

**MEMORANDUM**

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**DATE:** October 8, 2021**TO:** Taco Pope, AICP, County Manager  
Michael Mullin, Esq., County Attorney**FROM:** Thad Crowe, AICP- Planning Director**SUBJECT:** Planning and Code Enforcement FY20-21 Accomplishments and Goals

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Nassau County Planning Department continues to address land use and development challenges and opportunities throughout the County. Responding to continued growth, 2020-2021 proved to be productive as Planning staff achieved multiple goals, initiated new projects and continued providing planning and zoning services. The following report outlines major projects, updates on-going initiatives, summarizes development activity, describes department and staff achievements and details upcoming goals.

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## **SELECTED PROJECTS OF INTEREST, STUDIES AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

### **2021 Growth Trends Report**

- Annual statistical update including existing and historical conditions in Nassau County and comparative trends in the region. The report offers a status update to the twelve tools that were identified in the 2018 Growth Trends Report and updated in 2019 and 2020.

### **American Beach Planning Activities**

- Land Development Code Revisions: Residents and landowners of American Beach expressed concerns regarding home construction within the community and the need to ensure that new homes are compatible with the historic character of the neighborhood. The American Beach Task Force was formed, representing members of the Friends of American Beach and American Beach Property Owners Association, to discuss changes to help mitigate the residents' concerns. In April, the Land Development Code was revised to implement new standards related to lot size, setbacks, and lot coverage to protect the character of the American Beach community.
- American Beach Cultural Heritage Visitor Experience Enhancement Initiative: On February 17, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners directed the County Manager, with a unanimous vote, to commence the American Beach Cultural Heritage Visitor Experience Enhancement Initiative as a means to capture the essences of American Beach, protect the sense-of-place, honor the rich cultural heritage of the community, authentically tell the story of American Beach through the built and natural environment, enhance visitors' cultural experiences, and grow the tourism market by encouraging return visitors and ensuring one of Amelia Island's primary attractions remains a global destination for decades to come. Interviews with residents and stakeholders were held to gain insight and information regarding possible improvements to public spaces in American Beach. A design charette to incorporate the results of the stakeholder interviews was held in July and design options formed in the charette were presented to the community. The initiative, to include a master development plan and implementation strategies, will be completed in November.
- Planning staff secured a National Park Service grant in the amount of \$28,180 to perform a Historic Structures Report that details information for the repair and improvements of the historic Evans' Rendezvous, one of the most popular and enduring commercial establishments of the Civil Rights Era.

### **East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA) Sector Plan**

- Ongoing development and site plan review within Wildlight. Approval of PDP#2.

### **Conservation Land Acquisition and Management Program**

- On January 25th, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the Nassau County Conservation Land Acquisition and Management (CLAM) program. This program was created to preserve and conserve the county's natural, historic, and working lands resources by identifying, ranking, and assessing conservation lands for acquisition and management. The CLAM Committee was appointed in May and tasked with the review and ranking of nominated properties; recommendation of potential acquisitions; review of management plans; and review, monitoring, and enforcement of conservation easements. The County began accepting nominations of properties for potential acquisition in July. At the end of the nomination period, December 31, projects will be ranked for consideration of acquisition.

### **Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan**

- The PROSMP was adopted by the BoCC in January. Staff has been working with the consultant team to revise the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code to implement the strategies

identified in the PROSMP including the adoption of new level of service standards for recreational facilities.

### **PUD Annual Inspection Process**

- By October 1, Annual reports will have been created for approximately 50 adopted PUDs in the County.
- Reports include the following:
  - Location and Area (acres)
  - Names and contact information for developers or responsible associations
  - Maximum development program
  - Approved final development plans, site engineering plans and subdivision plats
  - Amount of development program completed
  - Completed and outstanding commitments of the development order.
- Interim reports were also created for all PUD-related items heard by the Planning & Zoning Board of the BOCC and included with the agenda items. This includes PUD modifications, Final Development Plans, and subdivision plats. 10 reports had been provided as of Sept. 1.
- Planning staff will consult with CEIs and other departments at pre-construction meetings to ensure commitment in PUD development orders are being met.
- Future goals include identifying built out status of PUDs to focus on the most active developments and stepping up on-site inspections by planning staff.

### **Timber to Tides SR200/A1A Corridor Design Plan**

- The County's consultant, Community Solutions Group, completed a draft version of the master plan in July, and the document is undergoing review by County staff. The Plan charts out the future of the 11-mile-long SR 200 corridor through five planning priorities that will shape future development and redevelopment: Nurture Nature, Grow Sustainably, Connect Communities, Catalyze Culture, and Future Proof. Highlights of the plan include directing higher density and intensity development into nodes around intersections, promoting a mix of infill housing types, providing for strong walking and bicycling routes, reserving land for future public facilities, and preserving natural areas.

### **Three Rivers DRI**

- Ongoing development and construction coordination with the Three Rivers development team. In August, the Board of County Commissioners approved a Notice of Proposed Change to the DRI Development Order and PUD rezoning to add a number of new uses (boat/RV storage, electric vehicle charging stations), to the overall development plan. Horizontal construction for Phase I development of the Community Park is currently underway.

### **William Burgess District**

- The William Burgess District Overlay represents a shift in land-use and policy planning in Nassau County. The District, encompassing over 5,000 acres south of SR200, east of I-95, west of US 17, and north of the Nassau River, is designed to create a community where people can live, work, play, and stay. A transect form-based code for the District was adopted in 2019. To date, over 552 acres, known as Liberty Cove, have been converted to District transects. Liberty Cove will be developed as a Unified Development Plan (UDP) to include a 30-acre school site and over 50 acres of community parks, including a 50-foot-wide linear park adjacent to a new north-south corridor. The UDP can accommodate nearly 1,800 residential units and over 850,000 square feet of non-residential space.

### **Westside Regional Park**

- The Planning Department participated in ongoing review of park design.

## **POLICY UPDATES**

### **Comprehensive Plan**

- Adopted updated Future Transportation Map Series and associated text amendments in November 2020 (CPA20-005).
- Transmitted proposed Property Rights Element (required by recently enacted HB59) in August 2021. Anticipated adoption in late September, early October 2021 (CPA21-005).
- Transmitted proposed amendments to implement the County's Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP) in September 2021. Anticipated adoption in late October, early November 2021(CPA21-002).

### **Land Development Code (LDC)**

- Adopted revisions to American Beach residential zoning districts (RS-2AB, RG-1AB), revising setbacks, reducing maximum lot coverage, adding maximum lot width requirements, and other changes intended to preserve the character of the American Beach community (Ord. 2021-05).
- Adopted revisions to building height restrictions, limiting building heights on Amelia Island and establishing a new method of measuring maximum building height. (Ord. 2021-08)
- Adopted new LDC Section 37.02, Unincorporated Amelia Island Tree Protection and Replacement, setting new minimum tree preservation and replacement standards, as well as creating the Nassau County-Amelia Island Tree Commission, creating the Amelia Island Tree Fund, and establishing for the Amelia Island Tree Planting Program. (Ord. 2021-12)
- Continue to work on update to Development Review Procedures and consolidation of Subdivision Regulations and Roadway and Drainage Standards into the Land Development Code with anticipation of adoption by the end of 2021.

### **Other Ordinances**

- Adopted the Tree Protection Ordinance on August 9, 2021.
- Adopted revisions to building height standards in unincorporated Amelia Island.

## **BOARD/COMMITTEE/ORDINANCE FACILITATION AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Code Enforcement Board: STAFFING**

- Meets the second Tuesday of every month
- 12 regular meetings
- Three meetings canceled due to no cases to be heard or lack of quorum
  - 16 cases reviewed
  - 1,025 complaints received
  - 1,049 initial inspections performed
  - 893 complaints resulted in code compliance
  - 1,481 lien searches requested from title agencies

### **Conservation Land Acquisition and Management (CLAM) Committee: STAFFING**

- Meets the third Thursday of every other month
- Three regular meetings

### **Conditional Use and Variance Board: STAFFING**

- Meets the fourth Thursday of every month
- 12 regular meetings
- Two meetings canceled
  - Processed 27 Conditional Use Applications
  - Processed Seven Variance Applications

## **Development Review Committee: STAFFING**

- Meets every Tuesday
- 51 Development Review Committee Meetings
- 105 Pre-Application Conferences
- Approved:
  - 5 Final Development Plans
  - 42 Site Engineering Plans
  - 29 Preliminary Plats

## **Essential Housing Advisory Committee: STAFFING**

- Meets the third Wednesday of every other month
- 7 Regular Meetings
- Activities completed by the Essential Housing Advisory Committee in 2021 with staff assistance include:
  - Recommendation that impact fees be waived for mother-in-law dwellings
  - Discussion and Ranking of Affordable Housing Strategies
  - Review of LHAP Update
  - Discussion Regarding Surplus Lands

## **Planning and Zoning Board: STAFFING**

- **Meets the first and third Tuesdays of every month**
- 22 regular meetings
- Two canceled meetings
- **Comprehensive Plan Text Amendments (CPA)**
  - Two applications to be transmitted October 2021
    - PROSMP related Amendments
    - Property Rights Element
- **Rezoning (R)**
  - Two applications (One recommended for approval & one recommended for denial)
- **Planned Unit Developments (modification)**
  - Two approved
- **Planned Unit Developments (new)**
  - Two approved
- **Notice of Proposed Change (to existing DRI)**
  - One approved
- **Site Plan Extensions**
  - Two approved site plan extensions
- **Final Development Plans (FDP)**
  - Three applications (Three recommended for approval)
- **Waiver of Road Frontage (WRF)**
  - One application (One recommended for approval)

- **Family Hardship Developments (FH)**
  - Six applications (approved)
- **Lot Splits**
  - 89 Single Lot Split Applications
- **Annual Reports for currently approved PUD's**
  - 48 reports completed
- **Future Land Use Amendments (FLUM)**
  - Four (Two recommended for approval & two recommended for denial)
- **Other Ordinances**
  - Two (PROSMP Chapter 29, Chapter 34), adoption dates TBA
- **Land Development Code Amendments (LDC)**
  - Three ordinances recommended for approval

### **Amelia Island Tree Ordinance Enforcement**

- Two new tree protection plan reviews for new subdivisions
- One re-review of a previously withdrawn tree protection plan for a mixed-use development
- Two site visits to determine if tree protection violations were incurred. There were no violations.

### **National Flood Insurance Program - Community Rating System (NFIP-CRS)**

#### **Participation**

- Coordinated the publicity of flood awareness messages to area residents during Flood Awareness Month in April.
- Logged communications with area residents regarding flood zones
- Assisted the Nassau County Building official in submitting Elevation Certificates which was completed at an above 90% correctness rate to meet the Class 9 rating.
- Prepared updates to Chapter 7, Building Regulations and Chapter 10½, Floodplain Management for the Nassau County Code of Ordinances.
- Participated in flood awareness outreach at Fernandina Beach Farmers' Market and Callahan Railroad Days.

#### **Grants**

- Secured a National Park Service grant in the amount of \$28,180 to perform a Historic Structures Report that details information for the repair and improvements of the historic Evans' Rendezvous, one of the most popular and enduring commercial establishments of the Civil Rights Era.
- Secured a grant from the Department of Historic Resources in the amount of \$50,000 to complete the second phase of a comprehensive countywide historic resource survey. The first phase was completed in July 2020. Phase II includes the preparations of a survey report and an update to the Florida Master Site File.

### **OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- Significant community outreach initiatives including community events, open house-style meetings, press releases, social media and roundtable events for American Beach. Public outreach events included (these numbers do not include number of meetings with additional interested parties such as property owners, nonprofits, state agencies, media, etc.):
  - Five community outreach meetings in American Beach.
  - One community outreach at Railroad Days at the Callahan Train Depot
- Issued multiple press releases related to planning initiatives, upcoming outreach events, awards, staff accomplishments
- Completed updates to and/or creation of multiple webpages related to Planning Department activity including:
  - Essential Housing
  - American Beach
  - Parks and Recreation System Master Plan
  - Timber to Tides Corridor Design Plan
  - Tree Protection
  - Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Committee
  - William Burgess Overlay
  - Conservation Planning
- Updated Planning Department applications and forms where applicable to improve clarity.



## **PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

### **Planning Staff**

- Naomi Braff
  - Received three commendation letters or feedback forms from area residents
  - Received promotion to Planner II and designation as Community Rating System Coordinator.
  - Added new responsibilities of coordinating historic preservation grant applications from the Dept. of Interior's National Park Service and the Department of State, Historic Preservation Division.
  - Attended numerous climate resilience, floodplain and historic preservation webinars.
- Holly Coyle
  - Presentation to Northeast Florida Builders Association Sales and Marketing Council
  - Speaker on Master Planning at Florida Planning and Zoning Association Annual Conference
  - Attended the virtual 2021 FPZA Conference
- Thad Crowe
  - Awarded annual recertification by American Institute of Certified Planners
  - Served as Secretary of the Regional Community Institute of Northeast Florida
  - Served as member of the Technical Coordinating Committee of the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization
  - Panelist on Jacksonville Business Journal panel discussion on Nassau growth
  - Presentation to Northeast Florida Builders Association Sales and Marketing Council
  - Speaker at Florida Planning & Zoning Association panel on Master Planning
- Doug McDowell
  - Attended the virtual 2021 FPZA conference on August 5, 2021
  - Will be attending the 2021 FAPA conference in Miami in September 2021.

### **Code Enforcement Staff**

- Robert Bostick
  - Attended F.A.C.E. 32<sup>nd</sup> annual conference June 21, 2021 – June 24, 2021 via Zoom

### **Other Activities and Events Attended by Planning and Code Enforcement Staff**

- Various Association Chapter Meetings – Florida Chapter of American Planning Association, Florida Planning and Zoning Association, North Florida Urban Land Institute, Women's Transportation Symposium, Northeast Association of Code Enforcement, EOC required Emergency Management workshops/webinars for Nassau County response improvement offered by FEMA Emergency Management Institute (remote).
- All Code Enforcement staff are members of F.A.C.E. (Florida Association of Code Enforcement).

- All Code Enforcement staff are also members of N.E.A.C.E. (Northeast Association of Code Enforcement) and attend the bi-monthly training for Continuing Education credits.

### **Administrative: Planning Department**

- Continued work on improving Planning Department processes, both internal and external, including file management systems and operational efficiencies. Continued work on Planning Department Standard Operating Procedures manual.
- Update Planning Department Organizational Booklet
- Identify and explore feasibility of software deployment to improve internal Planning and Code Enforcement processes, ensuring coordination with related County departments
- Continue to streamline internal processes and organize office for improved efficiency and operations
- Promoted Planner I, Naomi Braff, to Planner II
- Hired Joshua Macbeth, Planner II

### **Administrative: Code Enforcement**

- Code Enforcement staff continues to cross train, expanding the capabilities of each staff member.
- Continues to work with IT to implement Doc Star for scanning records
- Organized current and archived records in accordance with Florida Statutes 119 for prompt retrieval.
- Continued to work with banks and field service companies on foreclosures and lien searches. Maintain State mandatory and job required certification for Code Enforcement staff through education and training
- Continues to update Code Enforcement Policies & Procedure Manual
- Hired Shawn O'Reilly, Code Enforcement Officer
- Hired Deanne Williams, Code Enforcement Officer

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION ACTIVITIES**

- School Board
  - The Planning continues work on the School Board's Land and Growth Committee to identify future school sites, address transportation issues and address concurrency requirements.
- Health Department
  - Participate on Partnership for a Healthier Nassau to implement strategies resulting from Health Department's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) process
- Economic Development Board
  - Planning Director and staff coordinate with the NCEDB as needed relative to potential economic development projects, and will be involved in any future economic development plan activities as directed by the BOCC and NCEDB
- Emergency Management
  - Planning participates on Local Mitigation Strategy Task Force and Advisory Committee
- Animal Services Department
  - Continuing coordination with Animal Services regarding animal sheltering and boarding facilities and compliance with the Land Development Code
- Building Department
  - 400 building permit applications analyzed and reviewed for compliance with site plan and LDC requirements

- North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)
  - Continued coordination with TPO on county transportation planning
  - Current participation in the 14<sup>th</sup> St (Amelia Island) Bicycle-Pedestrian Safety Study, which kicked off in September 2020.
- Assist County Manager's office with organizational planning
- Continue to serve on the School Board Growth Committee
- Coordinate with City of Fernandina Beach on Joint Planning Activities as directed by Joint Boards; Habitat Conservation Plan, Safe Routes to School and Trail Planning, Roadways, Signage, Trees, etc.
- Participate in Partnership for a Healthier Nassau
- Continue coordination with Emergency Management Department

### **PROJECTS OF INTEREST, STUDIES AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- Continued Implementation of Developments
  - William Burgess District
  - Nassau Crossing
  - Nassau Station Phase 1
  - William Burgess Civic Center and River Village
  - Three Rivers
  - Wildlight Commerce Park
- Planning Projects
  - American Beach
  - Countywide Historic Resources Survey
  - Crawford Diamond Small Area Plan
  - Land Conservation Acquisition Planning
  - Parks and Recreation System Master Plan
  - PUD and Development Agreement Annual Monitoring and Reporting
  - Timber to Tides (SR200/A1A) Corridor Design Plan

### **Community Outreach and Engagement**

- American Beach Planning – neighborhood conservation district principles and zoning changes
- CRS and floodplain management
- Essential housing – focus incentives on Very Low- and Low-Income households (below 80% of County Median Income)
- Parks and Recreation System Master Plan
- Timber to Tides SR200/A1A Design Study

### **Policy**

- Continue to update and refine the 2030 Comprehensive Plan to align with best practices and legislative policy, especially as it relates to long-range planning initiatives
- Continue to update the Land Development Code of Nassau County to be consistent with current best practices, especially:
  - Development Review Procedures
  - Consolidation of Subdivision Regulations and Roadway and Drainage Standards into the Land Development Code
  - Planned Development Standards

### **Print and Social Media**

- Increase social media presence

- Continue to coordinate with the Public Information Officer to issue press releases
- Keep website current

## **Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Goals**

### **Major Development Review**

- Continued Review of Major Developments
  - William Burgess District
    - Nassau Crossing
    - Nassau Station
    - Liberty Cove
  - East Nassau Community Planning Area
    - DSAP # 1 – continued review of PDPs
    - DSAP # 2 – review of new sector plan amendment
  - Tributary DRI

### **Planning Projects**

- CLAM – review, ranking, and acquisition of CLAM properties
- American Beach Community Planning (commercial district future land use map change, zoning overlay adjustments)
- Land Development Code Update
- Countywide Historic Resources Survey – Phase 2
- Crawford Diamond Small Area Plan – initiate planning process
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan – work with Recreation Dept. to implement plan, including neighborhood and community/regional park development
- SR 200/Timber to Tides Trail Master Plan – adoption of implementing comprehensive plan amendments and land development regulations
- Tree Ordinance – administer the ordinance and staff the Amelia Island – Nassau County Tree Committee
- Vulnerability Assessment Update – update study, including positioning the County to apply for and receive state grant funds for resiliency projects
- Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Project Implementation – initiate planning process

### **Policy**

- Continue to update and refine the 2030 Comprehensive Plan to align with best practices and legislative policy, especially as relates to long-range planning initiatives – this includes identifying regulatory policies within all elements
- Continue to update the Land Development Code of Nassau County to be consistent with current best practices, especially:
  - Development Review Procedures, addition of PUD criteria, and consolidation of Subdivision Regulations into the Land Development Code
  - Align LDC standards to better implement Comprehensive Plan policies

### **Community Outreach and Engagement**

- CRS and Floodplain Management
- Essential Housing
- Healthy Communities/Age Friendly Communities
- Parks and Recreation System Master Plan
- CLAM – property nomination solicitation
- Revised Tree Ordinance
- Timber to Tides SR200/A1A Design Study
- Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Project

### **Print and Social Media**

Working with the County Public Information Officer, accomplish the following:

- Increase social media presence
- Continue press releases
- Continue updates to the Planning and Code Enforcement websites

### **Administrative and Staff Goals**

- Continue to streamline internal processes and organize office for improved efficiency and operations
- Continue Planner of the Day program for cross-training and customer service
- Develop back-up system for planners including quality control assistance

### **Intergovernmental and Interdepartmental Coordination Activities**

- Work with Engineering Services, Building Department, City of Fernandina Beach, and consultants on CRS program including recertification and ongoing outreach
- Coordinate with City of Fernandina Beach on Joint Planning Activities as directed by Joint Boards - Trail Planning, Roadways, Signage, Trees, etc.
- Work with consultants and Assistant County Manager, Engineering Services, Building Department, and Code Enforcement to Identify and procure/implement permitting and organizational software