide financial support, and facilitate procurement education.

**1. Refinement of Unitization within Community Leadership. Establish a Small Business Coalition: Create a dedicated coalition comprising representatives from city government, local agencies, educational institutions, financial entities, and established corporations.**

This coalition could meet regularly to discuss, plan, and execute initiatives that directly support small and emerging businesses. The coalition can collaborate on creating programs, organizing events, and sharing resources. Through joint efforts, the coalition can create a unified and supportive environment that encourages knowledge sharing, cross-industry collaboration, and strategic partnerships.

**2. Augmentation of Programs for Access to Capital: Small Business Capital Access Fund: Develop a specialized fund focused on providing financial support to small and emerging businesses.**

The fund can be established in partnership with financial institutions or appropriate agencies. This fund should offer various types of financial assistance, including micro-grants, and low-interest loans. In addition to initial funding, the fund can provide ongoing financial support to businesses that demonstrate growth potential. By tailoring financial solutions to the unique needs of these businesses, the capital access fund can help foster their resilience and expansion.

**3. Enhanced Accessibility of Procurement Education: Procurement Academy for Small Businesses: Create a dedicated Procurement Academy that offers comprehensive education and training on procurement processes.** This academy could offer workshops, webinars, online resources, and mentoring sessions specifically designed to demystify the complexities of procurement. Collaborate with experienced procurement professionals, contracting experts, and successful business owners to provide practical insights and real-world examples. By equipping small and emerging businesses with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate procurement

challenges, the Procurement Academy can empower them to confidently pursue and secure contracts at various governmental levels.

Incorporating these solution recommendations will contribute to building a more supportive and conducive environment for small and emerging businesses in Jacksonville. By fostering collaboration, providing access to capital, and enhancing procurement education, these initiatives can collectively elevate the entrepreneurial ecosystem and drive sustainable growth and economic impact for the entire community.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Hire a not-for profit consultant with a specialized skill set with Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Certification and that participates in CDFI funded programs.
- Staff assists with paperwork, predictability of revenue, opportunity to grow your business by doing business with COJ, evolution of including education, and helps people to better run their business.
- Continue educating. Education is instrumental to small businesses obtaining a contract with COJ.
- Value should not be based on the value of contracts awarded. You could have three businesses with \$250,000 contracts each, and is not comparable to one business that has a \$450,000 contract.
- Celebrate success stories.
- Currently you have to be a JSEB and then receive the educational piece. The education component needs to be on the front end.
- Set up what the success ratio looks like. What percent of JSEBs do we want to have contracts?
- Is there communication between the big business contracts and the JSEBs or small businesses in the community.
- 20% should be allocated to small businesses in the city budget. There are currently not enough small businesses to make up the 20%.
- Needs to be more competition within the program.
- Intent of the program is there, foundation is there. Need to look at building on the current program, and promoting small business within the city.

- Education on the front end. People do not know what certification they need and what model will best fit their business.
- Need to have an orientation after a business is certified and before commencement of an awarded contract. Most do not know the process once they are certified and awarded a contract.
- Need to also have orientation for the big businesses that hire JSEB sub-contractors.
- Perception that JSEBs are mostly interested in being paid versus providing quality workmanship.
- Primes need to review the JSEB list of available businesses periodically to see what skill sets may have been added.
- Primes want to hire JSEBs that provide quality work not just hire a sub-contractor because they are a JSEB.
- Educate and promote JSEBs for growth.
- JSEBs need to mentor other JSEBs.
- Danger of classifying all JSEBs in the same bucket because there are different skill sets based on industry. Currently they are all in the “JSEB bucket”
- Chamber to host a bi-monthly or quarterly roundup.

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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

### **CHARGE:**

**Meet with representatives of FSCJ to grow the city partnership on workforce development for industries that have a shortage of skilled workers, and identify local businesses/targeted industries to partner with.**

### **CHARGE:**

**Explore tax incentives for businesses who recruit from local workforce programs or skilled employees from national talent searches.**

On Thursday, August 17, 2023, the ED Transition Committee Workforce Talent Development met.

Dr. Anna Lebesch, JAXUSA Senior Vice President of Strategy and Talent Development assisted with gathering various individuals who work in the Jacksonville workforce talent development ecosystem.

Dr. Lebesch provided an overview of the five-year Northeast Florida Regional Economic Development Strategy Plan, “The Future is Now,”

- Guiding Principles
- Target and Niche Industries
- Jax Regional Workforce
- Projected Annual Growth Rate

Dr. Lebesch advised that during the strategic planning process among the employers was that talent development and the need for recruiting, developing and retaining talent in our region is crucial to the success of their businesses and organizations.

### **CareerSource Northeast Florida**

Mr. Bruce Ferguson, President and CEO for CareerSource Northeast Florida provided an overview of CareerSource NEFL.

- Serves Duval, Baker, Clay, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns Counties
- Provides innovative and responsive services that help both business and job seekers for the careers of today, as well as looking into the future
- All publicly funded, federal tax dollars as well as the state of FL
- Partnerships of Community, Economic Workforce Development
- JAXUSA Regional Economic Development Partnership
  - Life Sciences
  - Advanced Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Logistics
  - Technology Services
  - Financial Services

Mr. Ferguson noted that they understand what all of their regional partners are doing so that they do not replicate what another nonprofit is offering.

Dr. Carlton Robinson asked Mr. Ferguson to provide a brief overview of Startup Quest and asked if he thinks it is a program that would be valuable for the NEFL Region. Mr. Ferguson replied that Startup Quest was funded through the state and specifically targeted towards entrepreneurial training, to help individuals that have an idea or have a very small business to we ramp them up and get them to be a larger employer and ensure they have a strong future. He added that he thinks there are opportunities, notably grant funding.

Mr. Iosue asked Mr. Ferguson if he had a magic wand, what would be the one thing he would improve on or do to help the region. Mr. Ferguson replied that their challenge right now is funding and it is because of the way the funding formula works, which is the stronger the economy, the less funding the state receives. They do not have as many training dollars available. Anything they can do to leverage outside grants, leverage with partners and their dollars to continue to work, is the single most important thing right now.

He added that there are funding opportunities available from a grant perspective, noting that they partner with FSCJ who has a tremendous grant writing program.

### **Duval County Public Schools (DCPS)**

Mr. Corey Wright, Assistant Superintendent of Accountability and Assessment Duval County Public Schools, introduced Ms. Jill Fierle, Director CTE (Career and Technical Education) Duval County Public Schools. Mr. Wright advised that they have two strategic plan goals that focus on talent development, workforce development and career readiness (PowerPoint Presentation attached) in addition to the number of schools, enrollment, etc.

**Strategic Plan Goal 3:** DCPS will improve the post-secondary readiness of graduates by increasing the percentage of students earning soft skills credentials.

**Strategic Plan Goal 4:** DCPS Career Technical Education (CTE) programs will be recognized as high-performing by increasing the number of programs being identified as Advanced, Master, and/or National Model.

### **Duval Ready Experience**

Mr. Wright noted that a few years ago when the school board went through their strategic planning process, there was a lot of conversation though the community input process around the fact that students were graduating, but not prepared

for entering the workforce, and lacking skills. The school board tasked the district with creating a curriculum for soft skill development for students. Four key areas of focus were defined for soft skills.

- 1. Professionalism**
- 2. Team Building**
- 3. Communication.**
- 4. Problem Solving**

The Duval Ready Experience curriculum was first offered during the 2022/2023 school year. He noted that they partnered with Florida Ready to Work, a state funded program that provides some curriculum in assessments in the four soft skill areas, and they also have a comprehensive assessment that students take and earn a state credential in soft skills.

### **Impact Of Local Support in CTE Program Development**

Forming a strategic partnership with the City of Jacksonville supports the DCPS mission of developing a talent pipeline within the local area. They have a variety of programs requiring support. Their needs range from guidance on keeping curriculum relevant to educating the community about program opportunities. With over 62 DCPS academies, forming business partnerships is critical in sustaining relevant programs.

Mr. Wright advised that some of the CTE programs are more expensive to start and run because they often require more space and bigger equipment.

Mr. Randolph asked if there were any ideas around how to get more employers involved in the elementary – high school process, as it relates to being more engaged. Mr. Wright replied that a lot of the employers are focused on their own needs and do not necessarily see the benefit of partnering as a long-term solution of pipeline development. Starting new programs is challenging because you need a certain number of students interested in the new program to make it fiscally responsible. You need business partners that know their industry to sit on the academy advisory boards, awareness, and involvement.

### **Kids Hope Alliance (KHA) Workforce Development Strategic Overview**

Mr. John Everett, Kids Hope Alliance (KHA), advised that about two years ago they took an intentional look and started having focus groups with youth, young adults, high school and college because they were hearing from employers that



they are not prepared for the workforce. The people in the focus group also felt like they were not prepared for the workforce.

### **Workforce Readiness and Post-secondary Success**

- 50% of students coming into high school are below grade level
- Limited support after graduation
- Skills mismatch/expectations
- Stigma that you have to go to college
- There are 430 students per one school counselor
- Prime-Age Employment Gap (PAEG)

### **Employer Perspective Panel**

Dr. Lebesch introduced a panel of professionals who represent the workforce from an employer's perspective and asked them a few questions.

- David Emmanuel, Chief Human Resources Officer for JEA, representing utilities.
- Tyra Tutor, President and Chief Executive Officer of TAD PGS, Inc., the government solutions subsidiary of the Adecco Group.
- Crystal Dial-Wilson, CEO Remedy Intelligent Staffing, representing distribution and manufacturing and call centers.
- David Reichard, Managing Partner, Vaco, representing technology, accounting, finance and operations.

### **Challenges faced in sourcing talent in Jacksonville**

- The move to hybrid and automation is going to put pressures on that we are not dealing with today, and that we need to plan for.
- Working with employers regarding increasing pay rates.
- Perception of Jacksonville. Getting them here.
- Jacksonville has an image challenge.

### **Are there adequate resources to support the recruitment and retention of talent in the region?**

- Yes. We have all the right parts in the room. There is a cut off. High school goes to this age and KHA cannot take them over. Who owns that gap? A lot of companies will not do internships because they do not want to go through the federal requirements. Suggested having an "Internship Jacksonville" run locally in Jacksonville pulling together high schools and KHA.
- Active participation at the employer level.
- Ensure that our young kids get the essential skills so that when they do make career choices they stay in our community.
- A lot of people out in the workforce that are not being used at their highest capability. Companies need to look internally recognizing how someone may fit into their organization in a more meaningful way.
- Expose all that is being done so the people can take advantage of it. Programs under-publicized. We have a lot of students, young adults and parents out there that do not know what is available and what the possibilities could be.

### **Are there models or best practices that we should be looking at?**

- Aerospace company taps into their local technical colleges and high schools to expose kids to careers because they want and need the local talent to come back to them. The goal of the company was that, at least when they finished their internship, they knew every engineering opportunity especially those that may help in the aerospace industry.
- JEA. 33% of employees could retire tomorrow. No time to wait. They have 2,100 employees and every one of them recruits, mentors and will develop talent. Those are things they are teaching and developing internally. They want to develop enough sources and enough individuals that everyone can have a share. The exposure is what allows them to have the dream that they can participate.



**Do we have talent gaps and if so, how do we address them?**

- Two pieces. Technical and industry knowledge. We have people that know they can program, or be an IT Engineer, but they do not know the FINTECH or the Aerospace or... name the industry.
- To prepare for today, employers want both. They want you to have the technical, and they want you to know their industry, and they prefer that you have worked in the industry. That is hard to find. It seems like the easier piece for us to fix is the industry knowledge.
- For many trade technicians the profession is not what it once was. Many of them are programmers and have highly technical roles.
- You have graduates that after the fact decided the career path they thought they wanted to follow is not the right fit for them, and/or are not working in the field they earned their degree(s) in.

**Colleges and Universities**

Ms. Lebesch introduced a panel of presidents from local colleges and universities, present to represent the workforce from a college/university perspective.

- Dr. John Avendano, President and CEO Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ)
- Dr. Moez Limayem, President University of North Florida (UNF)
- Dr. Zachary Faison Jr., President and CEO of Edwards Waters University (EWU)
- Dr. Tim Cost, President Jacksonville University (JU)

The lead for each organization introduced themselves and talked about the scope and size of their institutions, enrollment, programming and partnerships.

Talent is considered one of the top decision makers for companies either to enter our market or to remain in our market. Share how your students contribute to the local economy and what is needed to recruit and retain more of them.

- UNF: Almost 80% of students graduate and stay in Florida, and almost 70% of them graduate and stay in Jacksonville and the surrounding area.
- EWU: They have about 1,200 students, about 88% of those students are Floridians and about 70% of those do stay in Jacksonville.
- JU: 75% of graduates stay in Florida after graduation.

- FSCJ: Fundamental opportunity with the four schools that see and hear the same things from the business community and are trying to respond to it. All four colleges work very well together. They may view themselves with different missions for the same common good, and that is to advance Jacksonville and Duval County.
- School partnerships with FINTECH, healthcare career programs, CDL truck driving, cyber security
- Serve on different boards within the community to keep apprised of what is happening in the business community and work with businesses to see what their needs are.
- Paid internships critical to bridge any gaps

### Challenges

- Lack of space to house students. Lack of financial assistance
- Financial aid for homeless students, housing and food insecurities
- Find out why students are dropping out of programs
- Students do not have the financial resources. They have to work to thrive.
- People do not want to come to FL due to where our state is politically.

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### SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

#### CHARGE:

**Meet with Downtown Investment Authority and Office of Economic Development** to discuss pending or upcoming downtown development opportunities and develop a strategic plan to maximize their impact and spread the benefits.

#### CHARGE:

**Meet with Downtown Traffic engineer, Parking Commissioner, COJ Public Works Department** to discuss past and future plans to simplify parking and traffic downtown. Meet with the Jacksonville Sheriffs Office to identify better traffic pattern practices for large events so

that downtown merchants and businesses can better benefit. Additionally, address the problem of absentee owners and single-level parking lots.

#### CHARGE:

**This focus area will meet publicly with Economic Development, Curricula representatives from JU, FSCJ, Ed Waters, and UNF, the Director of the Jacksonville Space Port and other interested parties** to determine how best to promote new tech investment, startups, and workforce readiness in the fields of AI, BioEngineering, Robotics, Space Industry, and other emergent technologies like Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality content creation here in Jacksonville. It will hear from appropriate research and development representatives from the US military and the area's Medical Technology centers to determine how best to grow these important economic sectors in our City and how best to work with local institutions to educate and support a community of these workers, designers, and creators.

#### CHARGE:

**This focus area will meet with representatives from EWC** to explore how to create closer connections between the campus and downtown, along with the UF expansion and other potential higher education institution collaboration.

On Friday, July 21, 2023, the ED Transition Committee Small Business Ladders focus area held a meeting. Mr. Allegretti assisted with gathering various individuals who work in the Jacksonville Downtown Development Ecosystem, including Downtown Development business owners and individuals that represent government and non-profit organizations that aid downtown development.

Committee members heard several perspectives from community stakeholders. All speakers spoke to the growth and potential of the downtown area with small changes and utilization of existing resources. It was noted that downtown never fully recovered its trajectory from the Corona Virus Pandemic, and once the city emerged from the pandemic the metrics used to measure success of a program or a business are no longer applicable to pre-pandemic.

#### AREAS OF FOCUS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

##### SHORT-TERM:

The DIA wishes to implement specific applications reflective of the nature of the project applying, these applications should also be allowed to be submitted electronically; expressly identify public parks and roadway projects as requiring approval from the Downtown Development



Review Board (DDRB). DDR approval at the conceptual level only, with staff review at the final level for consistency with conceptual recommendations.

#### MID-TERM:

Amend the applicable portion of the city Code to allow for staff approval, to streamline the permitting process; staff has deemed the current process to be redundant. For buildings subject to historic review, modify the Code to require one DDRB review only after issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Preservation Section.

#### LONG-TERM:

Make changes in procurement process to expedite bidding and award process; make changes in accounting system and payment system for incentive recipients (currently treated just like any other city vendor); initiate legislation to modernize ordinances applicable to parking; re-evaluate enterprise funds for parking.

#### ISSUES:

- Obsolete application forms that do not reflect needed information for current DIA projects
- Redundancy of DDRB approval
- Lack of clarity of DDRB requirement approval
- Zoning overlay regulations wastes developer and DDRB time and resources
- Unneeded deviation procedural steps should be incorporated into final approval process
- Lack of qualified job candidates for DIA
- State law changes regarding CRA agencies
- Increases of construction costs and interest rates are impacting development activity
- Limited publicity of Downtown success
- Public perceptions about safety and downtown homeless population
- Jacksonville is 20% more expensive than Orlando or Tampa because Jacksonville has limited local resources from a subcontractor base, and it is challenging to get the materials needed for the type of catalytic projects

that we want to see off the ground. All of those things going on behind the scenes cause escalation in costs.

- There is a problem getting the CIP dollars on the street. CIP dollars and incentive dollars are not competing.
- REV Grants are not enough for the type of catalytic projects they want to see that are going to bring real density, with ground floor activation and resilient construction types.
- Developers need assistance getting through the construction phase of a project.
- ROI of 1 to 1 does not work with the short-term economic conditions.

#### THREE KEY FINDINGS:

1. **For large-scale private redevelopment projects, the economics (internal rate of return as compared to costs of capital and of the project) do not work in the current Downtown Jacksonville market without public incentives.** These projects are important to maintain the momentum we have seen in recent years, both for those who have made investments in Downtown and to build a vibrant Downtown that will help us compete for talent (retaining our home-grown talent and graduates), and for large corporate relocations who depend on that talent.
2. **Public park and infrastructure projects are important to investors/developers, small business owners/operators, the growing population of Downtown residents, and visitors.** These public infrastructure projects, including public parks, should be fully funded, and constructed as quickly as possible, and Downtown public spaces properly maintained and activated with programming and events. Infrastructure projects will yield future growth, establish a sense of place, and show public commitment to Downtown.
3. **The various permitting and regulatory processes for programming and activation, for incentives, and for construction activities within Downtown need to be simplified and the public educated on available opportunities as well as applicable codes (such as maintenance of vacant lots).** Making these processes simpler, quicker, and more transparent is key to attracting economic development to Downtown.



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Continue to incentivize transformational projects** and evolve residential incentives based on market conditions; develop a consistent approach to general fund incentive requests that exceed current programs and allow prioritized projects to move forward.
2. **Streamline DIA application forms** and review process for smaller incentives.
3. **Sufficiently fund infrastructure** including the Emerald Trail and parks, particularly riverfront parks projects, today and fund future maintenance; increase staffing and resources for Parks, Procurement, Public Works project management and OGC.
4. **Invest in placemaking and eliminate barriers** to event permitting to invite and support smaller event producers, while also recruiting other national events to Downtown.
5. **Sufficiently fund enhanced maintenance** for landscaping, hardscaping, etc., and ensure there is sufficient human capacity to implement; and increase the number of ambassadors to support enhanced maintenance.
6. **Retain City-owned parcels adjacent or contiguous to Hogan's and McCoy's Creeks** until each project is completed, while ensuring that City Departments

understand the scope of the trade off in the creek restoration projects.

7. **Install new and upgraded lighting in Downtown** per lighting studies and as funded in the CIP.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create individual application based on application type with the ability to sign and submit electronically
- Amend code to permit staff approval of sign replacements previously approved by DDRB if the replacement sign is similar in size, location, or type
- Authorize staff approval for tenant signs that adhere to the Zoning Code
- Expressly identify Public Parks and Roadway Projects as requiring DDRB approval at the conceptual level only
- Amend Code to authorize staff level approval for all parking area only sidewalk-only projects unless deviating from the Design Guidelines or Zoning Code
- Eliminate workshop requirement for select deviations for properties not fronting the St. Johns River, Hogan's Creek or McCoy's Creek: existing buildings, building entrance criteria for new construction, rooftop criteria for new construction
- Buildings with historic designation, modify code to require one DDRB review only after issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness by Historic Preservation Section
- Increase marketing of Downtown to Jacksonville residents through funding and capacity
- Downtown is different. Rules, plans and standards should reflect downtown's unique character, dense environment, walkability and public transit options.
- We get the downtown we support. Sufficiently funding the DIA & the Master Plan is essential, specifically infrastructure improvements today and future maintenance at future prices.
- Appearances matter. Improve the built environment, public realm and parks (including landscaping throughout) to make downtown feel like the premier center it is for Northeast Florida.

- Raise the standards. Investments in build environment and police and ambassadors are essential to keep downtown feeling “Clean & Safe” because “dirty & dangerous” does not work.
- Homelessness affects everyone. Getting people off the streets helps them & helps Downtown. Invest in rapid rehousing with wraparound services for vulnerable individuals, as well as affordable housing.
- Invest in tourism. Attractions and amenities for visitors – especially those that capitalize on our riverfront – improve the quality of life for all residents.
- Invest in arts & culture. Downtown Jacksonville is the nexus of arts & culture and must support & embrace the cultural community, which is essential to creating identity and a sense of place.
- Tell the story. Bolster efforts to attract visitors and residents to our Downtown as a premiere destination with something for everyone: one-of-a-kind amenities, local businesses and the river.
- Make events easier. Lower barriers to event permitting to invite and support smaller event producers, while also recruiting other national events to Downtown.
- Invest in placemaking. Support community driven placemaking best practices that foster an engaged creative community, who will produce cool things that make our downtown more vibrant.
- Increase marketing of downtown to Jacksonville residents through funding and capacity
- Replicate Tampa and St. Petersburg by creating a Riverwalk Specialty Center
- Allow shared use of right of way
- Change policy to unlock activation and activities
- Fully fund riverfront parks
- Connect riverfront parks and public spaces by adopting ‘Activating Jacksonville’s Riverfront
- Enhance maintenance for landscaping and physical assets through funding and capacity
- Incentivize transformational projects
- Contract directly with design firms to keep the project moving. If a change is needed, it can be made immediately versus waiting six months on the city process
- Importance of public/private partnerships
- Vacant downtown parcels are needed for the Hogan’s Creek project. The city does not have capacity for land acquisition, from a human resource perspective or from funding.
- It’s important that the city not sell, trade or give away any parcels near the creek until the design is more advanced.
- It is also very important that every city department understand the scope of the trade-off in the creek restoration projects.
- As an example, OED negotiated a lease on city land with a developer, and that land is needed for Hogan’s Creek.
- The Union Terminal site plan puts parking where we may need room for the creek.
- Evolve residential incentives bases on market conditions
- Historic preservation is tangible investment in the future of a place.
- It is sometimes difficult to reach, or even calculate with precision, the economic return on investment of historic preservation, and it can be daunting to achieve a performance metric in calculating that ROI in the present moment.
- Emphasized public investment and public support for historic preservation.
- Sell city owned land in the Cathedral District, other than land needed for groundwork Jacksonville.
- Use the sale proceeds from the land as grants for historic landmark church renovations or park improvements.
- Significantly increase Code Enforcement Officers
- Code Enforcement is complaint-driven not code violation-driven



- Code Enforcement needs to cite nuisance property, NOT just those which have complaints filed against them. They will pass violations on their way to the property they are filing a complaint against
- Host historic church tours in the district that are more organized and formal
- Focus on market rate residential housing. Need to have healthy neighborhoods with a balance of mixed income, retail and affordable housing
- Lighting: Easiest, most impactful change or fix that could be made. Everyone understands that lighting is important. Lighting illuminates the space and makes people feel safer
- Landscaping: Setting downtown apart from the rest of the city with unique plants, employing staff to ensure cleanliness, and maintaining the aesthetic appearance of the city.
- Safety: Change the perception that downtown is not safe
- Incentives for small businesses investing in 2,500 to 20,000 square feet of light industrial space in the urban core
- Incentives for the Industrial Light business sector and other small business moving their business to downtown
- The Certificate of Use process is difficult and lengthy. It can take 6-8 months to open a business.
- Infrastructure and Public Works. The area at the corner of Talleyrand and Gator Bowl Blvd. off the Hart Bridge floods within less than one hour of rain, and that is the main entrance to the light industrial sector.
- Has been working with the city for about a year for a resolution. City acknowledged that it was an issue, but not a priority.
- There are enhancement programs that DIA puts out and enhancement programs that the City puts out, but they do not communicate.
- Being able to communicate with different city organizations.

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

### CHARGE:

**Explore current, planned, and possible economic development projects with the JAX Chamber, JAXUSA partnership and Office of Economic Development to identify how the city can best support.**

### LIFT JAX

Mr. David Garfunkel, President, LIFT JAX provided a brief overview of LIFT JAX. Mr. Garfunkel advised that LIFT JAX is an initiative of business and community leaders working to eradicate generational poverty in Jacksonville. He pointed out that The Eastside Legacy and Historic Eastside are two community partners that represent the small business community on the eastside of Jacksonville. Their number one guiding principle is to work with the community.

Mr. Garfunkel noted that they are focusing on a sense of place. He noted that they were recently successful in getting the Eastside neighborhood designated on the National Record of Small Places, the Historic Eastside. It is his understanding that it is the largest intact historically African American neighborhood that is on the National Record in the state of Florida thereby creating a sense of place beyond road borders.

LIFT JAX is implementing the Purpose-Built Communities model of community revitalization in the Eastside. They choose to focus on the Eastside for the reasons listed below.

- Impact the lives of more than 4,000 people, including nearly 1,500 children
- Partner with and empower strong community leaders who are already doing work
- Leverage resources and momentum in areas adjacent to the neighborhood (e.g., Sports Complex, Springfield)
- Create workforce links with strong local assets (e.g., JAXPORT)
- Strengthen the local commercial corridor along A. Philip Randolph Boulevard and Florida Avenue
- Improve housing conditions in several multifamily units and do infill development on more than 400 vacant lots



- Strengthen three local schools in our education pipeline, including John Love Pre- K Center, Long Branch Elementary (K-5), Matthew Gilbert Middle School (6-8)
- Preserve the legacy and history of one of Jacksonville's great African American neighborhoods

It is the mission of LIFT JAX to help steward investment into the neighborhood in a way that is consistent with what the neighborhood commuters want to see. Their mission is to lift up and strengthen the neighbors that been living there for generations and to not displace them.

LIFT JAX focuses on four main strategies for long-term financial vitality.

1. Improve employability, job readiness, and improved personal financial health
  - Job skills training and personal financial coaching
  - Access to financial services
2. Support local businesses and entrepreneurs
  - Programming and financing to support small businesses Enhance marketing for existing businesses

3. Activate the commercial corridor
  - Redevelopment of blighted or vacant properties
  - Supporting existing businesses
4. Attract outside businesses and employers
  - Attracting new businesses to the neighborhood
  - Identifying opportunities for local companies to expand

Mr. Garfunkel advised that they have Melanin Market that is held quarterly in the historic Eastside that is an authentically grassroot-led Eastside initiative. He noted that the market attracted 50-60 vendors from across the region about four-five years ago and the market now attracts approximately 200-250 vendors.

Mr. Garfunkel advised that they purchased Debs Store. The property operated as a local grocery for 90 years until it closed about 12 years ago. LIFT JAX is restoring the property about a \$2.2M project. Debs Store will have a fresh food market on the ground level. Goodwill is going to have their Good Careers Center on the 2nd floor that offers workforce development and career development opportunities to residents, and VyStar Credit Union will have a presence as well, offering financial services. He added that they have a grant from the city in the amount of \$650,000 that will be reimbursed to LIFT JAX upon completion.





#### Threats:

- Post-secondary capacity is not keeping up with the region's growth
- Poverty
- Aging housing
- Lack of ability to attain affordable housing
- To remain competitive and from a company's perspective, it does not matter how many people live in a region, if you want the company here you have to produce the talent in order for them to come here. We have to produce more talented individuals from a college degree standpoint.
- We have a great healthcare network system, but to grow in the life and sciences, we have to produce more talent from that prospective standpoint, as well as in the fields of Engineering, Computer & Information Sciences, Finance and Financial Management. Jacksonville is far behind in the talent department.

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#### IMPACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONSTITUENTS

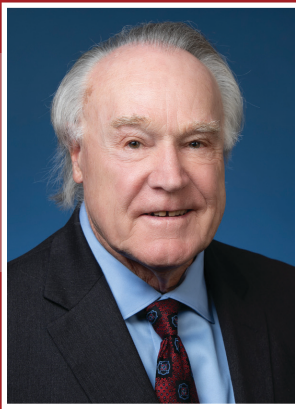
**Small Business:** Constituents would be able to locate proper information for their needs, limiting strain and misallocation of resources and funds – allowing for the timeline of a business's inception to realization to drastically decrease. Broaden already established incentive funding.

**Downtown:** Citizens and businesses would be drawn to the area; citizens would change their perceptions of the area and would feel safer. With a revision of the permitting process, more development projects would be drawn to Jacksonville, and the improvements implemented in the City would provide numerous business opportunities and more options for Jacksonville citizens.

**Permitting:** Developer projects brought to Jacksonville add value to the area and make the area more attractive for all City citizens and visitors. Small business owners that stabilize the business ecosystem will be able to open their businesses quicker, allowing for more immediate profits that can be invested in employees and the surrounding area.



# Public Safety



## W.C. Gentry

Public Safety  
Transition Committee Chair

- ▲ Jacksonville Journey
- ▲ Literacy
- ▲ Criminal Justice Reform

# Public Safety

## Jacksonville Journey | Literacy | Criminal Justice Reform

### INTRODUCTION

The Public Safety Transition Committee began meeting on June 14, 2023. The Committee consists of three subcommittees to address the Mayor's charges to the Committee:

#### 1. Jacksonville Journey Review Subcommittee:

The recommended focus for this committee is on revitalizing the Jax Journey program with an emphasis on education, literacy, and community policing along with teen programming, neighborhood stabilization and juvenile justice intervention. To review and assess revitalization of the Jacksonville Journey, reviewing programs and initiatives to determine their present status and efficacy and whether additional or new programs should be considered and implemented. Because of the correlation between illiteracy, crime and poverty, significant focus was given to how the Journey addressed these issues, and its approach to a long-term solution.

#### CHARGE:

This focus area will hold public listening sessions with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, leaders of the 2020/2021 Safer Together Workshops, First Coast Crime Stoppers, Duval County Teen Court, and program leaders of JSO-led community engagement efforts, including Teen Police Academy, Citizens Police Academy, and others, as needed, to determine opportunities for increased and more effective community-oriented policing strategies.

#### CHARGE:

This focus area will research and conduct a deep dive into former Jacksonville Journey initiatives and programs to determine which programs/initiatives, if any, could be restarted or re-imagined in an effort to make Jacksonville a safer city with lower arrest rates and decreased recidivism.

#### 2. Literacy Initiatives Subcommittee:

The Literacy Initiatives Subcommittee has primarily focused on community engagement. In addition to Jacksonville's abysmal third grade reading proficiency rate which has remained well below the State average, Jacksonville also has an English-speaking adult literacy problem as well as a large non-English speaking immigrant population.

Illiteracy is a citywide problem and requires a citywide initiative to raise awareness and engagement at all levels of the community. The Literacy Initiatives subcommittee is making an inventory of the current literacy landscape as a first step to breaking down silos and developing collaboration, and is in the planning stages for a citywide effort to boost literacy and help lift up families and communities.

There is a link between literacy, success, and quality of life. Therefore, we will focus on ways literacy can help to lift up families and communities through quality programs.

#### CHARGE:

The Education and Literacy Subcommittee will meet with Kids Hope Alliance (KHA), Jacksonville Public Library, Duval County School Board, Read USA, and other literacy initiatives to: (a) better ascertain the current literacy landscape citywide and (b) identify opportunities for improvement, expansion, and remediation across the city.

#### 3. Community Engagement and Crime Prevention:

In coordination with the Jacksonville Journey Review subcommittee, the subcommittee is reviewing present programs designed to address ex-offender recidivism, juvenile delinquency and aspects of the criminal detention system that may need modification to better help individuals get back on their feet, support intact families and avoid recidivism. The committee also is reviewing past police and community initiatives that have been successful in organizing community accountability and engagement, and is



making recommendations to create safe and engaged communities and raise public confidence in the City’s public safety efforts.

Criminal Justice Reform is dedicated to ending over-incarceration and racial disparities in our criminal justice system through data-driven, proven approaches that will save taxpayer money, keep our families intact, and make our communities safer by maintaining human dignity, and prioritizing rehabilitation, treatment, and alternatives to incarceration.

**CHARGE:**

**This focus area will meet with public and private prevention and intervention programs to index the various models in use and determine how to best expand those models that are successfully reducing recidivism in Jacksonville.**

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY  
TRANSITION COMMITTEE**

Committed citizens with a vested interest and/or expertise in the field of public safety make up the body of the Committee, which was led by the Chair, W.C. Gentry.

**Jacksonville Journey Review**

W.C. Gentry | Committee Chair  
Frank Denton

**Consultants:**  
Dr. Cheryl Fountain  
Dr. Saralyn Grass  
Debbie Verges  
Michael Munz

**Literacy Initiative**

Dr. Constance Hall | Committee Chair  
Frank Denton  
Rachael Fortune  
JoAnn Brooks  
Paula Renfro  
W.C. Gentry

**Consultants:**  
Dr. Cheryl Fountain  
Dr. Saralyn Grass  
Michael Munz

**Community Engagement and Crime Prevention**

Lolita Smith | Committee Chair  
Ellen Glasser  
Jack Meeks  
Derrick Mitchell  
Johnny Oldham  
Dr. Vicki Waytowich  
Barry Wright  
W. C. Gentry

**Consultant:**  
Debbie Verges



The members were also aided by several subject matter experts (consultants) present at each meeting, and a variety of other experts within their respective fields were invited to present to subcommittees to garner more information. Special acknowledgement is given to Saralyn Grass and Debbie Verges, who provided invaluable staffing and expertise to the committee. The full committee has met several times and there have been multiple subcommittee meetings, Sunshine meetings among committee members, and numerous meetings with people outside the committee to gather information and ideas.

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## SUMMARY OF JACKSONVILLE JOURNEY REVIEW

The Public Safety Transition Committee was charged with revisiting the Jacksonville Journey, a citywide anti-crime initiative, and to consider revitalizing a “Journey Forward”.

In addition, the committee was asked to analyze and consider a citywide literacy initiative, as well as focus on present programs to reduce crime and incarceration, juvenile delinquency and recidivism of ex-offenders. Prior Journey programs and data that involved the other subcommittees were shared with them.

The Review committee then turned its focus to long range solutions involving better education of our children that became evident during the Journey process and are as equally compelling today as then. Indeed, there is a well-established, inextricable connection between illiteracy and crime; to the point it has been suggested some states estimate the need for future prison cells based on the number of children who cannot proficiently read by the end of third grade. *See An Urban Myth That Should be True, The Atlantic, (7/2/2012).*

### Jacksonville Journey Revisited.

Jacksonville is in crisis, a crisis of its own making due to its failure to address fundamental community inequities that have persisted for decades and provide the wellspring for generational poverty and illiteracy which stifles development of a modern workforce and denies thousands of our bright and capable young citizens the fundamental right to a quality education.

The disparate conditions and opportunities of our neighborhoods has also been a primary source of the violent crime that has earned Jacksonville the reputation of Murder Capital of Florida. After two senseless homicides of children bystanders, Mayor Peyton, some 15 years ago, said, “Enough is enough” and brought the whole community together around an initiative called The Jacksonville Journey which resulted in programs designed to better educate our children, intervene instead of detain when juveniles get in trouble, and greatly reduce ex-offender recidivism by giving them a job and an opportunity to rejoin the community after they served their time. The result over a period of some three years was a drop of over 30% in the violent crime rate.

Most of Jacksonville remembers The Jacksonville Journey and the “Journey” name enjoys great goodwill in the community. We would recommend Mayor Deegan adopt a “Journey Forward” initiative, with a governing body modeled after the Journey Oversight board which viewed all programs funded by the City through the prism of crime prevention and assessed the potential impact of programs on crime and, wherever feasible, recommended actions and initiatives to reduce or eliminate crime.

We believe it is also essential that the City renew the Journey programs that had begun to show significant improvement in the reading proficiency of our most impoverished children. It is a fundamental duty of our community, and we “leaders” and adults, to protect and nurture our most valuable asset, our children, and teach them how to read so they can achieve their potential and prosper in our society.

### Jacksonville’s Historical Failure to Teach its Children to Read.

The recent report of the Department of Education is shameful and shows that Jacksonville has fallen even further behind other major school districts. When the school-by-school numbers are analyzed, it shows a horrific, unacceptable situation existing in our most impoverished communities.

The Causes.

So how does Duval County break out of this decades-long failure to teach our children who reside in certain parts of our town to read, while in other neighborhoods, 90% of the children are proficient at the end of third grade?

Obviously, external factors – all tied to poverty – such as poor nutrition, lack of healthcare, lack of parental engagement, crime, neighborhood and family trauma and other such factors impact the child’s ability to show up at school and be ready to learn. While these “external” factors need to be addressed, there are internal or institutional factors that are the responsibility and under the control of our city government and state agencies which, if operating properly, would teach our children how to read and provide an avenue to address the external factors and engage the entire community around literacy.

In short, our public education system (which includes charter schools) must improve how it teaches reading in our most economically depressed communities.

Pilot programs instituted by previous Journey initiatives have shown that the external factors can be overcome, and children from our poor schools can learn to read proficiently if they are given the chance. With the sustained commitment of resources and accountability by the City of Jacksonville and Duval County Public Schools, the Journey Forward can solve the age-old discrepancies and, finally, provide our children the education they deserve.

Jacksonville Has Gone Backward.

The most recent report from the Department of Education should sound an alarm for every caring citizen and is an opportunity to mobilize our community around saving our children. The data show that in over 40% of Duval County schools, charter and public, only about 30% of our elementary school third graders are reading on grade level. What the numbers within the numbers show is even more outrageous.

Third graders are tested on a scale of 1 – 5, with 3 being accepted as grade level reading. In many of our Title I schools, where less than 30% of the children score a 3, many of them score a 1.

For example, at Woodland Acres Elementary, 52% of the children scored a 1; at Cedar Hills, 58% scored 1; at Kipp Voice Academy, 52% scored 1; and at Northwestern Legends, 58% scored 1.

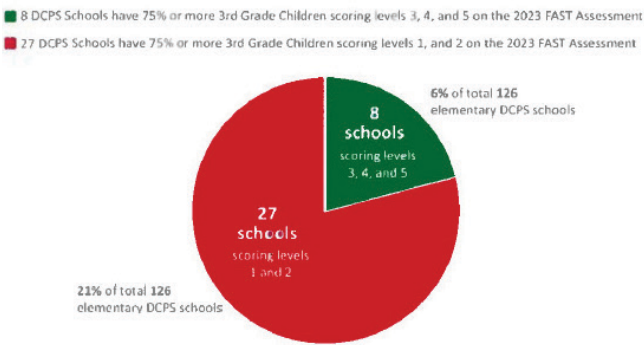
Dr. Fountain has advised that children scoring a “1” will require extensive remediation to have any chance of reaching grade level reading, which simply is not available in our school system. Not only are a majority of our Title I third graders not reading at grade, but a substantial percentage of them simply cannot read, and have little hope of learning to read, under the present circumstances.

The following charts show the reading achievement scores of all Duval schools.

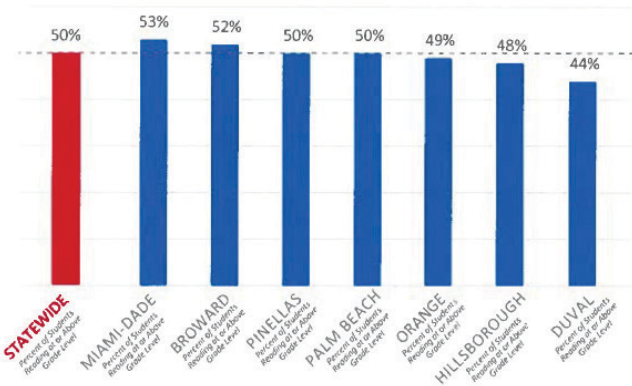
The pie chart shows that in 27 schools (mostly all Title I), 75% or more only scored at level 1 or 2 on the assessment, requiring intensive remediation.

The bar chart shows Duval lagging substantially behind the other major Florida school districts.

Proportion of Highest Achieving and Lowest-Achieving Elementary Schools (Traditional and Charter) in Duval County as Measured by the Spring 2023 FAST Assessment, 3rd Grade Reading



2023 FAST Results for English Language Arts, Grades 3-10 % of students on-grade-level or above in the "big 7" districts



## 2023 Third Grade Reading Achievement, Spring Progress Monitoring with Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) in Duval County Elementary Schools (including charters)

There are 27 schools in Duval County where 75% or more of 3rd grade students ARE NOT reading on grade level.

	Level 1	Level 2	% in Levels 1 & 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	% in Levels 3, 4 & 5
Grasp Academy	81	11	92	8	0	0	8
Long Branch Elementary	53	38	91	5	3	2	9
Rutledge H. Pearson Elementary	43	41	84	3	8	5	16
Wayman Academy Of The Arts	47	37	84	16	0	0	16
Northwestern Legends Elementary	58	25	83	10	5	2	17
Biltmore Elementary	68	13	81	6	10	3	19
Woodland Acres Elementary	52	29	81	11	8	0	19
Reynolds Lane Elementary	49	32	81	20	0	0	20
Sadie T. Tillis Elementary	50	30	80	14	7	0	20
Normandy Village Elementary	53	27	80	11	7	2	20
Kipp Jacksonville K-12	56	24	80	14	5	1	20
Annie R. Morgan Elementary	56	22	78	17	6	0	22
Kipp V.o.i.c.e Academy	52	26	78	20	2	0	22
Bridgeprep Academy	54	24	78	11	9	2	22
Duval Virtual Instruction Academy	53	25	78	12	7	3	22
North Shore Elementary	53	25	78	17	5	1	23
S. A. Hull Elementary School	57	20	77	17	7	0	23
Arlington Elementary School	38	38	76	16	8	0	24
Ramona Boulevard Elementary	45	31	76	10	14	0	24
San Jose Elementary School	54	22	76	15	8	1	24
Pinedale Elementary School	50	26	76	16	6	1	24
Pine Estates Elementary School	44	32	76	15	7	2	24
Hyde Park Elementary School	38	37	75	17	9	0	25
Windy Hill Elementary School	59	16	75	10	14	1	25
Cedar Hills Elementary School	58	17	75	15	8	2	25
Westview K-8	45	30	75	18	7	1	26
San Jose Primary School	49	26	75	15	9	2	26

There are 82 schools in Duval County where 50% or more of 3rd grade students ARE NOT reading on grade level.

	Level 1	Level 2	% in Levels 1 & 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	% in Levels 3, 4 & 5
Love Grove Elementary School	41	33	74	14	8	4	25
Seaside Charter North Campus	49	25	74	16	8	2	25
Sallye B. Mathis Elementary School	40	34	74	23	4	0	26
Global Outreach Charter Academy	55	18	73	16	10	2	28
Pickett Elementary School	45	28	73	14	7	7	28
Highlands Elementary School	41	31	72	18	7	4	28
Gregory Drive Elementary School	52	20	72	12	13	3	28
Beauclerc Elementary School	39	32	71	8	15	6	28
Hogan-Spring Glen Elementary	44	27	71	19	10	0	29
Tiger Academy	42	29	71	18	8	3	29
Hidden Oaks Elementary School	55	16	71	19	0	10	29
Timucuan Elementary School	41	29	70	15	11	4	29
Jacksonville Heights Elementary	52	18	70	19	11	0	30
Andrew A. Robinson Elementary	42	28	70	19	7	4	30
Rufus E. Payne Elementary School	49	21	70	23	8	0	31
Martin Luther King, Jr Elementary	51	18	69	20	11	0	31
Arlington Heights Elementary	41	28	69	23	8	0	31
Susie E. Tolbert Elementary School	47	21	68	16	11	4	32
Greenfield Elementary School	47	21	68	19	9	4	32
George Washington Carver Elem.	37	31	68	21	12	0	33
Kings Trail Elementary School	51	16	67	29	3	2	33
Don Brewer Elementary School	42	25	67	19	10	4	33
Fort Caroline Elementary Schl	47	20	67	21	9	3	33
Duval Charter School At Westside	42	24	66	25	5	3	34
Spring Park Elementary School	48	17	65	15	14	6	35
Brookview Elementary School	35	29	64	24	12	0	36
Crystal Springs Elem. School	43	21	64	22	8	6	36
Twin Lakes Academy Elem School	37	27	64	16	15	5	36
Biscayne Elementary School	46	17	63	21	13	3	37
Englewood Elementary School	38	24	62	25	11	1	37
Duval Charter Scholars Academy	37	25	62	25	14	0	39
Southside Estates Elem. School	45	16	61	19	16	3	38
Chaffee Trail Elementary	29	31	60	25	11	3	40

Source for all assessment results:  
FLDOE K-12 Assessment Results 2023  
<https://www.fl DOE.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-studentassessment/results/2023.shtml>



John E. Ford K-8 School	39	21	60	23	13	4	40
Parkwood Heights Elementary	33	27	60	27	10	2	40
Enterprise Learning Academy	28	31	59	28	10	3	41
Jacksonville Classical Academy East	38	21	59	24	17	0	41
Ortega Elementary School	31	28	59	24	14	4	42
Bayview Elementary School	40	19	59	25	13	4	42
Mayport Elementary School	28	31	59	26	14	2	42
Mamie Agnes Jones Elementary	36	23	59	24	14	4	42
Henry F. Kite Elementary School	41	17	58	29	5	7	41
Global Outreach Academy Intercoastal	41	16	57	34	6	3	44
Whitehouse Elementary School	27	29	56	25	16	3	44
Garden City Elementary School	32	24	56	32	11	1	44
Louis S. Sheffield Elementary School	21	35	56	24	16	4	44
Crown Point Elementary School	39	17	56	22	17	5	44
Somerset Academy-Elem, Eagle Campus	30	25	55	30	11	5	45
Thomas Jefferson Elementary	29	25	54	22	19	6	46
Lake Lucina Elementary School	30	23	53	21	18	7	46
Florida Cyber Charter Academy	29	24	53	26	18	3	47
Holiday Hill Elementary School	33	19	52	28	11	8	48
Oceanway Elementary School	26	25	51	19	23	6	49
Duval Charter School At Mandarin	30	21	51	23	21	5	49
Anchor Academy	16	34	50	16	25	9	50

Mandarin Oaks Elementary School	22	22	44	23	22	11	56
Duval Charter School At Southside	15	28	43	22	26	8	57
Duval Charter School At Coastal	17	26	43	34	20	3	57
Pine Forest Elementary School	22	20	42	28	20	11	58
Bartram Springs Elementary	20	21	41	20	29	10	59
Duval Charter At Flagler Center	21	20	41	34	19	6	59
River City Science Academy Intracoastal	11	30	41	26	23	10	59
Chimney Lakes Elementary School	20	20	40	28	23	8	59
Loretto Elementary School	19	20	39	26	23	12	61
San Mateo Elementary School	16	23	39	34	21	6	61
Alimacani Elementary School	20	19	39	25	25	10	61
R L Brown Gifted & Talented Academy	10	26	36	33	18	13	64
New Berlin Elementary School	16	20	36	30	21	13	64
Chet's Creek Elementary School	17	17	34	33	19	14	66
Abess Park Elementary School	18	15	33	37	23	8	67
River City Science Academy Innovation	17	16	33	28	31	8	67
Seabreeze Elementary School	18	15	33	30	26	11	68
Greenland Pines Elem. School	17	15	32	34	27	7	68
Sabal Palm Elementary School	8	23	31	32	25	12	69
Kernan Trail Elementary School	18	12	30	31	25	13	70
Neptune Beach Elementary School	14	15	29	26	33	12	71
Cornerstone Classical Academy	4	25	29	31	33	7	71
River City Science Academy At Mandarin	9	20	29	30	32	10	72
San Pablo Elementary School	12	16	28	33	34	6	72

**There are 36 schools in Duval County where 50-75% of 3rd grade students ARE reading on grade level.**

	Level 1	Level 2	% in Levels 1 & 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	% in Levels 3, 4 & 5
Venetia Elementary School	26	23	49	26	18	7	51
West Riverside Elementary School	37	12	49	15	23	13	52
Dinsmore Elementary School	20	28	48	22	20	10	52
Seacoast Charter Academy	25	23	48	26	20	6	52
Jacksonville Classical Academy	31	17	48	22	18	11	52
Lone Star Elementary School	28	19	47	28	19	7	54
Duval Charter At Baymeadows	23	23	46	27	20	7	54
Seaside Community Charter School	28	18	46	21	18	15	54
R. V. Daniels Elementary School	29	16	45	26	21	8	55
Seaside Charter K-8 School	12	33	45	26	19	10	55
Waterleaf Elementary	24	21	45	34	16	6	56
Ruth N. Upson Elementary School	23	21	44	27	21	8	56

**There are 8 schools in Duval County where 75% or more of 3rd grade students ARE reading on grade level.**

	Level 1	Level 2	% in Levels 1 & 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	% in Levels 3, 4 & 5
Central Riverside Elem. School	4	20	24	44	20	11	76
John Stockton Elementary School	10	13	23	20	42	15	77
Atlantic Beach Elementary School	7	13	20	31	28	22	81
Fishweir Elementary School	5	13	18	30	24	30	83
Hendricks Avenue Elementary	8	9	17	28	32	23	83
River City Science Elem. Academy	5	12	17	43	27	14	83
J. Allen Axson Elem School	3	14	17	29	40	14	83
Jacksonville Beach Elementary	0	8	8	17	38	38	93



### Identifying the Problems.

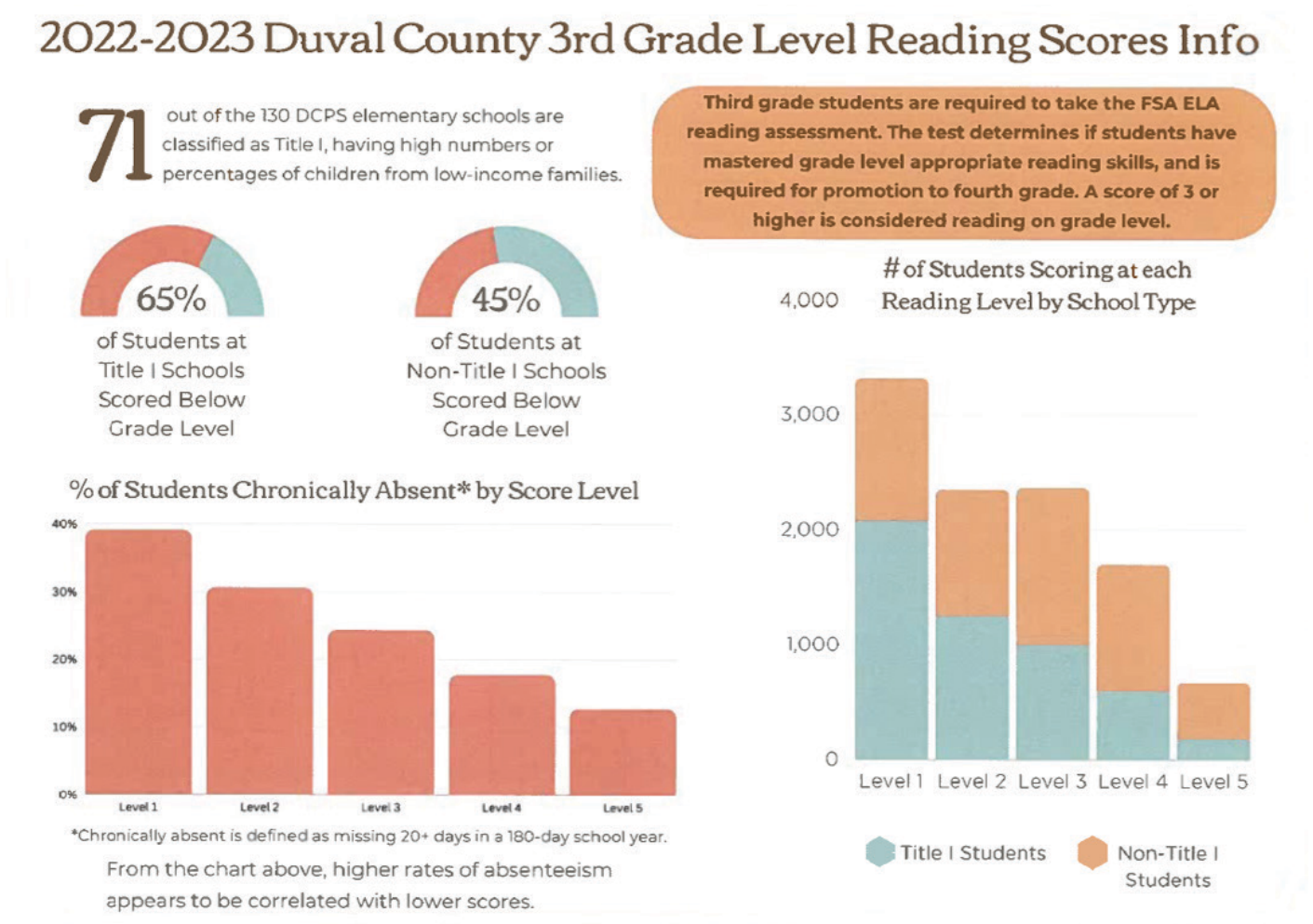
To get to the solution requires an honest and objective assessment of why we are here. The short story is:

1. Florida has adopted “Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)” and, as a consequence, some 20% of children start kindergarten without having any VPK; of the 80% who have, there is huge disparity in the quality of their VPK and their readiness to begin kindergarten.
2. Once children enter the public elementary school system, learning to read proficiently should be a priority at each grade, so by completion of third grade, they are reading on grade level. However, since children have not been tested for reading skills by the state until the third grade, historically, the public schools have not given the emphasis to reading in K, 1 or 2, and wait until the third grade to try to force-feed passing the test.
3. The primary institutional factor that contributes to children not being able to read proficiently is that in our poorest schools, the teachers are not well trained in, or supported in, teaching reading. Under Duval’s system, teachers cannot be required to teach at any particular school. Consequently, the more experienced and most capable teachers tend to go to the “best” schools and the least experienced, least

capable teachers tend to go to the “worst” schools. Many, if not most, elementary school teachers in our poor schools did not graduate from a college of education, have not been adequately taught how to teach reading skills, and receive relatively little training once they are hired by DCPS. In short, the children who need the most help from the most skilled reading teachers receive the least. It is not that these mostly young, beginning teachers are not able, it is the fact they have not been taught how to teach reading.

4. Many of the children coming from our more economically depressed neighborhoods, with all the external issues that impact their lives, have learning difficulties that require assessment and teaching skills attuned to that child’s learning style. Every child should be assessed by kindergarten to determine whether they need any particular help or assistance in absorbing the information they need to become a proficient reader. However, the system is grossly inadequate.
5. In addition to not receiving the reading instruction they need to read at their grade level, our poorest children frequently suffer “summer slide”, when they fall behind their more affluent peers who have the benefit of out-of-school experiences. A pilot program previously funded by the Jax Journey called “Summer SAIL” demonstrated that a summer program enriched with literacy and implemented with fidelity not only avoided summer slide (which in itself is a huge accomplishment), but most of the children increased their reading proficiency as a result of the summer program. Unfortunately, this intensive summer camp literacy program has not been scaled out because it costs more than the traditional summer camp.
6. Once the child moves from kindergarten to first grade and into second and on to third grade, the same deficiencies in their education and the same liabilities occur from grade to grade. To offset the lack of in-classroom literacy pedagogy, in addition to the Summer SAIL program, Jax Journey piloted afterschool programs in a small number of schools, with an emphasis on literacy, which showed great promise in helping children improve their reading proficiency. After-school programs now being administered by the City have added some elements of literacy but, to be most effective, require much more rigor and better collaboration from the school district.

The following infographic shows the reading proficiency disparity between Title I schools and non-Title I schools, and the impact of absenteeism on student learning and performance.



7. The bottom line is, the school system has failed our Title I students, and must make the necessary commitment to see that all its elementary school teachers are adequately trained in curriculum and pedagogy with ongoing monitoring to assure optimal teaching of all our children, not just those who go to schools in our more affluent areas of town.

### Explanation of Recommendations

The Journey Review Subcommittee recommends that the City of Jacksonville take a proactive role in teaching our children to read, and in collaboration with Duval County Public Schools, make a quality education available to all children, regardless of zip code. To this end, in order to achieve the long-term result which has, to date, eluded the efforts previously attempted, the City in cooperation with the Early Learning Coalition and Duval Schools should do the following:
1. Identify any “pockets” of non-VPK attendance and either arrange to get children to a quality VPK or establish a quality VPK in their neighborhood. Launch a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of VPK and attendance at VPK and school. Provide incentives to VPK providers to attend training sessions conducted in conjunction with DCPS to teach them the information the children will need to be successful as they enter kindergarten, and to align literacy teaching with Duval County education standards. Further, experts in early learning should be available to assist providers in learning how to best deliver literacy education and, from time to time, visit centers to assure fidelity of implementation.

2. All K-4 teachers in our literacy-deficient schools should receive professional development and an opportunity to work with their peers and be coached during the course of the year to assure fidelity of



implementation of what they have learned about delivering reading instruction to their students. The City of Jacksonville and Duval County Public Schools received hundreds of millions of dollars of nonrecurring stimulus money that was intended to be used to offset the losses that occurred during COVID.

There has been no greater loss than the loss to our children (particularly our poor) of their educational opportunities during COVID, and there could be no better use to which nonrecurring monies could be allocated than to train the teachers so they carry that knowledge for not just that year, but into years to follow, and for once and for all, deliver a quality reading education.

3. Summer camp should be expanded; children in literacy-challenged schools should be strongly encouraged to attend summer camps which are modeled after the SAIL program and are literacy-rich and not only help avoid summer slide but improve the reading proficiency of the child during summer camp. Those programs should be scaled out throughout the community, with particular emphasis on the neediest schools. All children who want to come should be able to.
4. Afterschool program providers should be trained in a literacy-rich afterschool program for K-4, with frequent follow-up to assure fidelity of implementation and ongoing education as necessary. All children who want to come should be able to. Tutoring should be available for those children most in need, and Grade 4 children who score a 1 on the state third grade assessment should be provided one-on-one tutoring.
5. Duval County Public Schools should be encouraged to have a Reading Summer Camp for those students who are significantly behind at the end of kindergarten and again at the end of first and second grades to assure they acquire the skills necessary to build upon and become proficient by the close of third grade.
6. Once the City and the school system has its house in order, it needs to engage in a community-wide literacy initiative involving the leaders of our community, our public agencies, our major businesses and our neighborhoods and parents.

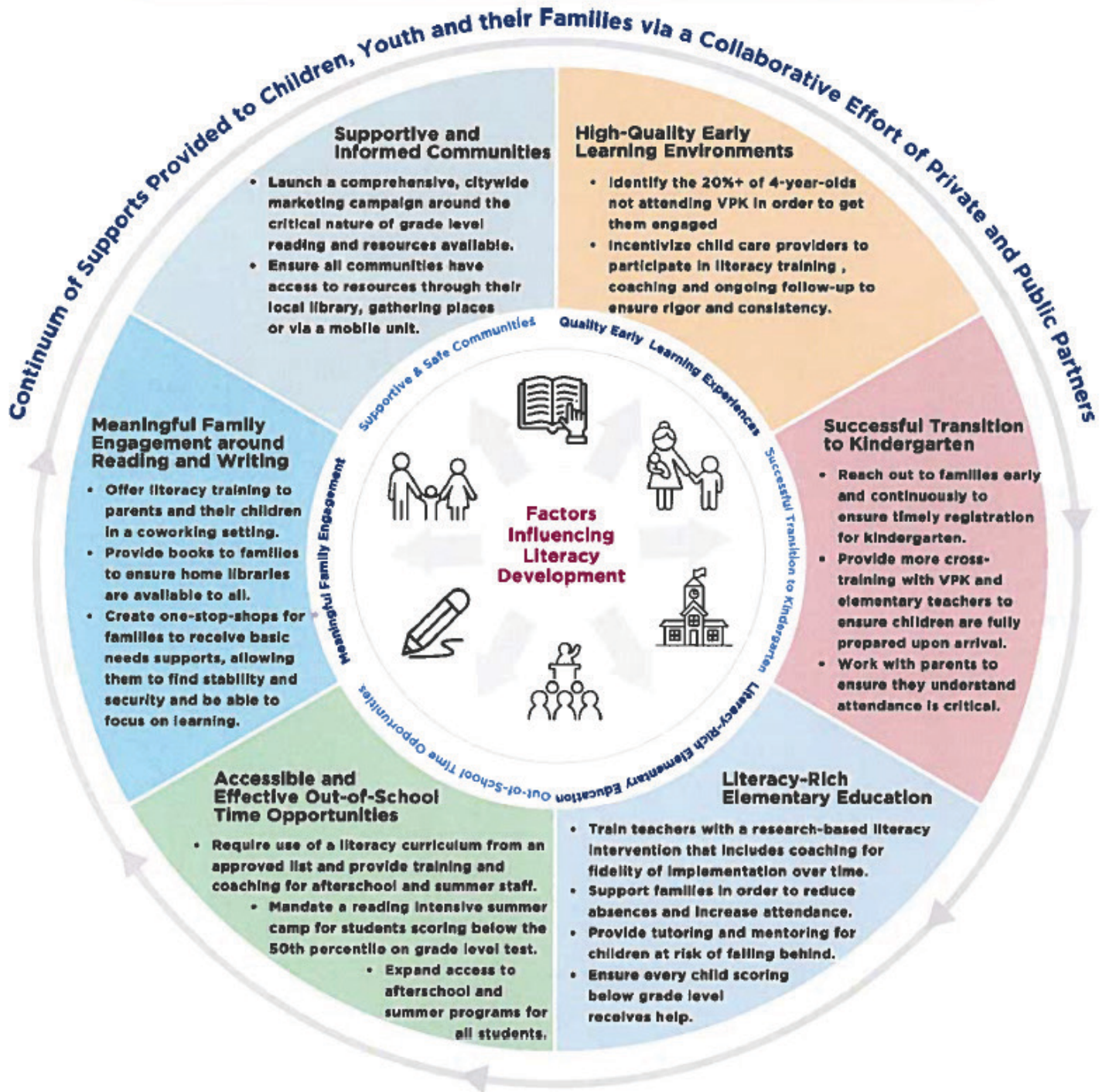
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## **RECOMMENDATIONS: JOURNEY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE**

1. **Establish Jacksonville Journey Forward (JF) and a JF Oversight Committee to function on the Jacksonville Journey model using a public safety and crime prevention lens** to assess targeted programs for effectiveness, return on investments and accountability for measurable results; to maintain ongoing review of new and innovative programs that serve the mission of Journey Forward; and to maintain engagement with the Community and lead initiatives to increase public wellbeing and confidence in the city.
2. **The Jacksonville Journey Forward Oversight Committee should create a Strategic Plan to guide the City of Jacksonville's Crime Prevention and Community Safety Initiatives.** All city departments and agencies should be engaged and coordinated with the Journey to maximize effectiveness and reach of the public safety initiative.
3. **Launch a citywide campaign (possibly in connection with citywide literacy initiative) to increase VPK attendance and attendance K-12.** VPK is voluntary and, particularly since COVID, attendance has dropped off. Similarly, attendance K-12 (particularly K-3) is down. Non-attending VPK children need to be identified and support provided for parents. Truants need to be identified and collaboration improved between DCPS and JSO.
4. **Provide literacy training, coaching and stipends to after-school providers, elementary school teachers and early learning providers.** State of the art reading professional development for elementary school teachers is essential to providing a quality learning experience for our children. Likewise, VPK and afterschool providers need to be taught how to teach their students reading skills. Additionally, offering small stipends can incentivize teachers and providers to actively participate in the training. This training will serve the teachers and providers for years and is a nonrecurring cost. In addition, to ensure optimal implementation of literacy programs, ongoing coaching, monitoring, and follow-up must be provided to ensure consistency in results.

## The case for investing in literacy supports as a tool for public safety.

A literate community is the answer to Jacksonville's crime problem. There is a direct correlation between illiteracy and delinquency, violence, and crime. Over 70% of inmates in America's prisons cannot read above a fourth grade level. In order to ensure our children, youth and families gain the skills to be employable and productive, as well as avoid involvement in crime, we must deepen our investments and attention to literacy supports at every stage. Needed supports for each factor influencing literacy development are highlighted in the chart below. When everyone can read, whole communities thrive.







**5. Expand availability of after-school programs and tutoring.** Kids Hope Alliance has successfully expanded after-school programs across the city, but due to limited funding, the number of available seats does not meet the demand from students in need of after-school care. Furthermore, the programmatic aspects of after-school programs need to be upgraded to better enhance literacy. Providers also need training and oversight. (See Recommendation Four.) In some instances, one-on-one tutoring is needed.

**6. Expand upon the Read Jax literacy campaign.** The Read Jax literacy campaign has gathered many of the major nonprofit and governmental literacy stakeholders and has increased literacy awareness within the community. However, to be successful, Jacksonville's business community must engage, and play a major role, in supporting literacy as a primary community objective. The Chamber of Commerce, Civic Council and other business organizations who will most benefit from a literate, well-educated workforce should play a primary role in a citywide literacy campaign. The campaign should also communicate the importance of VPK-12 attendance and, to the extent possible, support DCPS in recruiting high quality teachers.

**7. Expand the abilities of Kids Hope Alliance.** Kids Hope Alliance's current services are limited to individuals up to 18 years old, or 21 years old if they are in a working program or have special needs. This restriction hinders the organization's ability to support youth beyond these age limits and adults who are part of a family unit, and could benefit from their services. Additionally, adopting a trust fund model for funding would ensure financial stability and flexibility for Kids Hope Alliance, allowing them to invest in valuable projects such as training and other improvements.

**8. Ensure the community is aware of all resources offered to them. Establish a master calendar of all City events targeted to families.** While much is being done by numerous City partners, it is sometimes difficult for families to digest all the information. By establishing a community calendar and clearinghouse of all services, families would be better equipped with the information needed to meet their unique needs.



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## RECOMMENDATIONS: LITERACY INITIATIVES SUBCOMMITTEE

Literacy determines, to a large extent, young children's educational and life chances, and is fundamental in achieving social justice. Given the importance of acquiring literacy skills, the Public Safety Literacy Subcommittee engaged in pertinent data review, meetings, and conversations to develop a pathway for the city to achieve excellence in literacy education in order to build stronger, more vibrant, communities.

9. **Strengthen the partnership with the City of Jacksonville and its agencies, Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, and other business entities, in supporting a Citywide Literacy Campaign and the recruitment and retention of teachers in PK-3.**
10. **In a coordinated and multi-year integrated effort, utilize Jacksonville Journey Forward to expand efforts to work with Jacksonville's early learning partners,** including the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, Duval County Public Schools, the University of North Florida, Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville University, Edward Waters College, the Early Learning Coalition of Duval County, the Jacksonville Public Library System, and the many nonprofit organizations already engaged in a literacy focus.
11. **Address Literacy disparities through new or expanded early learning services, providing additional resources to high-poverty schools, as well as services to address social, emotional, and mental health needs.**
12. **Host collaborative roundtables and neighborhood dialogues to gather family and community involvement.** Jacksonville has a fast-growing population of non-English speaking citizens, adults and children, with very little support for teaching adults to learn English. Non-English-speaking communities need to be engaged to obtain input as to how to best assist in helping immigrants learn English. Identify Community Ambassadors and provide training to penetrate targeted neighborhoods.
13. **Partner with the Parks & Recreation Department to create Community Hope and Literacy Centers** in at least three additional neighborhoods in Jacksonville, and strengthen the existing model that is currently developing at Emmet Reed Community Center.
14. **Spearhead the creation of shared progress indicators across organizational boundaries that can be displayed citywide and celebrated.** Develop a set of shared quantitative measures, regularly analyze, and report the data. Using the results, create an easily understood set of progress indicators the community can use to see progress and/or make a contribution. Develop a mechanism to regularly gather feedback at the neighborhood level to inform next steps.
15. **Develop a Citywide Marketing Plan to focus on Literacy to include content creation, advertising, media channels, outreach programs, events, displays of progress, etc.** The citywide literacy campaign elements must be inclusive and reflect all communities and neighborhoods to include, but not limited to – Social Media, Community Outreach, Public Service Announcements, Educational Programs, Celebrations.



**RECOMMENDATIONS:  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND  
CRIME PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Adult Re-Entry/Ex-Offender Recidivism**

In 2008, the Jacksonville Journey recommended the establishment and expansion of the JREC as “a single portal of entry for all local, state, and federal offenders re-entering society in Duval County”.

Since that time, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) has taken the lead role in administering JREC. However, as services expand to meet the growing needs of ex-offenders, technical expertise and funding/investment must also expand at the same pace. Indeed, at least in the area of job training and placement, it appears much less is being spent today than when it was under the Journey.

The rising cost of housing, inflation, and cost of services overall requires an increased community investment to ensure that ex-offenders are receiving the training, support services, and basic necessities that provides them with the best opportunity to begin, and maintain, the process of successful reintegration, and to avoid recidivism.

- 16. Increase the current allocated funding to meet the needs of ex-offenders** in the areas of housing, job training, medical and mental health, substance abuse treatment, and special population needs such as the elderly and those with disabilities.
- 17. Coordinate services with JREC and community providers.** Develop a continuum of care across re-entry programming and services. Clients will need to be referred to both contracted and non-contracted service providers that operate outside of the JREC program. The Contract Manager should be housed in the Division of Grants and Contract Compliance under the Journey Forward. Having this program and other crime prevention initiatives under the Jacksonville Journey Forward Oversight Committee assures alignment with goals, accountability, and the best return on the investment.
- 18. Funding for Ex-Offender Employment Programs.** Determine the current landscape of providers that offer services to individuals as they re-enter the community following incarceration. Priority should be given to ex-offenders who are most likely to recidivate.

- 19. Provide restitution match opportunities/tiers (i.e., 3:1, 2:1, 1:1, etc.) to youth based on identified criteria (i.e., restitution contribution, program completion, education, employment, etc.) up to a certain percent to decrease the length of stay in diversion. (Average restitution owed is \$800.00.) Expungement of juvenile records should be reinstated (fairs should be restarted).** Since the reorganization of the Duval County Diversion program (2021), youth referred to diversion has increased more than 300%, with 95% of youth completing diversion remaining crime-free. This increase has resulted in caseloads exceeding recommended capacity by 69%. Some 20% of youth on diversion owe restitution that lengthens their stay from 1-18 months beyond their date of potential discharge. During this timeframe, 6% have reoffended. Research indicates the longer a youth remains under formal system processing, the greater the impact of stigmatization and criminogenic influences, increasing the risk of recidivating. Restitution ranges are \$7.00 - \$5,000. Currently, 115 youth owe a total of \$25,000 with 25% of this amount paid.

- 20. Activate community centers in highest crime neighborhoods as anchor points for youth and families that can act as a one-stop-shop for services.** By providing “Hope Centers” where children, youth, and their families can receive the services they need in one location, concerns regarding transportation and childcare, which are often barriers, are minimized. When families are equipped with the resources to meet their basic needs, a reduction in crime occurs.

**Mental Health**

- 21. The JSO should review the current working hours for officers and clinicians assigned to the Co-Responder Program (CRP), and expand its coverage.** The JSO CRP aims to divert the arrest and Baker Act of people who are in a mental health crisis.

An important part of CRP involves having an on-scene clinician who aids with de-escalating the situation, diversion, and supplying crisis intervention counseling, and mental health assessment. Currently, the officers and clinicians assigned to CRP only work ten-hour shifts Monday through Friday. When the CRP officers and clinicians are not working, mental health crises are managed only by officers.





There is a gap in the services provided by CRP during evening hours and weekends. Currently, The CRP has a diversion rate of 71%. This means that the CRP is effective in changing lives. JSO is working towards staffing the CRP around the clock. In the interim, JSO should use data to maximize the success of the CRP. JSO should decide if the current working hours of the CRP align with the peak hours of calls for services involving mental health crisis. Once funding permits, the program should be funded 24/7.

**22. Conduct mental health and substance abuse assessments on all youth entering the juvenile justice system.**

Research indicates that a significant proportion of juveniles involved in the justice system experience mental health challenges. According to a report by the National Institute of Mental Health, upwards of 85% of justice-involved-youth have diagnosable mental health disorders. Additionally, up to 95% of juveniles who encounter the justice system have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that have long-lasting effects on mental health and behavior.

Indeed, approximately 50% of lifetime mental health disorders start by the age of 14, and 75% begin by age 24. By addressing mental health needs early on, the likelihood of recidivism and re-arrest can be reduced, resulting in fewer further legal interventions and associated expenses.

**Community Engagement**

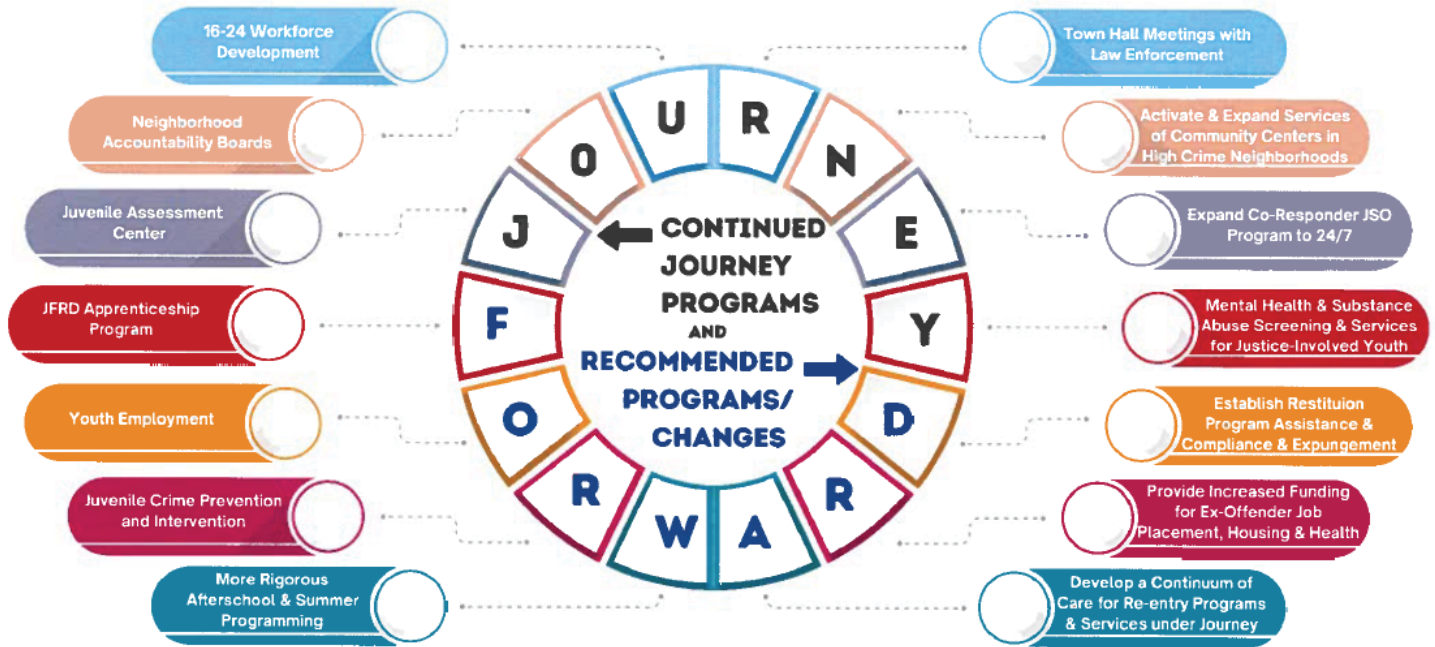
- 23. Host Town Hall Meetings to engage public and private sector partners with federal, state, and local law enforcement partners and the public.** With the goal of building trust and promoting the Jacksonville Journey Forward, the town hall meeting would allow the community to become engaged.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CRIME PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

### CONTINUED & RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS

While many youth programs funded through previous iterations of the Jacksonville Journey were continued through Kids Hope Alliance, their scope and availability needs to be substantially increased. Concurrent with the elimination of the Journey, a majority of City funding for adult programming was discontinued. Additional focus is needed to revitalize ex-offender services, enhance juvenile justice programs, and improve community/police relations.



#### Other promising initiatives for further consideration include:

1. Further research and investigation to identify additional programs that would help juveniles avoid criminal behavior and delinquency, and analyze services that help non-working 18-24 year olds avoid criminal behavior.
2. JSO should consider joining the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement Project out of Georgetown University (ABLE).
3. Review the Jacksonville Area Discharge Enhancement (JADE) program.
4. Establish a City of Jacksonville Safe Storage of Firearms Campaign in partnership with various community partners and governmental agencies.
5. Implement a Gang Prevention Training Initiative and expand current gang prevention programs into a more developed continuum of services.
6. Actively support JSO and SAO strategies to reduce violent crime.
7. Increase the funding for the Mental Health Offender Program (MHOP).
8. JSO should consider re-establishing its Operation Contact strategy.
9. DCPS, JSO, SAO, PD, COJ, and Department of Health should collaborate to determine how to address truancy.

#### CONCLUSION

As Chairman, I want to thank the members of the committee who collectively have volunteered hundreds of hours to this project, and the expert consultants who have volunteered their invaluable assistance. We are appreciative of the leadership of Mayor Deegan and excited about the opportunity to work together to fulfill the vision of One Jacksonville, a safe and healthy city with equal opportunity for all.

# Arts, Culture & Entertainment



**Hope McMath**

Arts, Culture & Entertainment  
Transition Committee Chair

- ▲ Retaining Local Talent
- ▲ Entrepreneurship
- ▲ Programming
- ▲ Quality of Life

# Arts, Culture & Entertainment

Retaining Local Talent | Entrepreneurship | Programming | Quality of Life

## OVERVIEW

The Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Committee embraced Mayor Deegan's elevation of the conversation around the power of arts and culture to define the greatness of our city. The clarity of her call in taking a position that arts and culture have value to the residents of Jacksonville, and to those who visit, has energized the sector. In addition to a rich tapestry of cultural organizations, historic sites, and large-scale events, this work amplifies that fact that those who create, care for, and steward the arts are an essential element in the vibrancy, viability, and wellness of Jacksonville and the diverse people who call it home or a place to visit.

This conversation, this work, rights a historic exclusion and centers the arts as part of what makes our city amazing and a critical part of the solutions we seek. It is in this recognition that the arts stand on their own as something critically important, but also intersect across all aspects of life, that we can find our identity, understand our history, find each other, and shape our future.

## COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

The ACE Committee was comprised of 24 individuals representing the diversity of the arts sector and the entire community. Leaders of cultural organizations, art educators, working artists, cultural entrepreneurs, event producers, healers, public arts professionals, youth voices, funders, curators, and creatives in disciplines including dance, visual art, film, music, literary arts, theater, digital media, and storytelling gave tremendous time, talent, passion, and wisdom to the work of the Committee. We have, with intention, amplified the voices of BIPOC creatives, youth voices, LGBTQIA folks, students, educators, individual artists, and people from every corner of the community.

In addition to the more than 232 engaged in the process described below, we were generously supported through the work of Michelle Godwin-Ware, Stephen Dare, and Joelle Dillard from City of Jacksonville.

## MEMBERS OF THE ACE TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Hope McMath | Committee Chair

Shawana Brooks	Kady Yellow
Yanira Cardona	Chrys Yates
Yolanda Copeland	Taryn Wharwood
Trey Ford	Mark Walker
Niveah Glover	Josh Taylor
Jenny Hager	Christa Sylla
Mai Keisling	Tim Stephen
Adam Madrid	Toni Smailagić
Katie McCaughan	Matt Shaw
Liz McCoy	Jason Peoples
Alex E Michael	Bobbie O'Connor
Emily Moody	

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

### Subject Area Experts

232 individuals with wide-ranging expertise were engaged in the process through interviews, panel discussions at subcommittees, collective meetings, and public comment. Of very special note has been the involvement of every member of the Cultural Council staff. They have attended every Committee and Subcommittee meeting, provided data and best practices, helped convene other stakeholders, and been nothing but a joy to work alongside.





### Public Comment

More than 200 members of the public attended 30 publicly-noticed Committee and Subcommittee meetings. Each meeting gave time - though never enough - to public comment, which fed the understandings and decisions of the committee.

### 1:1 Conversations

Dozens of one-on-one interviews took place over the past two months with City staff, agency leads, cultural leaders, artists, business owners, event planners, and individuals working in intersecting sectors. These meetings were often held with the goal of gathering specific knowledge on issues in front of the Committee, or to bring in a perspective otherwise missing.

### Artist Listening Session

122 artists, cultural workers, organizational leaders, art supporters, and educators attended a two-hour workshop, led by Chair Hope McMath. Held at the Ritz Theatre and Museum, the session provided attendees with an update on Mayor Deegan's priorities and the process of the ACE Committee. The majority of the time was spent with people sharing in writing, in tabletop conversations and in the larger public setting. They were invited to share challenges and barriers that exist as we try to create an arts-forward city. They also defined the characteristics of an inclusive, artful community and shared ideas of what success looks like. The

results of the session have been transcribed and exist as a supplement to this report.

### Cultural Organization Leader Listening Session

A meeting, co-hosted by Chair Hope McMath and Diana Donovan of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, was held to provide information to and gather feedback from leaders of the Cultural Services Grant organizations. Organizations large (Jacksonville Symphony, Florida Theatre, Cummer Museum, MOCA, etc.) and small (Mandarin Museum, Deck the Chairs, Jacksonville Dance Theater) were in attendance.

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### ESTABLISH A DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

This need for arts leadership embedded in city government surfaced in all five subcommittees and in conversations with artists and cultural leaders. The ACE committee is one of the only transition committees without a defined home for the work to be stewarded for the next four to eight years. Various models were explored, debated and finally voted on by the full ACE Committee. The creation of this department follows best practices in cities throughout the country, elevates art as a driver for the city's aspirations, and makes all the citizens of Jacksonville partners in the effort. Such a model not only creates more efficiency in city government, but creates a powerful partnership with existing entities like



the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville. It can serve as the impetus for increased funding from national funders.

### THREE KEY FINDINGS:

1. **The City of Jacksonville needs to leverage interest in the new administration to attract national funding in the arts, which often focuses on the intersection with social justice, public health, and animating democracy.** Jacksonville is underfunded by national philanthropy in the arts, and those communities who are successful rely on collaboration between city departments, key partners, and community members.
2. **We need to create a cultural shift in how the arts are spoken of and nourished.** The administration can set the tone by recognizing art and those who create it to be essential in the life of a city, beyond single events or works of art.
3. **One of the greatest barriers in the city being an arts-forward community is the cumbersome nature of internal systems that hinder those creating our cultural ecosystem.** Someone waking up everyday and working inside city government is one solution.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Create an ACE department with two new staff positions** and the integration of the Film department, historic preservation and cultural side of Sports & Entertainment department.
2. **Hire a highly qualified arts professional** with expertise to fill lead position.
3. **ACE Department (in government and accountable to all citizens) will collaborate with the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville** (independent regranteeing partner who advocates for funding and ensures a robust community of arts organizations and individual creatives).
4. **Create efficiencies and synergies around intersectional COJ efforts** by interacting with other departments including Parks, Health, Economic Development, Infrastructure, etc., as well as City Council and Administration positions that liaison with connected sectors.

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: RETAINING LOCAL TALENT

To support and retain artists, cultural workers, and creative entrepreneurs, COJ must prioritize inclusion of artists in city decision making; increase funding and professional development opportunities for cultural workers; create affordable live, work, and community engagement spaces; increase access to robust educational opportunities across human spectrums and in a variety of formal and informal settings. Understanding that the arts are both an economic and social cohesion driver, greater attention and value should be paid to and placed upon the creators and practitioners of art, culture, and entertainment in the City of Jacksonville.

### THREE KEY FINDINGS:

1. **Funding for independent artists has been intentionally minimized for more than twenty years**, and as a result we see an unprecedented talent/brain drain and a declining, if not dangerous, quality of life for the creative class.
2. **Inclusion, safety and censorship concerns, lack of enforcement of equal rights ordinances and laws, and barriers to professional entry in the arts are significant contributors to talent flight.**
3. **A significant cultural competency gap exists between the creative class and city leaders**, and a lack of communication (or miscommunication) between COJ, business owners, funders and artists prevents progress and effective collaboration.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**Significantly increase livability and professional assistance support for people who work in arts and culture, and integrate art and culture strategies and artists into all economic development and public work projects.**

- Make the arts visible in the workings of COJ, including artful moments in meetings, at Cityheld events, in COJ buildings, and as a consistent part of public discourse, eg. create a Poet Laureate for the City of Jacksonville.
- Ensure a percentage of City contracts are requested by and awarded to the creative class as a part of all public works projects and developments.

- Seat artists, creative entrepreneurs, and culture bearers (including youth voices) on boards, commissions and CPACs.
- Increase city funding (and public/private partnerships) to the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville for cyclical independent artist grants married with professional development services and business practice support. Change ordinance to allow for funds allocated to CCGJ to be distributed to individual artists/cultural entrepreneurs through similar, robust granting process as CSGs.
- Recognize the importance of artists as underpaid, undervalued community-based workers who play a role in elevating the City without direct compensation. Create a menu of benefits available through the private and public sector, including housing subsidies, insurance assistance, access to mental health services, and emergency funds.
- Lower barriers for smaller organizations in the Cultural Services Grant Program by updating the existing ordinance to make the CSGP reporting process more equitable for CSGP funded organizations relative to their budgets, award amounts and staffing capacities, and allow for the creation of cyclical independent artist grants.
- Allocate City funds to implement a pilot Guaranteed Income for Artists program.
- Allocate a percentage of all public works and development project budgets to subsidized co-work and live/work spaces for artists.
- Invite and include arts nonprofits, independent artists, art-based businesses, and creative entrepreneurs in the City's business cultivation and partnership efforts (eg. the Jax Chamber and Small Business Association) in order to professionalize the art and culture sector and make them recognized as business leaders of economic importance.

### **Prioritize arts education in City of Jacksonville government, schools and communities.**

- Implement Cultural Competency Training for City Officials, City Council and Cabinet.
- Invest in supporting arts and cultural education beyond the school system by supporting the existing



robust network of young artists, youth education organizations, cultural organizations, and youth leadership organizations.

- Dedicate city and matching funds to out-of-school City programs that utilize the arts and experienced artists across all genres. Targeted partnerships should include Public Library System, Kids Hope Alliance, and activation of Community Centers and public parks.
- Allocate funds from the Jax Journey for art and culture programming in neighborhoods for diversion and recidivism strategies.
- Leverage City influence to attract a Masters in Fine Arts degree program to UNF.

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#### **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: ART IN PUBLIC SPACES & NEIGHBORHOODS**

This focus area recognizes an existing strength for Jacksonville after almost two decades of investment in the installation of public art works, while also highlighting areas for expanded relevance, greater efficiency, and a new commitment to equity and accessibility.

##### **CHARGE:**

##### **Determine how best to activate unused or mostly dormant city spaces for artists in residency programs.**

Spaces like the Terry Theatre and other various venues that are presently closed to use by local cultural programming and artists.

##### **CHARGE:**

**Find creative ways to use already programmed public expenditures for artistic installations and projects** (such as the public furniture and utility boxes done by the Spark District). Connect a portion of public service grants to effectiveness of the funded institutions on the careers of their various artists. Expand the Arts In Public Places Ordinance where appropriate.

##### **CHARGE:**

**Additionally, It shall hold at least one publicly-noticed community meeting** for individual artists and entertainment groups to speak for themselves before the committee to identify how better to serve the creative class.

#### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. **A much broader definition of public spaces and art in public places is needed** to fully realize the potential art in public spaces has to invigorate, protect and transform our City.
2. **The city lacks accessible and available public spaces** which could be utilized by creative entrepreneurs, event organizers, coalitions of artists and collaborators, and community groups.
3. **Maintaining the Integrity of artists' work is critically important in broadening whose stories are being told.** We need to tell all the stories about Jacksonville. We should not censor/block the sharing of truth through art and culture.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

##### **Update Ordinance for Public Art**

- Increase funding for public art to 1.5%.
- Include both a percentage of funds for Private Development as well as municipal projects (see Greenville), especially for any new development projects that receive city funding or incentives
- Increase capacity of Cultural Council staff or ability to contract out increased work with major civic projects. Take administrative allocation to 20% and require city to actually pay out the full 10% for maintenance and conservation.
- Broaden definition of types of art included in ordinance to include but not be limited to augmented reality, live performances, projection art, film, immersive installations, literary performances, etc. – more than just an object, but a process of engagement.

##### **Properly compensate, prioritize and protect artists implementing COJ projects.**

- Prioritize Jacksonville-based artists for public arts funding.
- Update contracts, insurance requirements, permitting processes and best practices for paying artists for proposals.
- Create a standard for pay rates for artists in all media working on City projects.

- Create standards for maintaining the integrity of artists' work, protecting against censorship once projects are approved, and ensuring that true and authentic stories about and for Jacksonville are not eliminated from competing for city projects.

**Activate the riverfront through Public Art by funding and implementing the “Fun and Functional Plan” created by community in partnership with the Jessie Ball Dupont Fund.**

**Consistently pay for and manage maintenance and conservation of public art collection, existing and future.**

- Empower the Cultural Council to budget annually and implement a care program, based on guaranteed 10% allocation for conservation and a minimum of 10% for administering the effort.
- In the short-term, fund backlog of maintenance and care program for public art collection.

**Create a culture of collaboration within the City for Public Art projects, with an eye on efficiency and best practices.**

- City Projects should be developed with the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville and other cultural partners from the outset of the project. This allows for more efficient and effective planning of public art projects. No more after-the-fact “plop art”.

**Implement Equity standards in public art initiatives**

- Create and prioritize public art opportunities in underinvested neighborhoods.
- Work with CPACs to create public art projects that align with the identity, history and aspirations of the neighborhood.
- Maintain a map of all public art investments as a tool for accountability and planning.
- Ensure inclusion of diverse voices in the artist pool and on the boards and commissions overseeing Art in Public Place and Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville.
- Highlight and connect neighborhoods through the arts by investing in arts and culture integration into projects such as the Emerald Trail, development of



Riverfront parks in the urban core, and creation of cultural hubs in city districts (like those Out East and in Riverside).

**Re-imagine the role of monuments and memorials - existing and future.**

- Create a task force of artists, historians, and concerned citizens.
- Deinstall confederate monuments and other symbols of oppression from public spaces.
- Recognize the New Monuments Movement, which goes beyond memorializing of individuals and installing singular works of art. Use it as a model for reclaiming public spaces.
- As part of our place in the new monuments trail changing the public square that is the South, rededicate the city. Although the name can't change, who we say it is named for can and the arts and cultural community can lead in this work.
- Work with 904Ward's Jacksonville Community Remembrance Project, the LaVilla Marker Project, and the Jacksonville Historical Society to connect efforts of lifting up Memory Culture.



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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: CULTURE AS DESTINATION**

Great cities recognize the power of art to deepen the quality of life for residents and attract and inspire visitors. Anchor institutions like museums, theaters, dance companies, and concert venues play a vital role, as do small neighborhood-based businesses, festivals, literary events, and spaces where art is both created and shared with the public. This focus area considers what we already have that can be elevated, alongside fresh opportunities.

### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. Marketing of arts, culture and entertainment both inside and outside the city received intense feedback as part of this transition process. The city needs a modern marketing plan to highlight its distinctive cultural ecosystem.
2. To generate a rise in the profile of the City, from a national and international perspective, as a destination for cultural tourism, investments need to be made in strengthening local programming and festivals, and attracting conferences and conventions.
3. Where there are rich arts experiences - connected

with parks, food and drink, and historic spaces - there is walkability, human connection, and a street-level energy that brings pride and meaning to a place.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **Recognize and Invest in Culture as a Destination - For Residents and Visitors**

- Identify accessible public spaces expansive enough for large-scale public events, downtown and in all city districts, and target these spaces for basic infrastructure improvements.
- Increase operating grants to the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville for arts non-profits and non-arts organizations doing significant cultural programming and utilizing local talent.
- Take an active and meaningful role to support, fund, activate, acknowledge & connect Jacksonville's Black Historical Cultural destinations - those that already exist and shovel-ready projects including, but not limited to:
  - Norman Studios in Arlington
  - Jacksonville Music Museum in downtown
  - Black History and Legacy of LaVilla at Old Stanton School in downtown



- J.P. Smalls Park/Durkeeville/Bob Hayes Museum
- LaVilla Marker project
- Jacksonville Community Remembrance Project Historic Markers and Monument
- Lift Every Voice and Sing Park, and James Weldon Johnson Park
- Other Black historical cultural destinations outside Downtown core, ie. Mandarin Museum and park, Out East, Gullah Geechee sites in Arlington, Old Mayport, etc.

- Establish a Civil Rights Museum in Snyder Memorial Church, a space that should be preserved in perpetuity, for public use and for this highest and best use.
- Join the National Civil Rights Trail, resurrect recommendations from Civil Rights Task Force
- Excavate the stories of Jacksonville's diverse communities to include all racial, ethnic, and cultural groups, and support ways to tell those stories. Work with CPACs, Culturally-focused commissions, and Sister Cities to host listening sessions to gather needs and opportunities.

#### **Fully leverage the existence of the Ritz Theatre & Museum as a cultural anchor of the City**

- Explore a new management and/or funding model for the Ritz Theatre and LaVilla Museum. The Ritz is currently the most significant artifact and symbol of Jacksonville's most important contribution to the history of America. The current management structure and funding structure do not serve the needs of the community and are not on par with the importance of the institution.
- Increase city investment into the Ritz program and facility. The Ritz Theatre and LaVilla Museum is an unquestionably important cultural institution—a vital piece to any efforts to establish and bolster the city's cultural identity.

#### **Strengthen city-run anchor cultural events that elevate the city's cultural history/identity**

- Strengthen World of Nations by putting out an RFP asking cultural entrepreneurs to reimagine the festival and reconnect it to the city as it exists today.

- Do more to leverage The Jacksonville Jazz Festival to connect with the history or contemporary vibrancy of the city's jazz scene or support such a scene. Include more local artists and increase frequency of Jacksonville Jazz Fest programming by incorporating smaller quarterly concerts throughout the city.
- Leverage and support the vibrant network of existing film festivals with integrated annual programming and a grant program that help filmmakers pay entry fees to festivals outside of Jacksonville, as a means of cultural ambassadorship.

#### **Create a friendlier environment for existing events, and attract new cultural events, by revamping permitting and zoning processes for cultural events and arts programming in city buildings and spaces. Adopt best practices being developed by Downtown Vision, Inc..**

#### **Reimagine and reinvest in marketing and branding through arts and culture**

- Audit where city funds are being spent on the marketing of its cultural scene, and target areas for increased investment.
- Create a community-engaged process to name, promote, inject wayfinding into cultural hubs and districts (ie. Out East, Riverside, LaVilla, etc.
- Use tourism partnerships to create a communications campaign to get Jacksonville's talent, culture and amenities recognized throughout the country.
- The Office of Film and Television has a subsidy for film production in Jacksonville, where filmmakers that spend \$50,000 receive 10% back. This information, and the fact that our film permits are free, should be championed amongst film companies worldwide to spur film production in Jacksonville.
- Provide a platform for synergistic efforts between arts and culture and after-hours businesses in downtown and neighborhoods. Where there is density and walkability - day and night - vitality, community connection, and economic opportunity will be found.
- Create or link to designated webpage that shares opportunities/projects for artists.
- Create an Arts and Culture identity/brand for Jacksonville that celebrates Jacksonville's culture, landscape, and history. Work with artists and historic commissions to brand the city.

- Modernize it all, especially online and with airport marketing, for arts and culture.

**Create a useful, efficient and accessible transportation model that connects the city's cultural institutions and venues.**

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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: CREATIVE UTILIZATION OF EXISTING SPACES & PROGRAMS**

Past plans. Empty buildings. Fallow property. Existing institutions. Untapped wisdom. All of these are portals to opportunities all around us. From artist studios to neighborhood venues to places to gather to organizations in need of small investments for big returns, this is some of the lowest-hanging fruit. This charge focuses on better, more creative utilization of existing spaces, buildings and venues that are ripe for adaptive reuse, creative placemaking and permanent art maker spaces for creation, exhibition and performance.

### **THREE KEY FINDINGS:**

1. **The city already has assets, partnerships, and people who can marry the needs and dreams of the cultural community and residents more broadly with that which is right under our noses.**
2. **Current city-owned and privately owned building management and funding structures do not serve the needs of the community or renters, and are not on par with the importance of institutions and the communities they serve.**
3. **Investment in and attention to organizations, businesses, and partnerships - big and small - that create an ecosystem of engagement in the arts which builds a consistent, energized, dynamic culture of beauty, activity, and social connection that permeates the daily life of the city, is desperately needed.**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Analyze City-owned spaces to adapt/reuse for artistic use, including studios, live/work, public performances, galleries, etc.**

- Build a catalog of city-owned spaces with access by the public via a digital map.

- Create a Matching Grant opportunity for local organizations to obtain City spaces, similar to Durham's Open Space Matching Grant Opportunity.
- Look for spaces within City inventory that are adjacent or near other arts organizations, so clustering can happen.
- Work with CPACs, community stakeholders and grassroots efforts to empower the artistic decisions and offerings developed by the City and outside investors.
- Give Arts Investors the same or better investment opportunities as commercial investors and work with the necessary City agencies to streamline the process.
- City-owned dormant space, parks and Community Centers should be examined, brought up to code by the City, and made available for Arts & Culture use. This provides uplift for neighborhood-based and driven cultural programming in every pocket of the city.

### **Recognize and properly fund cultural spaces as essential infrastructure, drivers of cultural tourism, and as a means to maintain decades of investment**

- Increase budget for upgrades and maintenance of city-owned cultural spaces through CIP Funding and a more intentional maintenance schedule. This includes Jacksonville Performing Arts Center, Ritz Theatre & Museum, Florida Theatre, Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens, Mandarin Museum, MOCA and the existing MOSH facility.
- Increase funding to Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville for allocation to capital needs of Cultural Service Grant recipients.

### **Make City-owned facilities more accessible to non-profit and arts organizations.**

- Establish a fund to offset expenses of these facilities, to be managed by the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville and/or in the form of a credit to ASM's operating subsidy. For the city to fund organizations, festivals, and cultural programs and then require large fees to use public owned facilities is counterintuitive, and these spaces represent existing infrastructure that could be more fully engaged.

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: ART AS A TOOL FOR WELLNESS, BELONGING AND SOCIAL COHESION

It is one of the most ancient ways in which arts and culture have benefited society - as a bridge to health and wellness, a means of connecting us to one another, and a chance for differences to be seen and celebrated. In a city as diverse as Jacksonville, facing both historic and contemporary challenges, the arts are a proven way to address everything from social isolation and violence to environmental justice and public health. This focus area recommends aligning with an important national model program as a means to build a process of healing and outcomes that can reach every corner of our city.

### THREE KEY FINDINGS:

1. The power of the arts to repair the social fabric of our city and heal our communities is borne out in research and pilot programs all over the nation, specifically OneNation/ OneProject initiative.
2. Jacksonville needs spaces dedicated to social justice, cultural events, mental and physical health activities and resources, art studios and creative spaces, in all corners of the City, in order for our people to live healthy, meaningful lives and further health equity for all.
3. Support and investment in any arts and wellness initiative must also include access to affordable housing, transportation, healthcare, professional development services, and diversity, equity and inclusion practices.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**Leverage the arts sector to achieve healthy outcomes, deeper civic engagement, and diversity goals by aligning with the goals, research, and resources of One Nation/ One Project, a national arts and wellness initiative designed to activate the power of the arts to repair the social fabric of our nation and heal our communities.**

- Activate the collaboration: Start convening and building cross-sector relationships across arts/ culture, Government and health leaders with all representation of citizens.
- Amplify and uplift local narratives: Use existing, uplifting narrative from diverse stories of home, culture, and community for unity and wellness.



- Advance cultural, social and health equity: Aim for equitable and holistic outcomes for wellness.
- Aspire for transformative achievement: Providing opportunities for artists to use their bold creativity and the power of the arts.
- Identify one achievable transformative project. Start with One Neighborhood One Project that needs serious addressing, one at a time.
- Explore the city budget to find startup dollars for convening collaborative partnerships amongst city leaders, organization CEOs and community members to identify One Neighborhood One Project which is doable and realistic.
- Seek sustained funds to continue collaboration and deepen programs.

**Implement an Arts, Wellness and Law Enforcement initiative to build trust between the Police and Community by using the Police Substations as a place where arts activities and wellness resources can be made available.**





Utilize artists in implementation of public health initiatives and campaigns to increase participation in activities that lead to social cohesion (voter participation, anti-violence programs, health education, resiliency efforts, etc.).

Ensure that accessibility for people with disabilities to arts programming, public spaces, and cultural events is a priority.

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## RESOURCES

### Fun and Functional Plan by Jessie

[https://issuu.com/jessieballdupontfund/docs/072022\\_jax\\_report\\_web\\_single\\_pages](https://issuu.com/jessieballdupontfund/docs/072022_jax_report_web_single_pages)

### Al Letson's The Jacksonville Artistic Fellowship

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UaAcg0g2AeR-VyOvuPGprsRVPWHtOjWf/view>

### The Rise of the Creative Class by Richard Florida

[https://creativeclass.com/richard\\_florida/books/rise-of-the-creative-class/](https://creativeclass.com/richard_florida/books/rise-of-the-creative-class/)

### JAX Artist Live/Work Feasibility Study

[https://web.mit.edu/awhitlow/Public/JacksonvilleReport\\_6202011opt.pdf](https://web.mit.edu/awhitlow/Public/JacksonvilleReport_6202011opt.pdf)

### Guaranteed Income for Artists Research

<https://www.citizensinformation.ielen/employment/unemployment-and-redundancy/employment-support-schemes/basic-income-arts/>

### Murphey School: History of the Murphey School Burning Coal Theatre Company

<https://burningcoal.org/history-of-the-murphey-school/>

### Artspace: Our Story – Artspace

<https://artspacenc.org/our-story/>

### Durham County Open Space Matching Grants Program

<https://www.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-a-e/engineering-andenvironmental-services/durham-county-open-space-matching-grants-program>

### Durham Arts Council Fletcher Grant:

#### Fletcher Performing Arts Fund - Durham Arts Council

[https://durhamarts.org/fletcher-fund/?\\_gl=1\\*1gdnwxy\\*\\_ga\\*MTM4NTk4MTYyMS4xNjkxNzg4NTAx\\*\\_ga\\_](https://durhamarts.org/fletcher-fund/?_gl=1*1gdnwxy*_ga*MTM4NTk4MTYyMS4xNjkxNzg4NTAx*_ga_)

# Constituency & Community Outreach



**Parvez Ahmed, PhD**

Constituency and Community Outreach  
Transition Committee Chair

- ▲ Youth Outreach
- ▲ Faith Outreach
- ▲ Diversity
- ▲ Higher Education
- ▲ Nonprofits

# Constituency & Community Outreach

Youth Outreach | Faith Outreach | Diversity | Higher Education | Nonprofits

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## ON JUNE 20, 2023, THE CONSTITUENCY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE MET FOR THE FIRST TIME.

The meeting was held at the Jewish Family & Community Services, Alan J. Taffet Building, 8540 Baycenter Road, Jacksonville, FL 32256.

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## MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUENCY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Parvez Ahmed, PhD | Committee Chair

Basma Alawee	Angela Mann
Omega Allen	Rosemary McCoy
Erika d'Amore	Joey McKinnon
Mario Decunto	Whitney Meyer
Georgette Dumont	Jimmy Midyette
Reginald Gundy	John Newman
Christian Harden	Kiara Nixon
Lee Harris	Melanie Patz
Paul Hassell	Andrea Reyes
Joshua Hicks	Susan Ticker
Rebekah Hutto	Karrissa Wade
Regina Jackson	Cindy Watson
Anny Leon	Wei Zhou
Hilt Madison	

The following were appointed as co-chairs of each of the following subcommittees:

### Christian Harden

*Managing Partner NAI Hallmark*

Non-Profit and Higher Education Revitalization

### Angela Mann

*Associate Professor University of North Florida*

Non-Profit and Higher Education Revitalization

### John Newman

*Pastor at The Sanctuary @ Mt. Calvary*

Interfaith Relations

### Rebekah Hutto

*Executive Director Interfaith Center for Northeast Florida*

Interfaith Relations

### Whitney Meyer

*SVP & Chief Community Impact Officer Jacksonville Jaguars*

Empowerment of Marginalized Communities

### Melanie Patz

*CEO United Way*

Empowerment of Marginalized Communities

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## TO EFFECTIVELY ORGANIZE THE WORK, THE COMMITTEE'S WORK WAS STREAMLINED INTO 3 SUBCOMMITTEES:

### 1. Empowerment of Marginalized Communities

Co-chairs - Whitney Meyer and Melanie Patz

This sub-committee focused on the charge of diversity.

### 2. Interfaith Relations

Co-chairs - John Newman and Rebekah Hutto

This sub-committee focused on the charge of faith relations.

### 3. Non-Profit and Higher Ed Revitalization

Co-chairs - Christian Harden and Angela Mann

This sub-committee combined higher ed and non-profits.



The charge of youth outreach was integrated into the work of all the sub-committees.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Collaboration:** Create a culture of collaboration among nonprofits, city government, businesses, and academia to provide the best solutions for advancing inclusion and equity in City of Jacksonville's services.

**Communication:** Identify effective communication and messaging strategies that will inspire citizens to take a keen interest in their local government while providing clarity to employees to be successful.

**Accessibility:** Seek to address any barriers of communication, language, culture or other impediments for full engagement of all citizens in their interactions with city government officials.

**Innovation:** Be open to technological breakthroughs, creative problem-solving, best practices, peer review and better solutions for citizen and business needs.

**Transparency:** Be open and transparent about deliberations and decisions in order to enhance citizen confidence and improve the quality of governance.

**Youth Engagement:** Find creative ways to get Gen Z and Millennials engaged about issues that will impact them most in the future.

**Citizen Involvement:** Actively seek methods and mechanisms to enhance the participation of citizens in decision-making, and encourage constructive feedback from those who do business with COJ.

**Education, Training and Development:** Provide opportunities for all residents through diverse education, training and development options that will help create a competitive workforce and career opportunities for residents.

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## GENERAL ETHOS FOR THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

**Be Curious:** Ask questions. Generate new ideas.

**Breakthrough Bias:** Defy the expectations to generalize. Question your assumptions.

**Embrace Differences:** We are all created equal, but we are not the same.

**Collaborate Across Differences:** The best ideas exist at the intersections of our differences.

**Be Resilient:** Embracing differences means taking risks and persisting through discomfort.

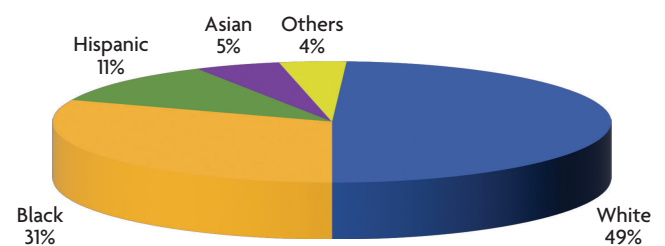
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## CENSUS BASED DESCRIPTION OF JACKSONVILLE'S DIVERSITY

As of July 1, 2022, the US Census Bureau estimates the population of Jacksonville to be 971,319 and that of Duval County to be 1,016,536.

Since the last census in 2010, the population of this region has grown by approximately 18 percent.

Comparatively, the population growth in the US overall has been around 8 percent. The population growth in Jacksonville and Duval mirrors that of the state at around 18 percent.



Demographic Distribution of Jacksonville Population Based on 2020 Census

The city and county are increasingly diverse. In the 2020 U.S. Census, the demographic distribution for the city is White (49 percent), Black (31 percent), Hispanic (11 percent) and Asian (5 percent), making the city majority-minority, a nod to its march towards greater diversity. As of the 2020 Census, Jacksonville is the 12th largest city in the nation with a population growth outpacing the growth in the rest of the state.



Jacksonville also has a higher percentage of Veterans (8 percent) compared to the national average of 5 percent. Jacksonville's median household income (\$58,263) is below the national average of \$69,021.

The city also boasts a relatively younger population. About 14 percent of the city is over 65 years old, compared to the Florida average of 22 percent and the national average of 17 percent.

In terms of educational attainment, 30.2 percent of Jacksonville's resident aged 25+ have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 90.3 percent have high school education or higher. These numbers are comparable to the State of Florida. Although Jacksonville has a higher civil labor force participation compared to the State of Florida, the city's per capita income (\$58,263) lags behind that of the State (\$61,777).

All this leads to the conclusion that Jacksonville is a diverse city. If recent trends hold, the city will continue its path towards increasing diversity, as Asians and Hispanics lead the city in population growth.

## TRANSITION COMMITTEE AREAS OF FOCUS

The Constituency and Community Outreach Committee was given the following charge from Mayor Donna Deegan's Transition Senior Advisors - Pat McCollough and Phil Perry.

### Youth Outreach

The Focus of Youth Outreach is to focus on young people with a participatory approach to research, strategies, and planning. There should be emphasizes on economics, social, and professional development and growth, and lifetime opportunities.

#### CHARGE:

**Speak with youth-oriented organizations to identify ways to incorporate young people into the civic process, including participation on city boards; education; and entertainment.**

### Faith Outreach

The focus of the Faith Outreach committee is to enlist, enable, empower, and expand the work of volunteer faith-based and community-based organizations. The committee is tasked with providing recommendations to the Mayor that will encourage the government and the faith-based community to work together to improve social services for our city.

#### CHARGE:

**Meet with faith-based organizations to identify ways to better incorporate ecumenical practices into non-profit and charitable cooperative ventures that strengthen the unity of the city as a whole. Identify obstacles that faith organizations encounter when providing direct services to the community and solutions to those challenges. Index faith observances, high holidays, and festivals to increase public understanding, respect and participation among the diverse communities that make up the beautiful Jacksonville mosaic.**

## Diversity

The focus of the Diversity committee is to ensure that there is a diverse group of individuals who have different backgrounds and skills that will work together as a team to achieve the Mayor's vision of Jacksonville being a welcoming city for all of us and to provide recommendations of what a diversified city should look like. Take into considerations regarding age, abilities, nationality, ethnicity, religious background, personal history, professional opportunities, skills, gender political preferences, communities, etc. These differences will help us discover creative solutions and innovative methods to improve our city overall.

### CHARGE:

**The Diversity Subcommittee will meet to determine how best to reflect the city's tremendous diversity - including Black, Hispanic, Asian American and Pacific Islander, LGBTQ+, and immigrant communities - on the various boards committees, commissions and other organizations appointed by the Mayor's office, and how best to make sure that they remain diverse into the future.**

## Higher Education

Explore ways to take full advantage of higher education opportunities.

### CHARGE:

**Meet with representatives of all local higher education institutions to identify the economic infrastructure of the future and develop programs that address those industries while training students to be the leaders of those industries, including AI, virtual reality, space, medical bioengineering, robotics, genetics research, and related fields to make sure Jacksonville is competitive in the economy of the near future.**

## Non-Profits

The focus of the Non-profit group is to look at the health of our nonprofits by categories and locations throughout the city. A strong nonprofit sector is a major key to a thriving community. Our nonprofits create job opportunities, connect people and services. The nonprofit leaders have strong voices and contribute to economic stability and mobility.

### CHARGE:

**Identify opportunities for grant writing programs and partnerships with the city to help local-area nonprofits to reach their missions.**

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## AREAS OF FOCUS FOR EACH SUBCOMMITTEE

In the first meeting of the full committee, Chair of the Committee, Parvez Ahmed, divided the overall charge into three areas of subcommittee work and provided associated questions to answer for each area.

### 1. Empowerment of Marginalized Communities

- a. Identify city boards and commissions that work on issues related to racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and disability justice.
- b. Meet with community leaders who work in these areas of focus.
- c. Propose action items to empower marginalized communities.

### 2. Interfaith Relations

- a. Identify interfaith groups that work with city agencies to provide services to underserved communities.
- b. Meet with faith leaders across their full diversity to find out issues that are important to them.
- c. Propose ways the city can better incorporate ecumenical services provided by faith institutions into non-profit cooperative ventures that strengthen the unity of the city.
- d. Create an index of faith observances to increase the public's understanding of the diverse faith communities that call Jacksonville home.

### 3. Non-Profit and Higher Ed Revitalization

- a. Identify existing relationships between COJ and the city's non-profit and academic institutions.
- b. Meet with non-profit and academic leaders to form the scope of a partnership between COJ and these institutions.
- c. Propose action items to strengthen relationships between COJ and these institutions.



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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: EMPOWERMENT OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**

This sub-committee's recommendations to enhance the relationships between the city and its marginalized communities are listed below, with justifications for each of the major recommendations and associated budgets (if applicable) appended later in the report.

### **1. Youth Civic Engagement and Workforce Development**

- a. Create a program aimed at increasing civic awareness among Jacksonville's youth (15-24 age group).
- b. Revitalize Mayor's Youth Advisory Council.
- c. Initiate the Blue Cap Youth Democracy program.

### **2. Boards and Commissions**

- a. Create an Office for Re-entry and a Mayoral Re-entry Board or Commission.
- b. Create a Mayoral LGBTQ+ Citizens Board or Commission.
- c. Create a Mayoral Refugee and Newly Arrived Immigrant Board or Commission.
- d. Ensure members of all city boards and commissions are representative of Jacksonville's demographics, within the limitations imposed by statutes.

### **3. Physical Infrastructure**

- a. Review COJ expenditures on infrastructure by zip code or census tract to ensure equity in investment across communities.
- b. Ensure all COJ facilities provide a family bathroom option.

### **4. Business Development**

- a. Review JSEB Program (Jacksonville Small and Emerging Businesses) to ensure equitable outcomes across Jacksonville's diverse population.
- b. Review and implement recommendations from the JSEB Disparity Study.



### **5. Safety**

- a. Move oversight of Group Violence Intervention to be under the Mayor's Office, specifically the Director of Community Initiatives.

### **6. Community Engagement**

- a. Take steps to qualify COJ as a "Welcoming City."
- b. Implement a week of voluntary service activities throughout Jacksonville in conjunction with Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday.
- c. Create a Lien Forgiveness Program.
- d. Officially have the COJ acknowledge Axe Handle Saturday and its place in Jacksonville's history.
- e. Create a fully funded and appropriately staffed Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- f. Strengthen Disability Services with additional funding/partnerships with other aligned non-profits.

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## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: NON-PROFIT AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

This sub-committee's recommendations to improve the relationships between the city and local nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and higher education institutions are listed below, with justifications for each of the major recommendations and associated budgets (if applicable) appended later in the report.

### **SHORT-TERM - NONPROFITS:**

#### **1. Expand the authority, staff, and funding for the Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP).**

By having additional staff and impact to carry out the Mayor's priorities, the OSP could build from the existing strong foundation and be even more impactful for local NPOs, and thus for the community.

- a. The Steering Committee that was active in the early days of the OSP should be recognized and continued. This component was key to success, keeping non-profit leadership engaged with the COJ and helping drive key metrics.
- b. Recognize the hard work of NPOs across the city by having the director of OSP coordinate an event to celebrate the crucial role they play in our community – such as a nonprofit appreciation breakfast. (Note: August 17th is National Nonprofit Day)
- c. This expansion could also serve as an opportunity for nonprofits to build bridges and forge positive relationships with one another toward improved coordination of services.

#### **2. Streamline the contract process for grants.**

- a. Designate one or two experts within the General Counsel Office who are points of contact for NPOs, and have these experts focus on nonprofit contracts.
- b. Create a common application for NPOs to use across the city when applying for city funds.
- c. Institute an electronic workflow system to track the application and contract process, as well as adopt the use of e-tools such as DocuSign (or the like) to help streamline the grant application and awarding process.

#### **3. Include NPOs in public discussions/taskforces on topics about which the NPO is an expert.**

- a. Have a directory of all local nonprofits housed in the OSP. Include name, contact, and service area/expertise to make it easy for the city to identify who to include in different task forces and committees. Low-cost incentives can be used to entice nonprofits to populate the directory with their information.
- b. When meeting to solve local 'wicked' problems, increase the number of people at the table to go beyond public and nonprofit individuals; include those from the private sector entities who can help solve the issue.

### **LONG-TERM - NONPROFITS:**

#### **1. Move away from having grant awards being decided by one or two staff members (as is the case in some instances) to a more objective process to decide on grantees:**

- a. Hire an external consultant who makes recommendations to each board of KHA, PSGC, CC, Neighborhoods, Parks & Recreation, and any other city departments who are involved in making decisions about grant dissemination.
- b. Provide more funding stability for NPOs that have been long-term partners with the city. Perhaps address this through a combination of scoring points and previous goal achievements.
- c. Offer bonus points for addressing each new mayoral initiative, while keeping the general desires the same.
- d. Have a rubric for the targets each NPO must hit to be competitive for a grant.
- e. Explore the use of an accountability system (e.g., use the Results Based Accountability (RBA) model).

#### **2. Explore extending the grant funding period to 2 years (or more) for awards.**

- a. It is unclear to us at this time what the implications of extending the grant funding period to two years would mean for the city, but this was a frequent request from the NPOs we queried.

## SHORT-TERM - HIGHER EDUCATION:

1. **There is great variability in terms of the connection between the various higher education institutions and the city, and there is a need to have a point of contact who has a direct line to the Mayor.**
  - a. Establish a Director of Higher Education Outreach to liaise and develop a deeper relationship between the city and its various institutions of higher education.

## LONG-TERM - HIGHER EDUCATION:

2. **Determine a long-term collaboration plan between the city and the various institutions of higher education. Some areas for consideration are:**
  - a. Sharing space downtown to form ‘centers’ that, in collaboration with the city, will identify and provide solutions for issues facing Jacksonville. (e.g. brain trusts and think tanks)
  - b. Identifying anticipated needs for local workforce development and the role each institution can play to serve those needs.
  - c. Increasing the visibility of each institution of higher education by using their facilities and other resources (such as faculty skill sets) to meet city needs.

3. **Robust funding and commitment to the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission (JHRC) in order to gather citizens of Jacksonville around themes relevant to our city’s needs.**
  - a. JHRC to play a bigger role in promoting peace and unity in these polarizing times.
  - b. Revival and funding of JHRC’s “study circles” initiative as a forum of citizen advisory groups for community engagement, and for information dissemination as trusted messengers.
4. **Recognition of the city’s history by the Mayor’s office and the COJ, particularly those moments of pain and conflict that have defined us.**
  - a. For example, Ax Handle Saturday should be recognized this year on August 27th with a proclamation from the Mayor’s office, and we will work toward placing a plaque in James Weldon Johnson Park honoring the victims of this violence.
  - b. A statue of James Weldon Johnson should be placed in James Weldon Johnson Park.
5. **Increased communication between the COJ safety and disaster preparedness team and faith leaders in order to ensure healing in the midst of tragedy, and assist with dissemination of information in harder-to-reach communities.**

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## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT: INTERFAITH

This sub-committee’s recommendations to increase the relationship between the city and its interfaith communities are listed below.

1. **The Chief of Diversity and Inclusion will develop an interfaith calendar to be shared on COJ Social Media in order to educate our city of its religious diversity.**
  - a. An example: <https://www.diversityresources.com/interfaith-calendar-2024/>
  - b. Develop a significant, interfaith religious holidays social media guide with significant holiday descriptions and culturally competent graphics.
2. **Each COJ cultural event should be reviewed by the Chief of Diversity and Inclusion as a check for cultural sensitivities and quality control.**
6. **Mayor’s office should work with the Duval School Board to make sure that the District Calendar schedules its calendar with awareness of all religious holidays.**
  - a. This calendar can be used as a resource: <https://www.diversityresources.com/interfaith-calendar-2024/>
7. **Increased participation of the Mayor’s office and Chief Diversity Officer on the following observances (based on feedback from our community conversations):**
  - a. The Mayor and the Chief Diversity Officer to be involved in Jacksonville Pride Month.
  - b. The Mayor and the Chief Diversity Officer to attend the OneJax Thanksgiving Interfaith Service this November 2023 in order to celebrate the religious diversity of Jacksonville.



- c. Access to meetings and vacancies to COJ boards and commissions to be communicated clearly in this time of transition so that a diversity of applicants may get involved, and to make the work of this transition clear to residents.

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## **FULL LIST RECOMMENDATIONS: SUB COMMITTEE - EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**

### **1. Youth Government Engagement and Workforce Development**

- a. Revitalize Mayor's Youth Advisory Council.
  - i. WHY: A Youth Advisory Council will provide the opportunity to bring young people into the discussion and decision-making around city events, programs, and initiatives that impact their lives.
  - ii. HOW: The Kids Hope Alliance maintains a Mayor's Young Leaders Advisory Council. ([coj.net/mylac](http://coj.net/mylac))
    - 1. High school juniors and seniors are eligible to apply and participate in this 50-member council. To be effective, a KHA staff member should be assigned to coordination with the council. It is important to be clear about the role of the Mayor's Young Leaders Advisory Council or Youth Advisory Council. While participation in and of itself is beneficial to the leadership development of young people, the primary role must be to bring awareness and discussion to all young people on key decisions and challenges impacting the city of Jacksonville. Young people should be asked for input on any youth program design that is being developed by the city (including Jacksonville Journey and other initiatives of the Kids Hope Alliance). In addition, young people should also be engaged in city infrastructure discussions around resiliency, climate change, downtown development, as well as the cultural climate and goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Supporting youth leadership and engagement will require staff time to support the logistics, meeting content and meeting gatherings.
- iii. Participant Stipends: All participants should be offered a travel and time stipend for each meeting attended, so that their basic costs for participation are covered, including both their transportation and also their lost wages. For example, if an average of 30 youth council members participate in a 2 hour meeting 8 times per year, at a travel/ time stipend of \$40 per meeting, \$9,600 should be set aside.
- iv. Council Discretionary Funds: Additional funds should be allocated for the use by the Youth Council for an annual special project or large youth convening to engage the larger community of young people. Recommend \$5,000 - 10,000 annually.
- b. Create a program aimed at increasing civic awareness among Jacksonville's youth (15-24 age group) and initiate a Blue Cap Youth Democracy program.
  - i. WHY: According to Florida Civic Literacy Exam (FCLE) 2021-2022 school year, 5,507 Duval students took the FCL course and 1,584 passed the FCLE. Duval has a 29% passing rate. 5,179 students were enrolled in a course requiring them to take the FCLE and the Exam, and 1,441 (28%) passed.
  - ii. FCLE measures the following civic literacy competencies and outcomes:
    - 1. Understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government.
    - 2. Understanding of the United States Constitution and its application.
    - 3. Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-government.
    - 4. Understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.
    - 5. A report from the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School found<sup>1</sup>:

- a. Current levels of knowledgeable engagement by America's youth remain too low. Less than half of young Americans vote, even in presidential elections, and just 10 percent of Americans between 18 and 24 met a standard of "informed engagement" in the 2012 presidential election cycle.
  - b. Opportunities for civic learning and engagement are highly unequal. White, wealthy students are four to six times as likely as Hispanic or Black students from low-income households to exceed the "proficient" level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in civics. Only 7 percent of students whose parents didn't graduate from high school, and who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, reached "proficient."
  - c. Civic education is increasingly viewed as controversial by the public. 24.8 percent of the teachers surveyed by the Commission thought that parents or other adults in their community would object if politics was discussed in their course – even though they were asked about a course on government or civics taught during a presidential election year.
  - d. Although highly controversial, voting laws have only small effects. Photo ID laws seemed to lower voting for young people who have not attended college. Same Day Voter Registration modestly, but reliably, boosts youth turnout. The overall effects of these laws are small compared to the larger challenges to engaging youth in democracy.
- iii. WHY: Establish a Focus group to initiate the Blue Cap Youth Democracy program. The program will prepare youths (15-24) to become civically engaged, knowledgeable adults who will make positive contributions to Duval communities and the political platform.
  - iv. HOW: Program eligibility: middle and high school students living in New Town Success Zone.
    1. New Town Success Zone demographic: Urban core of Jacksonville (1 of 6 Health Zones established to address health disparities in diverse areas of the county).
    2. Range of land uses: city's port; downtown commercial core; surrounding historic homes and residential areas.
    3. 81% minority population; 31% of Duval County's black population.
    4. Highest poverty rates in Duval County: 29.6% of the population Negative job growth -2.18%.
    5. Utilize existing youth programs, such as Kids Hope Alliance, Harriet Tubman Freedom Fighters, or other non-profit organizations that offer Youth Civic Education and service-learning opportunities.
- ## 2. Boards and Commissions
- a. Recommendation: Create an Office for Re-entry and a Mayoral Re-entry Board or Commission.
    - i. WHY: Form a multi-sector Returning Citizen working Group. While promoting public safety, the Re-entry committee will focus on challenges faced by the returning citizens population. Bring together experts in the re-entry space such as, government representatives, policy advocates, research, justice-impacted individuals. Determine the city's successes in support of returning citizens and acknowledge where the city falls short.
    - ii. Each year approximately 1,650 offenders are released from Florida State Prison into Duval County. Approximately 32,200 were released from Duval County jail into society. Returning citizens paid their debt; however, overarching systemic challenges continue to perpetuate punishments and barriers that make it harder for them to re-establish their lives in Duval County. The Re-entry committee provides an opportunity to reduce recidivism, while promoting public safety.
    - iii. Systemic challenges to returning citizens: Denial of employment, occupational licensing, eEducation, housing and voting rights.
    - iv. Seek best practices from other cities<sup>2</sup>

b. Recommendation: Create a Mayoral LGBTQ+ Citizens Board or Commission

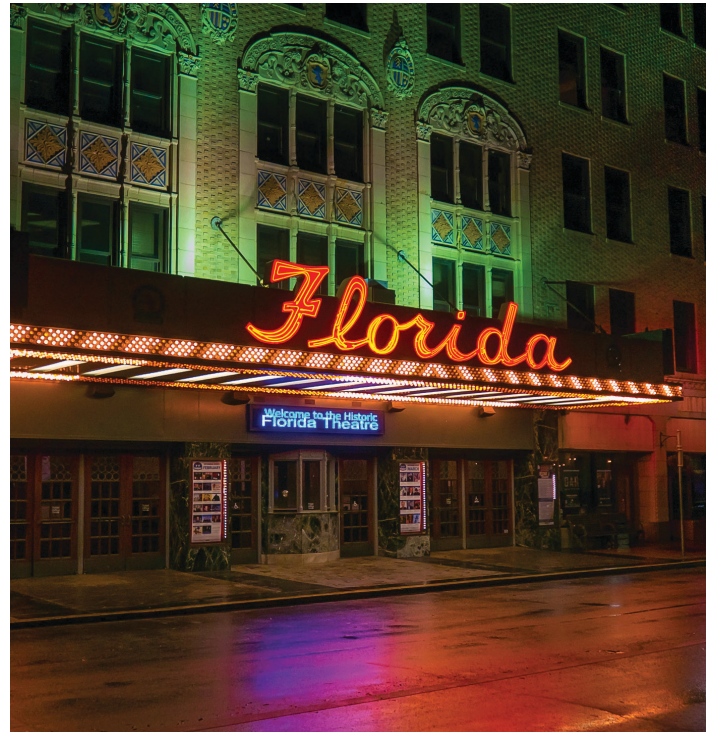
- i. WHY: LGBTQIA+ residents of the City of Jacksonville have historically been one of the communities that lack a formal voice within local government. According to a study conducted in 2018 on the Jacksonville area by the Williams Institute of the UCLA School of Law, “Approximately three quarters (74.5%) of respondents reported that they experienced at least one experience of “everyday discrimination,” such as being treated with less courtesy or respect than other people, in the past 12 months.” Additionally, “... about one in 25 respondents (3.9%) reported being fired unfairly from a job in the past year; more than one in six respondents (17.1%) reported unfairly not being hired for a job for which they were qualified in the past year; 5.5% reported being unfairly denied a job promotion in the past year; 1.8% reported being unfairly prevented from moving into or buying a house or apartment in the past year; 3.3% reported being unfairly denied a loan in the past year; and 4.5% reported being unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened, or abused by the police in the past year.” The report also notes that among those who reported experiences of discrimination, few sought legal recourse.

- ii. Forming this board would give a voice in government to these marginalized people as well as demonstrating that City officials are willing to listen in good faith to the Jacksonville LGBTQ+ community’s concerns and act on them.

c. Recommendation: Create a Mayoral Refugee and Newly Arrived Immigrant Board or Commission.

- i. WHY: Recommendations for the Establishing a Refugee and Immigrant Board or Committee within the Mayor’s office can be crucial for promoting inclusion, addressing the unique needs of refugees and immigrants, and fostering a welcoming and supportive community. Here is some language highlighting the importance of such a board and outlining its potential functions:

1. A Refugee and Immigrant Board can serve as a dedicated platform for collaboration, coordination, and advocacy on behalf of refugees, immigrants, and their families. By



bringing together stakeholders from various sectors, including community organizations, service providers, and government agencies, we can work together to create a more welcoming environment and ensure that our city becomes a supportive home for all residents.

2. The potential functions and responsibilities of the Refugee and Immigrant Board could include:
  - a. Policy Development and Advocacy: Collaborating with city officials to develop inclusive policies and practices that support the rights and needs of refugees and immigrants. Advocating for the rights of refugees and immigrants at the local, state, and national levels.
  - b. Community Engagement and Education: Organizing community outreach programs to foster understanding, appreciation, and cultural exchange between refugees, immigrants, and the broader community. Conducting educational campaigns to dispel misconceptions, challenge stereotypes, and promote the positive contributions of refugees and immigrants.



- c. Service Coordination and Integration: Facilitating partnerships between service providers, community organizations, and government agencies to ensure coordinated and comprehensive support for refugees and immigrants. Developing programs and initiatives to assist with language learning, employment opportunities, healthcare access, and social integration.
- d. Data Collection and Reporting: Collecting and analyzing data on the needs, challenges, and successes of refugees and immigrants in our city. Producing regular reports that inform policy decisions, measure progress, and highlight areas that require additional attention.

ii. Examples from other cities:

1. City of Seattle - Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) works to enhance the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into the community.
2. City of Chicago - Chicago's Office of New Americans (ONA) aims to improve the quality of life for immigrants and refugees in the city.
3. City of Austin - The City of Austin's Immigrant Affairs Office (IAO) is committed to creating an inclusive environment for immigrants and refugees.
4. City of Minneapolis - Minneapolis's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for immigrants and refugees.

**3. Recommendation: Ensure members of all city boards and commissions are representative of Jacksonville's demographics, within the limitations imposed by statutes.**

- a. Review membership and ensure members are representative of Jacksonville's demographics and include people to be served by the Board or Commission.
- b. Review meeting times to ensure accessibility

for non-traditional citizens to serve and attend.

- c. Review Charters and their impact, and adjust as needed.
- d. Review application and recruitment process to remove unintended biases.
- e. Publicly promote the Board and Commission process, to add more transparency, along with a timeline.
- f. Fully fund JHRC (Jacksonville Human Rights Commission).

**4. Physical Infrastructure**

- a. Assure that the time to respond to COJ requests for infrastructure repairs and maintenance reflects an equitable response regardless of zip code, so that no neighborhood is left behind or ignored while others have prompt responses.
  - i. WHY: Many city residents in low-income and historically Black neighborhoods have experienced long delays in response to requests to the COJ for infrastructure repairs and maintenance, compared to more affluent or mostly white neighborhoods. City streets, sidewalks, and parks in these neighborhoods may accumulate garbage and debris and contribute to blight, as well as a lack of safety for residents. Increasing resident engagement in city repairs and maintenance can be an effective way for the City to make improvements, especially in the urban core and historically neglected neighborhoods. But the city must make an internal commitment to respond to all service requests in an equitable manner that prioritizes neighborhoods with more extreme needs due to years of neglect.
  - ii. HOW: The Mayor's Citizens Planning and Advisory Committees (CPAC) are already in place to engage neighborhoods across the city. The structure supports neighborhoods that are organized into associations, and membership from each Neighborhood Association is encouraged to participate. In addition, nonprofit organizations serving specific neighborhoods and other homeowners associations may participate.

The CPAC meetings provide an avenue for neighborhood representatives to directly request a better response from city departments (Municipal

Enforcement, Parks and Recreation, Waste Management, Transportation, etc), and the CPAC chairs have historically met quarterly with the mayor to identify city-wide challenges and issues impacting neighborhoods for the mayor's office. The CPACs should continue to be empowered to raise these issues of equity and responsiveness. The Neighborhoods Department should regularly review response times for service requests to assure that no neighborhood or request is being neglected, and neighborhoods where long-term neglect, and that are at high risk for blight, be prioritized.

iii. Budgetary Impact: The Neighborhoods Department already has a structure to support the CPAC work, and this should be sustained at the same level as the previous administration.

b. Ensure all City of Jacksonville owned or controlled facilities provide single person family restrooms.

i. WHY: Recent changes to Florida Statutes resulting from the passage of CS/HB 1521 (Facility Requirements Based on Sex / Safety In Private Spaces Act) require all City-owned or City-operated facilities to comply with and enforce new regulations on restroom and changing room use by sex assigned at birth. The Act requires the City to maintain the following facilities:

1. (a) A changing facility designated for exclusive use by females and a changing facility designated for exclusive use by males; or (b) A unisex changing facility.
2. (a) A restroom designated for exclusive use by females and a restroom designated for exclusive use by males; or (b) A unisex restroom.
3. The Act defines male and female, as well as unisex facilities, as the following:
  - a. "Female" means a person belonging, at birth, to the biological sex which has the specific reproductive role of producing eggs.
  - b. "Male" means a person belonging, at birth, to the biological sex which has the specific reproductive role of producing sperm.

c. "Unisex changing facility" means a room intended for a single occupant or a family in which one or more persons may be in a state of undress, including, but not limited to, a dressing room, fitting room, locker room, changing room, or shower room that is enclosed by floor-to-ceiling walls and accessed by a full door with a secure lock that prevents another individual from entering while the changing facility is in use.

d. "Unisex restroom" means a room that includes one or more water closets and that is intended for a single occupant or a family, is enclosed by floor-to-ceiling walls, and is accessed by a full door with a secure lock that prevents another individual from entering while the room is in use.

4. Due to the ways in which the law is implemented, Transgender and Gender Diverse residents and visitors to the City of Jacksonville are placed at a greatly increased risk of discrimination. In addition, any persons who do not appear "male enough" or "female enough", regardless of their birth sex or gender identity, are placed at this same risk. Those traveling to the City may also elect to change their itinerary to avoid possible discrimination, potentially subtracting from the City's tourism income. Providing unisex facilities to the impacted persons would provide an alternate option.

5. Providing single-use facilities would also benefit the City's disabled and elderly community members and visitors by ensuring accessible facilities are provided at all locations.

6. HOW: The City can provide readily accessible single-occupancy Unisex (also known as Family) restrooms and changing facilities at all City-owned or City-controlled properties.

7. The City should instruct the Facilities, Parks, and any other applicable Departments to conduct an audit of all staff and public-facing restrooms to determine which areas need to be updated for accommodation.



8. Any single-occupancy restrooms or changing rooms that currently exist should be re-labeled as Family restrooms rather than gender-separated facilities.
9. On City-owned or City-controlled properties that currently lack single occupancy facilities, the City should construct new single-occupancy Family restrooms and changing facilities.

## 5. Business Development

- a. Review Jacksonville Small and Emerging Business Program
    - i. WHY: Research revealed the need for implementation or improvement of checks and balances on large companies (Prime Contractors), and outreach to involve/include small and emerging businesses. Here are recommendations for checks and balances, as well as the prevention of exploitation of small businesses by Prime Contractors:
    - ii. HOW:
      1. Pre-Bid Outreach Documentation: Maintain comprehensive records of their outreach efforts to small and emerging businesses.
2. Standardized Outreach Plan: Create a detailed outreach plan for each bid opportunity, outlining their approach to engaging small businesses. This plan should demonstrate proactive efforts to involve small businesses at various stages of the project.
  3. Pre-Bid Meeting Requirements: Hold pre-bid meetings that are well-publicized and provide sufficient notice to potential small business subcontractors. This encourages meaningful participation and allows small businesses to ask questions and gather information.
  4. Subcontractor Commitment Letters: Obtain written commitment letters from small businesses expressing their intent to participate in the project. These letters should outline the scope of work and the terms of collaboration.
  5. Joint Bid Agreements: Encourage large companies and small businesses to enter into formal joint bid agreements. These agreements should outline the roles, responsibilities, and profit-sharing arrangements between the parties, promoting transparency and accountability.
  6. Mentor-Protégé Programs: Create mentor-protégé programs where large companies mentor and collaborate with small businesses. Require documented plans for knowledge transfer, skill development, and capacity building.
  7. Performance Evaluation Metrics: Develop performance evaluation metrics that assess the effectiveness of large companies' outreach efforts. Use these metrics to incentivize active engagement and measure the success of partnerships with small businesses.
  8. Review and Implement JSEB Disparity Study Recommendations - Designing a disparity study to address the challenges faced by minority-owned businesses in the City's small and emerging business program for participation in city capital improvement projects requires a comprehensive approach.

This documentation should include communication logs, emails, meeting minutes, and other evidence of engagement.



## 6. Public Safety

- a. Move oversight of Group Violence Intervention to COJ in accordance with best practices.
- i. In 2022, Jacksonville's murder rate was the highest in the state, as well as the 23rd highest murder rate of the top 75 largest cities in the US. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office currently operates the City's GVI program, which was developed by the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College. The NNSC's program, when implemented as they recommend, has been shown to significantly reduce violent crime and shooting deaths. After successful program implementation, the City of Boston saw a 63% reduction in youth homicides, the City of Lowell saw a 44% reduction in gun assaults, the City of Cincinnati saw a 41% reduction in group homicides, and the City of Indianapolis saw a 34% reduction in homicides.
- ii. The program as operated by JSO has not produced a reduction in the City's rate of violent crime or homicide since it was implemented. This is in large part due to the program being run out of the Sheriff's Office, as well as JSO's refusal to contract with the NNSC and implement their best practices. JSO previously contracted with the NNSC, but no longer does. The sheriff has stated publicly that he believes the contract is unnecessary. According to representatives of the NNSC, the City of Jacksonville is also the only city nationwide implementing this program that does not coordinate all efforts through the Mayor's office. This is essential to the program's success, as a neutral party is needed to ensure community trust and an equal playing field for all organizations at the table. Members of this committee unsuccessfully attempted to gather additional information from JSO regarding the program.
- iii. The Group Violence Intervention program should be moved to the newly- formed Department headed by Lakesha Burton. This move will allow the program to work in tandem with the City's Cure Violence program, and will allow the program to be run by a neutral party, rather than law enforcement.

## 7. Community Engagement

- a. Make the City of Jacksonville a "Welcoming City."
  - i. This recognition signifies our commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all residents, including immigrants and refugees. By embracing this initiative, Jacksonville can reap numerous benefits and showcase itself as a city that values diversity, fosters social cohesion, and harnesses the economic potential of immigrant communities.
  - ii. Becoming a Certified Welcoming City carries several important advantages:
    1. Economic Growth and Innovation: Immigrant populations have proven to be catalysts for economic growth, job creation, and entrepreneurial ventures. By welcoming immigrants and providing them with the support and resources they need, we can tap into their talents, skills, and innovative ideas, contributing to the local economy and boosting job opportunities for all residents.
    2. Cultural Enrichment and Social Cohesion: Embracing diversity and creating an inclusive environment fosters a sense of belonging and social cohesion among residents. Welcoming newcomers from different backgrounds promotes intercultural understanding, enriches our cultural fabric, and strengthens community bonds, leading to a more harmonious and united Jacksonville.
    3. Workforce Development and Talent Retention: Attracting and retaining a diverse range of talents is crucial for a thriving economy. By positioning ourselves as a welcoming city, we can attract skilled professionals, researchers, and students from around the world, fostering a dynamic workforce and establishing Jacksonville as a destination of choice for global talent.
    4. Community Integration and Well-being: A welcoming city approach ensures that newcomers have access to the resources and services they need to integrate successfully into our community. By providing language assistance, educational opportunities,

healthcare access, and social support networks, we can enhance the overall well-being of immigrants and promote their seamless integration.

5. National Recognition and Best Practices: Attaining the Certified Welcoming City designation brings national recognition and allows Jacksonville to join a network of cities that share best practices, strategies, and experiences in immigrant integration. This collaboration enables us to learn from other successful initiatives, implement evidence-based approaches, and showcase Jacksonville as a leader in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment.

iii. Here are a few examples of Welcoming Cities across the United States:

1. Austin, Texas: Austin became a Welcoming City in 2012 and has implemented various initiatives to foster immigrant integration, including language access programs, workforce development initiatives, and community engagement efforts.
2. Boston, Massachusetts: Boston has been recognized as a Welcoming City since 2014. The city has implemented programs to support immigrant entrepreneurs, enhance language access, and promote inclusive policies that protect immigrant rights.
3. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minneapolis has been designated as a Welcoming City since 2015. The city has established programs and services to support immigrant and refugee integration, such as employment assistance, language classes, and community engagement initiatives.
4. Nashville, Tennessee: Nashville became a Welcoming City in 2014. The city has focused on providing language access, workforce development programs, and cultural exchange opportunities to support the successful integration of its immigrant population.
5. Salt Lake City, Utah: Salt Lake City has been recognized as a Welcoming City since 2014. The city has implemented initiatives to

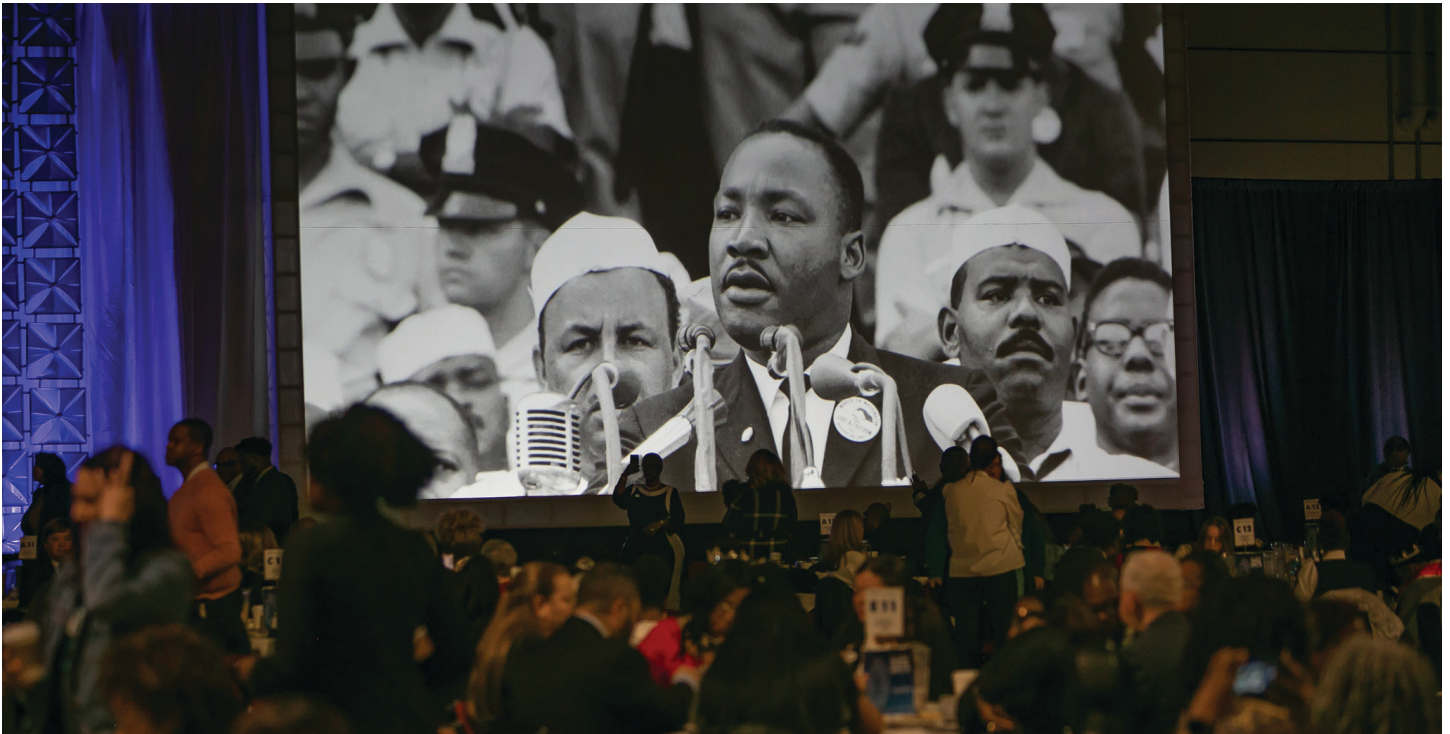
enhance language access, provide immigrant-focused workforce training, and create a welcoming environment for all residents.

6. Seattle, Washington: Seattle has been designated as a Welcoming City since 2015. The city has implemented programs to support immigrant and refugee integration, such as English language classes, legal assistance, and community engagement initiatives.
7. Chicago, Illinois: Chicago became a Welcoming City in 2012. The city has focused on fostering immigrant integration through programs that provide legal support, access to city services, and initiatives aimed at enhancing economic opportunities for immigrants.

- b. Implement a week of voluntary service activities during the MLK Holiday throughout Jacksonville.

i. Purpose and Goals:

1. According to the most recently published A.L.I.C.E (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) report, 39% of households in Northeast Florida struggle to make ends meet. The report also reveals deep racial disparities in the rates of financial hardship, with 55% of Black households and 46% of Hispanic households in Northeast Florida living below the ALICE threshold, compared to 34% of white households. This research continues to demonstrate the importance of incorporating a racial equity lens to all our work, to drive equitable impact throughout our community.
2. Convene hundreds of individuals to volunteer in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy.
3. Create and harness energy that focuses on increasing trust in our systems, policies, social structures, and institutions that have historically excluded impoverished communities and communities with large populations of Black and Brown citizens.
4. Inspire impactful change, through partners in liberation, freedom, and justice with the community - not for the community.



5. Facilitate an opportunity for people to connect with each other and feel part of a big, joint effort, and cultivate an ecosystem of shared care.
6. The following plan for a full day of service has been developed, particularly focused on paying tribute to the legacy of Dr. King, along with furthering United Way's critical work in our city:
  - a. A Community Rally: The MLK Day of Service project will kick off with a community rally in Jacksonville to bring together the hundreds of volunteers who will take part in the day's festivities, celebrating and honoring his history. Dignitaries, volunteers, project leaders, business partners and nonprofit partners will be invited to attend. The rally is an opportunity to acknowledge and recognize trusted neighborhood leaders, inspire, and empower the audience, and deliver a call to action that will continue cementing Dr. King's legacy beyond the MLK Day of Service. Mayor Deegan, lead sponsors and neighborhood leaders will present their visions of a community united in helping every neighborhood and person reach their full potential.
  - b. A Community Celebration
  - c. The MLK Day of Service events will conclude with a celebratory fellowship event among volunteers and neighborhood leaders. A reunion-style atmosphere with music, games and activities for children, and an inspirational closing message by Mayor Deegan, will serve as a community celebration and inspiration for continued collective action to make Jacksonville a great home for everyone. The intention is to build and strengthen community relationships across economic, racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, and continuing throughout the year.
  - d. Other potential partners - Jacksonville Urban League, NAACP, Clara White Mission, Visit Jax, Jacksonville Chamber/JaxUSA, JASMYN, Interfaith Center of Northeast Florida, Center for Independent Living, Downtown Vision, OneJax, LISC Jacksonville, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.
  - e. United Way's role:
    - i. Co-lead with the City of Jacksonville, providing planning and organizing of a city-wide Week of Service events.





- ii. Expertise in identifying community needs and credible community partners.
- iii. Convener of partners to provide facilitator and project-management training, and capacity- building support of organizations.
- iv. Facilitator and connector.
- v. Subgrantee to provide mini-grants to community organizations for purchase of supplies and additional capacity support.
- vi. Reporting and tracking of volunteer hours and stories of impact.

c. Create a Lien Forgiveness Program

- i. WHY: The Amount of a Lien on Property Exceeds the Value of the Property.
  - 1. The City's Municipal Code Compliance Division enforces property maintenance, safety, and zoning codes. The Division will cite properties for violation of the City Codes. The goal of code enforcement is to have property owners comply with the

City Codes and to clean up their property. If the owner does not comply with the code violations for properties, fines can be placed on the property. Code violation fines can be daily fines, which can result in very large fines. If the fines are not paid, the City can place a lien on the property to recoup the fine. Sometimes a lien is placed on the property for work the City performs, such as mowing the property. If not paid by the owner, the lien is usually paid off when the property is sold. The problem is that many times the lien amount is higher than the value of the property. This limits redevelopment/reuse of the property.

ii. HOW: Corrective Action – Forgive the Lien

- 1. The City could have a program to forgive the code violation liens, if the property owner mitigates the condition that created the lien and improves the property. The property owner would submit a plan for redevelopment/reuse of the property. The lien would be forgiven when the plan for redevelopment/reuse is complete, and the code violation is mitigated.

d. The Mayor's Office should officially acknowledge Ax Handle Saturday

i. Issue Proclamation

ii. Acknowledge the pain and its lingering legacy.

e. Create an Office of Diversity and Inclusion for the City of Jacksonville.

i. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion should study the examples of other cities which have developed initiatives for addressing issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. There are important ways that these cities have been working to remediate structural inequities that adversely affect marginalized communities.

1. Create a formal office with staff.

2. Fully fund the office that includes the following personnel:

a. Create Spanish and Haitian Creole Coordinator.

i. Provide language access/interpretations in Spanish and Haitian-Creole.

b. Create outreach coordinators to the LGBTQ+ community.

f. The City of Jacksonville needs to increase support for the disabled community.

i. WHY: The TLC program lacks a driver to transport Durable Medical Equipment (DME) to people outside the I-295 beltway, and to pick up community donations. Furthermore, the lack of transportation exacerbates the problem of removing consumers from the waiting list, causing a build-up in equipment entering the community. CIL Jacksonville must find additional funding to repair, clean, and obtain equipment to fulfill program requests.

ii. Make the hosting of the Spirit of the ADA at the Zoo both affordable and accessible:

1. To have 1,000 donated tickets from the Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens

2. To have the Deposit Waived

3. Facility Rental Waived

4. Secure operational costs for the event, which includes:

5. Two (2) sign language interpreters (at a rate of \$70.00 per hour)

6. To have COJ advertise the event to make it more inclusive, not only in the disability community, but to gain a broader audience

iii. Temporary Loan Closet (TLC)

1. Overview: The Temporary Loan Closet (TLC) provides durable medical equipment free to residents in Duval County. The TLC includes a selection of wheelchairs (manual and electric), walkers, canes, crutches, shower equipment, and other items available to be loaned temporarily. Both short and long-term loans are available. The TLC inventory is equipment received through donations from community members. CIL Jacksonville ensures that donated equipment is in good working condition. If equipment needs repair, CIL Jacksonville has partnerships with medical equipment providers to complete them at a reasonable cost. The Temporary Loan Closet saves people with disabilities around \$300,000 annually, with over 1,200 pieces of equipment

## 2. Emergency Preparedness Conference (EPC)

a. Six (6) Sessions throughout Duval County Immediately after funding is received.

i. Overview: CIL Jacksonville prepares the disability community for emergencies by hosting the annual Emergency Preparedness Conference. The EPC is an 8-hour conference held at the Schultz Center in the San Marco Area, with guest speakers, community partners, and emergency personnel to educate the disability community and their caregivers. The conference provides critical information and emergency action planning to mitigate future emergencies and minimize their effects. This education and action empower the disability community to prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies.



## RECOMMENDATIONS: NON-PROFITS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

### 1. Scope & Focus

- a. Identify existing relationships between COJ and the city's non-profit and higher education institutions.
- b. Meet with non-profit and academic leaders to identify the scope of a partnership between COJ and these institutions.
- c. Propose action items to strengthen relationships between COJ and these institutions.

### 2. Current Context & Process

- a. The subcommittee quickly determined that the group would need to take different approaches to assessing the COJ's relationship with Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) compared to Higher Education institutions (Higher Ed). There are over a thousand registered non-profit organizations but only a handful of institutions for higher education in Duval County.
- b. While government is sometimes thought of as making up for the failures of the free market, in recent decades it has turned to nonprofit entities to provide individualized services to meet the social needs of communities. These relationships are nuanced and often include specialized challenges. The City of Jacksonville is no different. This group seeks to determine how the COJ's investment of millions of dollars in local nonprofit organizations can attain the greatest impact to improve our quality of life and strengthen our community, while also providing a safety net for the most vulnerable individuals in Jacksonville.
- c. Early in our subcommittee's information-gathering process, several members of the subcommittee as well as leaders in the nonprofit community in Jacksonville, shared the findings of the previous transition subcommittee that endeavored to address this topic. The primary objectives identified at that time was to increase coordination and collaboration among nonprofit associations, and to establish a point person within the city for supporting the work of nonprofit associations. The recommendation at that time led to the development of the Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP).

### 3. Spirit of the ADA

- b. Planning for the month of October (2023)  
Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens
  - i. Overview: The Spirit of the ADA invites members from the disability community to a free day at the Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens to celebrate the signing of the "Disability Act of 1990." The Spirit of the ADA is a partnership between CIL Jacksonville and the City of Jacksonville's Disabled Services Division. The event provides ticket holders from the disability community with free lunch during three lunch sessions in the Shaba Terrace Venue. During lunch, the Jack Gillrup Award is given to a volunteer, business, or organization that demonstrates leadership in advocacy for the disability community.



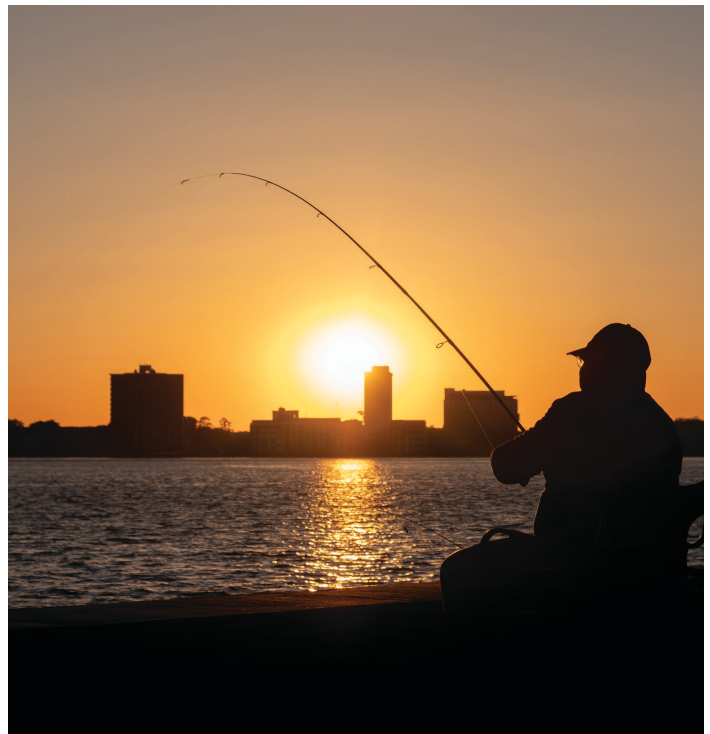
d. The past administration shared a number of resources that are housed in the recently developed Office of Strategic Partnerships:

- i. The Nonprofit Gateway Jacksonville Nonprofits - Strategic Partnerships (coj.net). This will be a very helpful resource to you and your team as you prepare to make your recommendations to the next administration.
- ii. The census link has access to the Strategic Partnership Ambassador tool kit, newsletters, etc., which connected 700 community leaders serving as neighborhood census champions. It was a very successful strategy and increased our self-response rate by 4.5% (Jacksonville Nonprofits - 2020 Census (coj.net)). That same approach can and should be applied to future community engagement opportunities.
- iii. The new dashboard that we just released at MyJax Community Connect (coj.net) has the details of all the community initiatives we have invested in over a three- year period, totaling over \$1.6 billion.

**3. The Nonprofit and Higher Education subcommittee members for the Deegan Administration's transition committee on Community and Constituent Outreach were asked to reach out to a wide variety of NPOs in different service areas, then report back to the committee co-chairs with a data set.**

**4. Subcommittee members were charged with asking NPO leaders the following questions:**

- a. Can you provide an explanation of any funds received from COJ and what they are used for specifically?
- b. What is your experience working with the Office of Strategic Partnerships?
- c. Have you used the Nonprofit Gateway?  
If so, in what way?
- d. What are the strengths in how the City works with NPOs?
- e. What are the weaknesses in how the City works with NPOs?
- f. What are specific opportunities to improve in how the City works with NPOs?



- i. One very surprising finding was that a majority of the nonprofit leaders interviewed in the subcommittee's information- gathering process expressed never having heard of the Office of Strategic Partnerships, nor were they aware of the various resources this department had been integral in developing.
- g. Subcommittee members were also asked to speak with the presidents of the local higher education institutions, using the same questions above, but rephrased for higher education, to understand how they view the relationship between their institution and Jacksonville and ways to strengthen these relationships.
- h. Impressively, it appears this may be one of the first times the city has formally examined its relationship with institutions of higher education.

## 5. Observations

- a. It was expressed that there has historically been concern about a lack of coordination among nonprofit organizations (NPOs) serving the city, and that this has resulted in a competitive (as opposed to collaborative) relationship among some NPOs, a duplication of efforts, and even competing against one another for local, state, national, or foundation funding.



- b. The OSP has been very influential in leading joint grant applications that brought together local NPOs - providing a “unified front” for national opportunities by determining the right approach to lead to a higher rate of success (i.e. by determining the lead nonprofit and support NPOs based on grant requirements). OSP has already helped introduce local NPOs to previously unknown grant opportunities, and has also acted as an ombudsman/liaison to help NPOs determine the status of already awarded, but not yet funded, grants through the COJ. All of the NPOs that were familiar with OSP suggested that OSP had been a tremendous advocate for the nonprofit sector in Jacksonville.
  - c. These early meetings with NPO leaders also found that efforts during a crisis - specifically the COVID-19 health crisis and named storms - was where the work of Jacksonville’s OSP and NPO had shined; there was collaboration and coordination across the city to meet the needs of our most vulnerable members as well as all residents across the county.
- ## 6. Challenges
- a. Nonprofit organizations (NPOs), especially newer and smaller nonprofits, feel unacknowledged and often disconnected from the city. This appeared especially true if they were not directly serving in the initiative areas that were of interest to whichever administration was in power at the time.
  - b. Many of the NPOs felt that too many grants were at the whim of political interests (e.g., a council member’s “pet project” or the latest initiative the newest leader was pushing).
  - c. Many NPOs also reported hesitation in applying for funding from the city because of long delays (later identified as hold-ups in the Office of the General Counsel due primarily to lack of available attention) in processing their contracts, requiring them to front the monies required to provide services already awarded until city funds came through, often months into an award.
  - d. There was also an emerging theme of a lack of coordination of efforts among NPOs in the city. In particular, several NPO leaders expressed that they weren’t sure of the work of other NPOs in the city, but they felt that often different city entities competed against each other for external funding and, at times, they were competing with NPOs that have similar missions.
  - e. Similarly, leaders of local higher education institutions felt the city did not appreciate the unique and complementary roles each institution plays in community engagement, the local economy, or workforce development, nor did it recognize the potential for collaboration.

- f. Leaders reported very little to no communication with city leaders about shared interests and mutually beneficial engagements. Academic leadership believes they could provide support for mayoral priorities with formal engagement (i.e. embedding higher education in policy).
- g. Generally, there was an expressed interest in learning more about how the city plans to collaborate with UF and how they will fit into the higher education landscape in Jacksonville, without being duplicative of what is already offered by local higher education institutions.
- h. Private universities feel strongly about their ability to provide agility in terms of product delivery; private universities would also like to offer a steady stream of great ideas that could use co-investment to be realized.
- i. Higher education is not only making an impact on workforce development, but has a tremendous impact on all quality-of-life considerations by improving the capabilities of the citizenry.

## 7. Metrics of Success

- a. Defining the success of the improved relationship between the COJ and nonprofit organizations from a qualitative standpoint would be difficult because of the sheer depth and breadth of organizations currently in the COJ. That being said, the subcommittee believes that one measure of success could be to state if 75% of significant (i.e. budget in excess of \$500,000) are familiar with the Office of Strategic Partnerships and have a high level of familiarity with the online portal/dashboard. Access is important, and these resources will improve the chance that qualifying NPOs can receive an opportunity to access funding.
- b. Communication was consistently mentioned as the most important issue between the COJ and local institutes of higher education. At the top of the communication list was the request to be included in the structure of high-level policy development and ongoing communication, so these institutions can deliver results that align with mayoral policy objectives.

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## INDEX & LINKS

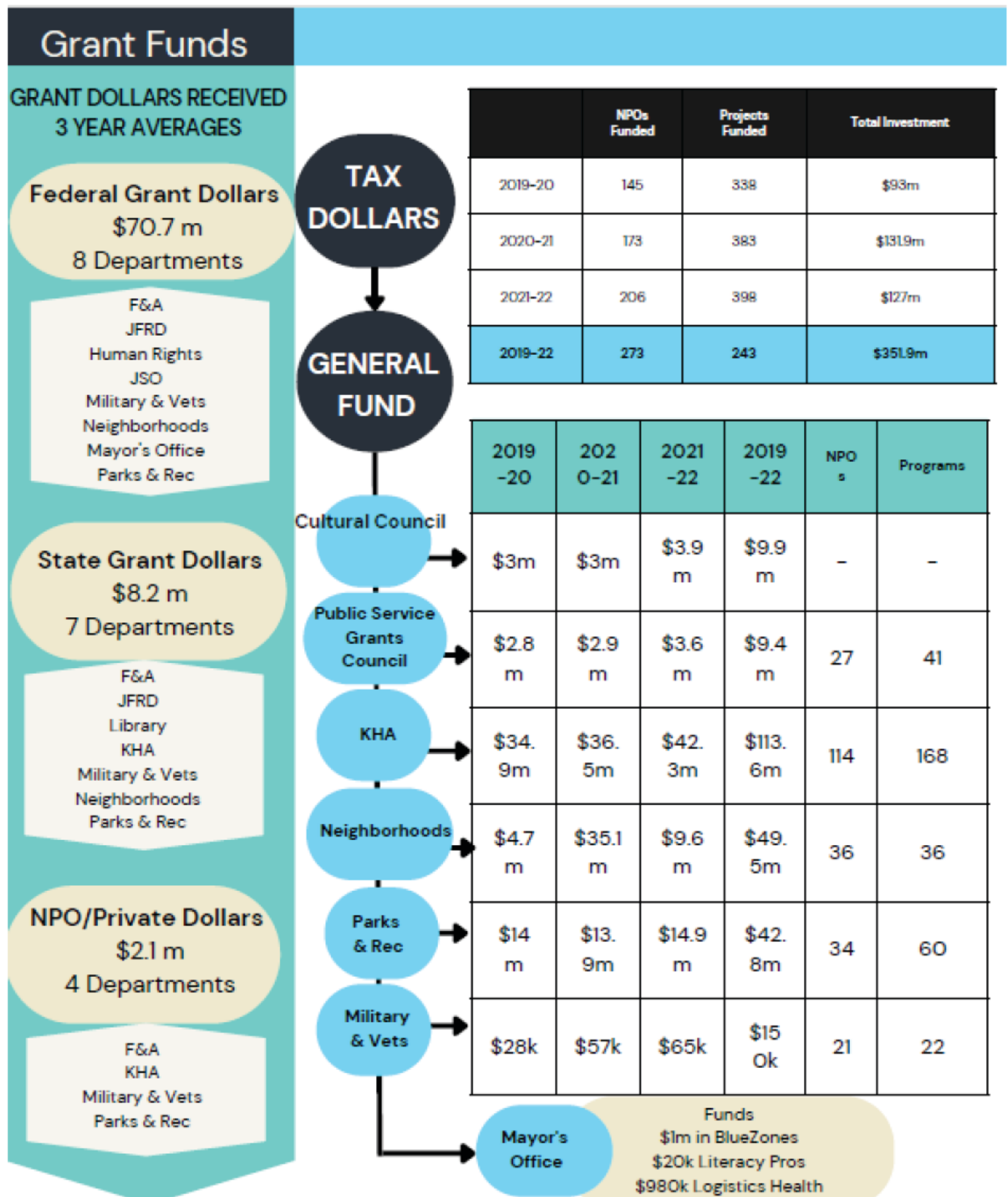
<sup>1</sup> Groundbreaking Report Released on Educating America's Youth for Civic & Political Participation, Harvard University.  
<https://iop.harvard.edu/news/groundbreaking-report-released-educating-americas-youth-civic-political-participation>

<sup>2</sup> City of Chicago | [chicago.gov](https://chicago.gov)  
Returning Residents Working Group  
Interagency Re-Entry Council  
[chicago.gov/city/en/sites/reentry/home/about.html](https://chicago.gov/city/en/sites/reentry/home/about.html).  
[ReentryReport.pdf](#)

District of Columbia | [dc.gov](https://dc.gov)  
Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs  
Mayors Office of Community Affairs  
<https://communityaffairs.dc.gov/morca>

City of Philadelphia | [phila.gov](https://phila.gov)  
Office of Reentry Partnerships  
Philadelphia Reentry Coalition  
<https://www.phila.gov/departments/office-of-reentry-partnerships/>





# Military & Veterans Affairs



**Rick Snyder** *Vice Admiral, US Navy, Retired*

Military & Veterans Affairs  
Transition Committee Chair

- ▲ Multi-faceted approach to the needs and concerns of our local military members and veterans

# Military & Veterans Affairs

Multi-faceted approach to the needs and concerns  
of our local military members and veterans.

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## CITY OF JACKSONVILLE MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS TRANSITION COMMITTEE

The City of Jacksonville (COJ) Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) Transition Committee was established on June 21, 2023, at the direction of Mayor Donna Deegan. Vice Admiral (retired) Rick Snyder was appointed as committee chairman.

The focus of the Military/Veterans group shall be multi-faceted. Provide data pertaining to what are some of the main issues and concerns facing our local military members and veterans in our city. Provide recommendations to the mayor on how their lives can be improved, what type of activities, services, etc., they are looking for in our city, and how our city can best serve our military members and veterans. Research and provide recommendations for a Veterans Community Center in Jacksonville.

### The charges provided to the committee were to:

1. **Meet with the COJ Military Affairs Department and veterans service organizations (VSOs) to understand the landscape of current services available in Jacksonville, usage by members of the veteran's community, and gaps in services, including a Veterans Community Center.**
2. **Meet with representatives at Naval Station Mayport and Naval Air Station Jacksonville to identify ways that the City of Jacksonville can further support the active-duty military presence that contributes so much to our community.**

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## MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Rick Snyder | Committee Chair

Bob Adelhelm

Wendy Layton

Travis Akers

John Longfield-Smith

Austin Belet

Rich Possert

Keshon Chambliss

Dee Quaranta

Tony D'Aleo

Millie Smith

Peter Harding

Joe Tavares

Demetris Harrison

Harrison Conyers served as the committee's COJ liaison.

Jacksonville has a large population of military service members, veterans and their families. Area military installations include Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Naval Station Mayport, Kings Bay Naval Base, Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Naval Aviation Depot Jacksonville and Marine Corps Blount Island, and Florida National Army and Air Guard. There are also several United States Coast Guard installations and units in the Jacksonville area that were considered by the committee. According to the Florida Defense Fact Book 2020, the total economic impact of the military in Duval County is more than \$12 billion.

There is significant support provided to the military and veterans community by the COJ Military and Veterans Department (MAVD), veteran service organizations (VSO) and the private sector. This support includes assistance with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) processes, social services, advocacy, transition support, medical and mental health needs, and legal support. While much is being done to support military members, veterans and





their families, the committee determined through meetings, public comment, research, and personal knowledge that there are **Six Key Needs** that present opportunities for improved support.

These Key Needs, in priority order, are:

1. **Better understanding of the military, military members, veterans and family members demographics, needs and contributions.** A better understanding will help focus additional support where it is most needed.
2. **Increased availability and accessibility to affordable healthcare, especially for veterans, military families and unhoused veterans and their families.** Mental health and dental care are most needed. Special attention should be paid to suicide prevention and substance abuse prevention and recovery.
3. **More affordable safe housing, and improved educational services in areas with affordable safe housing.** Junior military families and at-risk veterans are most in need.
4. **Improved collaboration and coordination amongst the many VSOs who support military service members, veterans and their families.** The valuable services they provide are sometimes stovepiped and duplicative. Currently, support is coordinated through an informal network.

5. **Provide a veterans center(s) to foster focused support and provide a safe space for veteran and military networking and mutual support.**
6. **Increase awareness of available military member, veteran and family support services.** Additional resources are needed for employment assistance, childcare and education.

THREE KEY FINDINGS:

1. **Increased availability and accessibility to affordable healthcare, especially for veterans, military families and unhoused veterans and their families.** Mental health and dental care are most in need. Special attention should be paid to suicide prevention and substance abuse prevention and recovery.
2. **Improved collaboration and coordination amongst the many VSOs who support military service members, veterans and their families.** The valuable services they provide are sometimes stovepiped and duplicative. Currently, support is coordinate through an informal network.
3. **Develop a better understanding of the military, military members, veterans and family members demographics, needs and contributions.** A better understanding will help focus additional support where it is most needed.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS:

Listed below are a number of committee-approved recommendations, in priority order and grouped by implementation time frame.

The committee strongly recommends that a quarterly progress report on the implementation of these recommendations be provided to the Mayor and published for public record.

### SHORT-TERM (0-6 MONTHS):

#### **The Mayor committed to quarterly attendance at military and veteran installations and/or related events.**

The Mayor's regular personal interaction with military members, veterans and their families shows a personal commitment to their well-being, and will provide a forum for feedback and recommendations. (Key Need #1)

#### **Establish a city-led standing military and veterans affairs advisory commission that reports to the Mayor to ensure veteran and military voices are heard and their needs are given appropriate attention.**

This standing commission would assist the Mayor and the COJ MAVD in identifying key issues, receive input from the public and monitor the progress of key military and veteran initiatives. (Key Need #1)

#### **Establish a city-supported forum and technology solution to enhance VSO communication and coordination.**

Currently, VSOs rely on an informal network to coordinate and complement each other's efforts. An established, regularly scheduled in-person forum for meeting, collaboration and coordination would provide a more formal means of connecting the organizations and their efforts. A technology enabled forum would allow for continuous connection, coordination and communication. It would also serve as a central repository of available services for military members, veterans and their families. (Key Need #4)

#### **Conduct a study and use existing data to map out the location of the military and veteran population.**

Data for veterans who connect with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is currently available. Data for active/reserve/guard/Coast Guard members is not consolidated to provide population-wide distribution for them and their families. An accurate understanding of their location is essential to targeting services where they are most in demand. (Key Need #3)



#### **Coordinate with local military leadership to better leverage the military community for their volunteer services.**

The military is a reservoir of available volunteer services. Tapping into this reservoir will provide volunteer services for the COJ and the people of Jacksonville. It will be a means to better connect the military population and the people of Jacksonville. (Key Need #1)

#### **The COJ currently has a number of intergovernmental support agreements.**

These agreements leverage mutual support capabilities of federal and city capabilities. They should be reviewed, assessed and updated, and additional opportunities assessed, to further increase intergovernmental coordination and support. (Key Need #1)

#### **Conduct a review of the terms of the city's Veterans Memorial Arena agreement and an independent audit of compliance with the agreement.**

This agreement was signed in 2019, and it provided funding for veterans' services, another monetary advantage to military members and veterans. There was a public comment sense that some of the terms of the agreement may not be enforced. The committee recommends a review of the agreement and an audit of its execution. (Key Need #1)

#### **Review the results of the environmental impact study for the basing of F-35 aircraft at Jacksonville International Airport.**



The replacement of the Florida Air National Guard F-15s at Jacksonville International Airport with F-35s will be a significant change. An environmental impact study was conducted several years ago, and the committee recommends the Mayor's administration review the study and ensure potentially affected citizens and businesses are aware of the changes expected with the replacement. (Key Need #1)

#### **Review the policy for inclusion on the Veterans Memorial Wall.**

There is an established policy for inclusion on the wall, and the committee recommends a formal review of the existing policy and its implementation. (Key Need #1)

#### **MID-TERM (0-12 MONTHS):**

##### **Increase funding and staffing for the COJ MAVD.**

Increased marketing funding for the COJ MAVD is needed to increase awareness and usage of the services that are currently available. The MAVD provides excellent services for the military and veteran community. It is a sense of the committee that awareness of these services should be improved through additional marketing funding. This would result in additional support for the military and veteran community. Significantly increased staffing will be needed to support the additional services demand. Furthermore, many of the committee's recommendations will likely be implemented and assessed by the COJ MAVD. (Key Need #6)

##### **Advocate for increased state funding and provide additional city funding for the Purple Star Campus Program certification at Duval County schools.**

This certification is awarded to schools that have military-friendly programs and services. (Key Need #3)

##### **Increase funding for Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs at Duval County schools.**

The purpose of the JROTC program is to instill in students at secondary educational institutions the values of citizenship, service to the United States, personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment. The JROTC program promotes community involvement by developing patriotism, citizenship, self-reliance, and responsiveness to authority. (Key Need #3)

##### **Explore city-subsidized housing or rental partnerships for military and veteran high-need populations, to the extent permitted by law.**

The lack of affordable housing in safe areas, with good schools, was a recurrent concern raised by the public and committee members. (Key Need #3)

##### **Advocate for a VA hospital in the Jacksonville.**

Access to affordable health care, including mental healthcare and dental care, is a key need, especially for military family members and veterans. There were efforts on the past to bring a VA hospital to Jacksonville. Those efforts should be restarted to improve care for veterans. Reducing the volume of veteran care at local military healthcare facilities would increase capacity to serve military families at military facilities. (Key Need #2)

##### **Leverage existing Department of Defense funding programs.**

There are many available, such as the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program, Defense Infrastructure Grant Program, and Defense Reinvestment Grant Program to improve local infrastructure. (Key Need #1)

#### **LONG-TERM (0-48 MONTHS):**

##### **Improve critical road infrastructure to provide assured access for Naval Station Mayport and Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville facilities near Mayport.**

Assured access to both these locations is critical to their ability to conduct their missions for defense, security and disaster response. Currently, assured access is held at risk due to road flooding and limited road capacity. (Key Need #1)

##### **Improve electrical power resiliency for military installations in Duval County.**

Currently, both Naval Air Station Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport have a single point of failure for city-provided electrical power. This creates risk and reduces the resiliency of of the bases and the services they provide. (Key Need #1)

##### **Advocate for increased military presence in Jacksonville.**

Jacksonville is a strategically important location for the Department of Defense. It is one of two locations on the east coast with a significant Navy ship presence and capability. It is home to all Navy east coast patrol aircraft, the site of military sealift capability, and home to Florida Air National Guard fighter aircraft. Recent cuts to the Littoral Combat Ship fleet will significantly diminish Navy ship presence in Jacksonville unless new class combatants are home-ported here. F-35s will be replacing F-15s at JIA and the city must be ready for this change. It is in the Nation's strategic interest and Jacksonville's economic interest to advocate for increased DoD investment in Jacksonville. (Key Need #1)



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## VETERANS COMMUNITY CENTER (KN #5):

The committee was expressly told to focus on the need for a veterans center. While several support centers and support services are available to veterans in Jacksonville, there is not a dedicated location that provides the necessary range of services to support veteran needs. The committee believes that one or more veteran community centers are needed in Jacksonville.

The mission of the veterans center(s) is to provide veterans of Jacksonville from all eras a safe space for gathering to receive needed services, social opportunities, enhance connectedness and serve as a source of pride for veterans, their families and the people of Jacksonville. The vision is for a number of centers across the Jacksonville area that shine as a centerpiece of the support the city and her citizens provide for veterans.

As part of a 2022 Northeast Florida Veteran and Family Needs Assessment Project, a survey was conducted to identify the services desired at a veteran center.

### The key services identified were:

- VSO Services Onsite
- Fitness Activities
- Counseling Services
- Primary Care
- Continuing Education/Educational Events
- Cafe/Food Vender

The committee considered these findings, in addition to committee member input, and public comment in making the recommendations below.

### There are several key issues to consider for a veterans center:

**Location:** The center's location is key to its success. Consideration should be given to factors such as the geographic location based on the population of veterans, desirability of the location, public transportation availability, and parking.

**Services:** The services provided at the center should include:

- Meeting spaces to accommodate local veteran organization meetings, veteran related events, and support groups
- Office space on a rotating basis for VSOs and Veteran Service Officers
- Social spaces including the availability of food and beverages
- Recreational services
- Mental and physical health counseling
- Educational facilities

**Cost:** Expenses will include obtaining a suitable facility, hiring staff, facility maintenance and repair, program costs and utilities.

**Return on Investment:** Hand-in-hand with cost is measuring the return on the investment. Usage rate will be the key measure of effectiveness. Providing the right services, in the right location will have a direct positive impact on the return on investment.

**Name:** The committee spent time discussing the name to use for the facility. Names that were considered included community center, wellness center, and service center. The committee recommends not using the name service center as that is frequently associated with office-like spaces that serve in a businesslike manner.

### Committee recommends a series of actions over time:

#### SHORT-TERM (0-12 MONTHS)

- Conduct a census of military and veterans to help inform the location of the first community center
- Hold public forum for additional community input
- Conduct a detailed cost analysis based on several possible courses of action, to include building a new facility, repurposing an existing city-owned facility, and repurposing a commercial owned facility
- Explore public/private and sponsorship funding possibilities



- Determine site options based on the result of the military and veterans census
- Determine initial hours of operation
- Based on services provided and hours of operation, determine the staffing requirement
- Assess identification and security requirements

#### **MID-TERM (12-24 MONTHS)**

- Contract for the desired facility
- Hire staff
- Conduct a marketing campaign
- Grand opening of the first center

#### **LONG-TERM (24-48 MONTHS)**

- Performance an in-depth evaluation of the usage and effectiveness of the first center, to include services provided, staffing and hours of operation.
- Develop options for additional centers as appropriate based on the success of the first center.

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### **EVALUATIONS AND MEASUREMENTS FOR SUCCESS**

Many of the recommendations provided will result in successes that are not easily measured or evaluated. Many of the results are things that do not happen. Providing objective measurements of prevention efforts (suicide, homelessness, job loss, major illness, etc.) is difficult. Objective measurements are possible by measuring the usage of services provided, results of satisfaction surveys, the volume of response services needed, the number of service members who stay in the city post-military service, and the timeliness of city support services.

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### **RESOURCING AND COORDINATION**

There are many federal and state programs available to help fund initiatives that positively affect military members, veterans and their families. As previously stated, these include the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program, Defense Infrastructure Grant Program, and Defense Reinvestment Grant Program. There is also a Navy program to help fund encroachment prevention.

Public/private ventures are an option to help fund improvement of military and veteran support activities.

These activities will require dedicated efforts to coordinate and execute the fundraising activities.



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## IMPACT

These recommendations will result in better coordination of the excellent veteran service organization services already being provided. A veterans center will provide a single site for veteran services and socialization. They will result in improved infrastructure resilience for all the citizens of Jacksonville. They will enhance the positive economic and social impact of the military members, veterans and their families, while giving them an improved quality of life and service.

These recommendations will strongly support the Mayor's goals. They will improve the city's infrastructure and schools. They will result in a healthier population and safer neighborhoods. They will increase the positive economic impact of military, veterans and their families by making Jacksonville a more attractive duty station and place to live after separation or retirement.

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## CONCLUSION

The members of this committee are grateful for the opportunity provided to assist Mayor Deegan and her team in support of the military members, veterans and their families in the Jacksonville area. Jacksonville is a military town. It provides excellent services, great appreciation and an outstanding quality of life for those serving and those who have served. The recommendations provided in this report will serve to increase that support and quality of life, making Jacksonville the duty station and post-service city of choice.



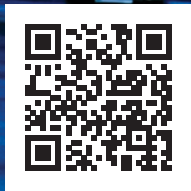
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