



Fernandina Beach

“Vision – 2020”

Updated 20-Year Plan
Revised December 2005



Preface



What you are holding in your hands is a collection of the dreams and desires of Fernandina Beach residents for their community. This document is an updated version of the *Vision 2000* Plan, which was started in 1998 by a steering committee of city residents approved by the City Commission, with input from several public forums, to provide a vision for our city. This document is not intended to be a “how to” guide for Fernandina Beach’s future, rather it is intended to provide a set of guiding principles and goals for our community from now to year 2020 (hence “Vision 2020”). The vision is not set in stone and will require revision and revitalization over time. The plan is intended to serve as a reference for everyone in the community, including businesses, residents, government and civic organizations – as well as those looking to become new members of the community. Critical to the success of the plan and its underlying vision is the participation of the community. Volunteerism, civic pride and communication – three components of the vision – are keys to this success. So read on, and don’t be afraid to dream a little along the way... Welcome to Fernandina Beach’s Vision!

Commissioner Bill Leeper



Vision 2000 Steering Committee



Herbert J. Babin (**Chair**) – County Commission Representative

Beano Roberts (**Vice Chair**) – Former City Commissioner

Charles Albert, Jr. - NCCP

Joan Altman – Sierra Club

Joe Anderson – Resident at Large

A.J. Beale – Large Business Representative

David J. Caples – Tourist Development Council

John Conner – City Commissioner

Donald J. Hughes – FCCJ

Reverend P. Allen Jump – Ministerial alliance

Sherry Klein – Economic Development Board

J.R. “Rich” Lang – Resident at Large

Danny Leeper – Port Authority

Foy R. Maloy – Publisher of News-Leader

Brian McCarthy – Chamber of Commerce

Greg Roland – Former City Commissioner

Sid Sax – Small Business Representative

Marilyn Showalter – Resident at Large

Gail A. Shults – Volunteer Center

W. Curtis Solomon – Hospital

Bonnie W. Sovereign – Amelia Island Museum

Sherry Stein-Corbin – Nassau County School Board

Suanne Thamm – Resident at Large

Patricia Thompson – NAACP



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Statement of Vision



“Foster a thriving small-town atmosphere in which civic pride, personal well-being and a balanced economy are nurtured and protected.”



Vision 2000 Goals: Downtown/Historic Resources

1. Ensure marina completion
2. Develop a River Front Walkway
3. Encourage downtown summertime entertainment
4. Preserve, maintain, and expand historic district
5. Keep Courthouse a focal point of downtown
6. Identify and promote the historic significance of Old Town
7. Increase downtown parking
8. Explore possibilities of using the Lighthouse for Tourism



Vision 2000 Goals: Tourism and the Beaches



1. Renourish and maintain the beach dunes
2. Improve, complete and add beach accesses at dune over walks
3. Clean up natural and man made wastes
4. Enhance and develop Seaside and North Beach parks
5. Provide stationary and attractive garbage cans at all beach accesses
6. Control the use and number of signs on the beach and on North & South Fletcher Avenue
7. Enforce the safety ordinances on the beach with respect to motor vehicles



Vision 2000 Goals: Tourism and the Beaches Cont'd



8. Endorse the execution of the plan of the Main Beach Planning Committee with emphasis on a promenade, ADA access, a band shell with dished green, landscaping and an improved boardwalk
9. Explore possibility of creating revenue from parking fees to maintain Main Beach and the new facilities
10. Refurbish the Marina without delay and remove restrictions to flow of river
11. Establish a water-front park, boardwalk, and band shell to be used for gatherings, art concessions and musical entertainment



Vision 2000 Goals: Tourism and the Beaches Cont'd



12. Ensure that there will be adequate parking for the water front and the downtown
13. Expand, maintain and improve the aesthetics of Centre Street from 8th Street to the water front
14. Beautify the entrance to the city from the Shave Bridge to Centre Street
15. Actively pursue the development of a maritime museum/visitors center



Vision 2000 Goals: Government & Finance



1. Take positive steps to solve internal problems
2. Continue to build, through the Joint Planning Agency or other constructive means, a productive and constructive relationship with Nassau County
3. Develop, implement and monitor a five-year plan which sets priorities and determine levels of service which will meet the city's needs in the 21st century
4. Work with Nassau County so that the citizens of Amelia Island may be united through rational and common-sense land use policies
5. Sponsor a growth summit to identify and solve critical issues related to growth



Vision 2000 Goals: Government & Finance Cont'd

6. Fairly, consistently and scrupulously enforce the law and city codes to guard against commercial sprawl into residential areas and unauthorized commercial expansion
7. Examine existing zoning regulations and consider instituting changes which will bring more mixed use into the Centre Street retail area and revisit coastal area zoning
8. Control, limit or reduce city property tax rates to provide affordable living
9. Broaden the tax base and encourage businesses to rehab old properties



Vision 2000 Goals: Government & Finance Cont'd



10. Aggressively pursue grants from all sources so that programs such as city acquisition of green space may continue to grow
11. Re-examine the budget process with an eye toward adopting zero-based or performance based budgeting to ensure greater accountability



Vision 2000 Goals: Citizenship



1. Keep citizens involved in government and promote interest in serving both elected and volunteer positions
2. Develop a program designed to increase participation in voting
3. Increase involvement of high school students in all aspects of the community
4. Make use of public referendums where feasible
5. Create and distribute voter pamphlets with all referendums and candidates included



Vision 2000 Goals: Communication



1. Provide a city newsletter to keep citizens informed of city events, goals, etc.
2. Provide a city maintained website that provides for downloading of forms, filing information, department information, pertinent dates, etc.
3. Explore new uses of public programming and provide a public access schedule
4. Provide electronic government access for people of all economic levels
5. Provide town-wide bulletin boards
6. Conduct town meetings where citizens have face to face access to government officials and city staff



Vision 2000 Goals: Public Health, Safety, and Security



1. Improve treatment conditions for persons with mental illness and/or substance abuse problems
2. Develop a cohesive evacuation plan, with the county, to efficiently facilitate the timely exodus of residents in case of emergency
3. Encourage the city commission to build and support facilities that will house well-trained and equipped public safety personnel
4. Investigate the need for local transportation throughout the city
5. Reduce/eliminate crime and drug problem



Vision 2000 Goals: Environmental Resources



1. Protection and preservation of the city's island beauty
2. Reduction of and in some cases, the elimination of litter and pollutants
3. Use local, state, federal and private sector help and funding for the city to acquire available green space
4. Build infrastructure to conserve and enhance our local environmental resources, and educate, encourage and promote local use and ecotourism



Vision 2000 Goals: Neighborhoods and Housing



1. Hire and use professional grant writers for affordable housing, beautifying neighborhoods and recreational/community programs
2. Provide drug prevention programs and education to establish crime free areas
3. Promote volunteerism by rewarding community groups, homeowner associations for tree planting, community beautification and recreational programs
4. Have government (Planning Dept.) evaluate and plan lighting, bicycle paths, road paving and green areas as well as growth limitations, and provide strict code enforcement



Vision 2000 Goals: Community Harmony and Unity



1. Expand the scope, ensure multicultural participation, and publicize the proceedings of the community relations board
2. Promote better racial harmony/involvement by creating multicultural groups (action groups) or have facilitated town meetings of public forums to address “hot” issues
3. Proactively integrate minorities in to the decision-making processes by programs to increase voter turnout, appointments to public committees, and communication with organized minority groups



Vision 2000 Goals: Community Harmony and Unity Cont'd



4. Ensure that no one community/neighborhood receives preferential treatment
5. Encourage participation by all citizens
6. Create neighborhood watch programs, drug prevention/recovery programs, and other programs that require neighbor attention
7. Unify by creating events that celebrate our differences and educate others about different cultures. Begin the process with children and youths



Vision 2000 Goals: Community Harmony and Unity Cont'd



8. Seek neighborhood cleanup block grants
9. Create a city department to coordinate the efforts of volunteer, service, civic, education and religious organizations as well as government agencies and private industry
10. Establish a stabilizing unit/detox center at our local hospital for the mentally ill & drug dependent
11. Establish a PACT (Program for Adult Community Treatment) program to provide housing and total welfare of the mentally ill community



Vision 2000 Goals: Education



1. Seek to enhance learning opportunities for citizens of all ages
2. Cooperate with and support the Nassau County School Board in its endeavors to bring quality educational programs and facilities to our citizens
3. Coordinate and help Nassau County School Board plan for the development and funding of educationally related capital improvements
4. Provide educational equipment, support school organizations and encourage local businesses to support our youth



Vision 2000 Goals: Economic Development



1. Promote a climate, which will advance the economic well-being of the city
2. Create and enhance a healthy and attractive environment
3. Maximize the value and beauty of our waterfront for our citizens and industry
4. Place a high priority on the retention and expansion of existing businesses while attracting desirable new industry
5. Maintain and improve the economic environment for tourism, retail, and professional business downtown



Vision 2000 Goals: Recreation/Arts/Culture



1. Develop a marine park at or near pogy plant area
2. Improve middle school auditorium for community functions
3. Improve and add recreation facilities and programs
4. Improve and expand library facility and services
5. Provide a full range of arts and culture education and experience for residents and visitors of all ages
6. Improve and increase sidewalks, trails and bike paths



Vision 2000 Goals: Transportation/Traffic/Public Infrastructure



1. Improve traffic flow at key points
2. Improve appearances
3. Investigate expansion of airport services
4. Plan for future needs of sewerage and water
5. Improve waste management collection & disposal
6. Improve and expand public transportation
7. Increase the number of jogging & bicycle paths
8. Improve parks and boardwalks
9. Continue ferry to St. Mary's and Cumberland



Vision 2020 Core Values



- **Managing Our Future** by promoting a balanced local economy, preserving the history of our town & ensuring slow, well-planned growth
- **Personal well-being** through quality education in schools, strong public safety programs, and new and improved social & recreational opportunities
- **Community Responsibility** through volunteerism, strong civic pride and a commitment to communication



Attaining Quality Education



- Chapter Vision Statement:

Provide abundant opportunities for college and career preparation, technology training and lifelong learning to realize excellence in education through active parental and school staff involvement and a commitment to achieve a Florida “Distinguished School – Grade A” designation for all schools



Attaining Quality Education Cont'd



- Chapter Goals:
 - A. Identify and support existing efforts of agencies that provide educational programs for youth & adults
 - B. Student leaving the school system with a competitive edge to succeed
 - C. Strong parental involvement in all aspects of their child's education
 - D. Learning opportunities for all ages, from infants to seniors
 - E. Residents demonstrating pride in our schools



Attaining Quality Education Cont'd



- F. Students proud to go to school and respectful of other students and teachers
- G. Resources for extracurricular activities
- H. Quality, state-of-the-art library & school facilities
- I. Up to date, well-equipped vocational programs
- J. Graduation rates above state & national averages
- K. High student acceptance rates into 4-year colleges
- L. Attract and retain highly-qualified educators



Fostering Civic Pride and a Spirit of Volunteerism



- Chapter Vision Statement:

People taking the responsibility to make a difference; residents keeping homes and businesses neat and attractive; city workers and citizen volunteers keeping streets, sidewalks, paths and parks well maintained and neighborhoods free of blight; and people giving their time and talents for the good of the community.



Fostering Civic Pride and a Spirit of Volunteerism Cont'd



- Chapter Goals:
 - A. Thriving downtown with attractive, inviting storefronts reflecting and preserving our historic architecture
 - B. Residential Neighborhoods with attractive yards and well-maintained homes exhibiting pride of ownership
 - C. People working together to help others and keep our community attractive and prosperous
 - D. Well-maintained streets, parkways and trees



Fostering Civic Pride and a Spirit of Volunteerism Cont'd



- Chapter Goals (continued)
 - E. Manicured, green parks and flowering, landscaped entryways into the city
 - F. People enjoying a variety of social activities, such as dinner, dances, festivals, etc.
 - G. Strong participation in local service clubs/civic organizations
 - H. Persons realizing self-satisfaction by freely giving their time to benefit others
 - I. Volunteer recognition programs



Fostering Civic Pride and a Spirit of Volunteerism Cont'd



- Chapter Goals (continued)
 - J. All age groups working together, with volunteer opportunities for all
 - K. Organized efforts to aid senior citizens with household chores, transportation, etc.
 - L. Churches, civic groups, etc. working together
 - M. Youth employment service/organization to coordinate volunteers



Connecting Our Community Through Communication



- Chapter Vision Statement:

Establish easy access to information and a free and open exchange of ideas between all Fernandina Beach residents on community issues, upcoming events, volunteer activities, and opportunities for recreation, socialization and employment



Connecting Our Community Through Communication Cont'd



- Chapter Goals:
 - A. Persons understanding how they play a critical role in the communication process
 - B. Greater understanding of other ideas and culture
 - C. Greater understanding of our community's shared goals and vision
 - D. Readily available information on the community's wants and needs



Connecting Our Community Through Communication Cont'd



- Chapter Goals (continued)
 - E. Clearly identifiable, numerous, well-used, easily-accessed sources of information
 - F. Consensus and understanding between residents and police
 - G. Balanced and informative media coverage
 - H. Frequent, well-publicized city hall meetings and local events



Connecting Our Community Through Communication Cont'd



- Chapter Goals (continued)
 - I. Information on how to participate in community events and volunteer activities
 - J. Meetings and results well-publicized in the community
 - K. Frequent “word of mouth” communication
 - L. Residents communicating needs to local government



Strengthening Public Safety



- Chapter Vision Statement:
Provide well-equipped and appropriately staffed public safety agencies able to respond to service calls in a timely and caring manner and capable of taking proactive steps to reduce crime and eliminate hazards to life, property and the environment



Strengthening Public Safety Cont'd



- Chapter Goals:
 - A. Modern equipment and facilities
 - B. Well-trained police officers and firefighters
 - C. Strong interaction between residents and police and fire personnel
 - D. Proactive law enforcement programs
 - E. Proactive fire prevention programs
 - F. Effective judicial system capable of reducing repeat offenders



Strengthening Public Safety Cont'd



- Chapter Goals (continued)
 - G. Active Citizens Patrol and Neighborhood Watch groups
 - H. Safe streets for drivers/pedestrians/bicyclists
 - I. Safe community with crime rates and fire losses below state and national averages
 - J. Effective methods to combat graffiti, vandalism and gangs
 - K. Strong partnership with surrounding public safety agencies



Maximizing Recreation and Social Opportunities



- Chapter Vision Statement:
Establish quality parks and abundant recreation and social activities for all age groups in order to evoke rich social interaction within the community and nurture good health and strong civic pride



Maximizing Recreation and Social Opportunities Cont'd



- Chapter Goals:
 - A. Master Recreation Plan
 - B. Active Senior Center with opportunities for hobbies, field trips, continuing education, physical fitness classes and small business ventures
 - C. Well-organized sports programs for youths and adults
 - D. Entertaining and popular festivals, concerts and parades



Maximizing Recreation and Social Opportunities Cont'd



- Chapter Goals (continued)
 - E. “Welcome Wagon” to greet new residents and businesses
 - F. Thriving service clubs/civic organizations
 - G. Social activities that feed a spirit of community volunteerism
 - H. Bike path surrounding the city/Island
 - I. Multi-purpose community center
 - J. A well-maintained community pool offering programs to a variety of ages



Maximizing Recreation and Social Opportunities Cont'd



- K. Facilities comfortable for positive social interaction among older teens
- L. A prosperous town theatre and active community center offering programs that support a wide range of activities, from ceramics classes to kick-boxing to dance to fine arts
- M. Support groups meeting critical emotional needs
- N. Sufficient playing fields and clean, safe, well-maintained parks and facilities
- O. Completion of additional community parks



Promoting Balanced Economic Growth



- Chapter Vision Statement:

Promote a thriving, balanced economy emphasizing:

Tourism promoting and celebrating the historic characteristics, culture, lifestyle and features of Fernandina Beach

Locally-Owned Business and Industries set in a traditional, small-town business environment



Promoting Balanced Economic Growth Cont'd



- Chapter Goals:
 - A. Balanced mix of quality restaurants, retail stores and professional offices centered in our downtown
 - B. Quality lodging to accommodate visitors, tourists, film crews
 - C. Increased job opportunities and higher incomes
 - D. Residents/visitors/tourists spending their dollars in local stores
 - E. Residents shopping locally



Promoting Balanced Economic Growth Cont'd



- Chapter Goals (continued)
 - F. Infrastructure – roads, rails, utilities – capable of supporting a strong, balanced economy
 - G. Economy in which residents, tourists, paper mills and businesses can co-exist and understand the other's needs
 - H. Businesses displaying superior planning/customer service skills



Managing Growth in Our Community



- Chapter Vision Statement:

Preserve our small-town atmosphere and quality of life through slow, well-planned growth in order to protect open space, allow tourism to thrive and strengthen our local economy, neighborhoods, schools, parks, libraries and public services



Managing Growth in Our Community Cont'd



- Chapter Goals:
 - A. Broad mixture of home values, from affordable units to executive housing
 - B. Retention of our small-town atmosphere
 - C. Slow, well-planned growth
 - D. Land use balanced between housing, commercial, local industry, recreation
 - E. Balanced job-housing ratio
 - F. Downtown businesses serving local residents as well as visitors



Managing Growth in Our Community Cont'd



- Chapter Goals (continued)
 - G. Adequate public services and facilities to accommodate growth (police and fire, libraries, schools, parks, community center)
 - H. Adequate water and sewer systems, streets, lighting, storm drains



City Mission Statement

We are dedicated to exceptional service to the community to enhance the quality of life and provide for the well being of our citizens and the environment while preserving our history. We will achieve this through quality employees, teamwork, community involvement and civic duty, fiscal stability, caring, integrity and fairness, responsible planning, and commitment to excellence.