

Sustainable Treasure Coast



Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast
FINAL REPORT



Sustainable Treasure Coast

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September 30, 2005

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RE: Final Report of the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast

On March 30, 2004, Governor Bush signed Executive Order No. 04-61 creating the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast. At the request of Senator Ken Pruitt, the Governor asked a panel of citizens from Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River Counties to study the challenges and opportunities facing their region and to recommend actions and tools that could be used to maintain a sustainable quality of life within the region. Pursuant to the Governor's directive, we have completed our work and enclose our Final Report.

The Treasure Coast region is blessed with vibrant communities, unique natural amenities, fertile lands and profitable agriculture, and an increasingly diverse population who possess a proud sense that we live in a special area worth sustaining and protecting. Growth in our residential and business sectors has been robust for many years and our local economy is strong. We see a need to help balance this growth with our desire for clean, healthy communities and preserving our rural and agricultural heritage. And while our region endured two costly hurricanes and a tropical storm in the last year that demonstrated just how fragile our homes, businesses, infrastructure and ecology are, it also evoked fierce determination among our citizens to restore our way of life and rebuild in the most responsible way; for ourselves and for our children. We believe the Treasure Coast has learned much from these crises. And we believe that we can build a sustainable region, with its own unique character, where future generations will prosper.

To move toward a sustainable future, the Committee divided itself into five major areas of investigation; natural systems, rural lands, built environment, social systems, and the economy. We reviewed studies, heard expert presentations, listened to citizens and spoke and debated among ourselves. We have produced a report complete with background findings and a set of recommended Principles and Action Steps. Now that we have completed this phase, we are committed to putting the recommendations to action and we ask for the ongoing support of federal and state government to provide the necessary leadership and financial assistance. Our top priorities are implementing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan projects that will keep our natural systems viable and securing assistance for our citrus industry so that it may survive the dual calamities of hurricanes and canker. In return for additional assistance, we offer the unyielding commitment of our local governments, regional agencies and private citizens to implement our Principles and Action Steps and to use every tool available to sustain our natural, built, social and economic systems.

We want to express our continuing thanks for the unwavering leadership that Senator Pruitt has given our region and this Committee. We are thankful to Governor Bush and the Legislature for their attention to the plight of the Treasure Coast following the storm events and for the financial assistance provided to the Committee. And we appreciate the ongoing support provided by the many public and non-profit agencies serving our region.

As we move forward, the test of our success will be decided by future generations along the Treasure Coast who will look back and determine whether we had the vision and fortitude to act in time.

Sincerely,



Melissa Meeker
Chair



Funded by

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Florida Department of Community Affairs
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Florida Department of Transportation
South Florida Water Management District
St. Johns Water Management District

Special Contributions to the CSTC Rural Lands Subcommittee

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners
Indian River Citrus League
Florida Farm Bureau Federation
Indian River County Florida Farm Bureau

Acknowledgements

Special thank you to the following individuals for helping to prepare this report:

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Angela M. Grooms
James F. Murley
Jean Ward Scott

Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium (FCRC)

Robert M. Jones
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Indian River Community College (IRCC)

Betty Mulvihill
Suzanne Parsons
Judith Riley
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Florida Department of Transportation

Lois Bush (District Four)
Angie Breugelmans and Karen Kiselewski (Carter and Burgess, Inc.)



COMMITTEE FOR A SUSTAINABLE TREASURE COAST

Created by
Executive Order No. 04-61

FINAL REPORT

This report was approved by the
Committee on September 24, 2005.



FOREWORD

As members of the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast, we believe it is urgent that the Principles and Action Steps contained in this report be embraced, adopted, and implemented throughout the region by the appropriate entities and individuals. Everyone will need to make choices to achieve a sustainable region. It is our hope that local governments and others will utilize the range of tools that best meets their needs and that they measure progress in accomplishing our strategic vision through their comprehensive and strategic plans. Periodic reports on progress should be generated for public review and comment in the region. Public officials are faced with complex challenges, and leadership from all sectors is necessary to make today's tough decisions for sustainability tomorrow.

(This Foreword represents a statement of intent by the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast members at the committee's final meeting on September 2, 2005.)



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I. BACKGROUND

The Treasure Coast is a vibrant and growing region on Florida’s Atlantic coast encompassing the counties of Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River. This special place, located between the Indian River Lagoon, Lake Okeechobee, the headwaters of the St. Johns River and the Loxahatchee River, provides citizens with a natural beauty and a quality of life that are virtually unmatched elsewhere in the state. For years, the residents of this region have been able to avoid the intense growth pressures that surrounding areas have faced. Now, however, the tranquil lifestyle that Treasure Coast citizens have worked so hard to preserve has made the region an attractive place to many new residents and businesses. Treasure Coast citizens and leaders now face a formidable challenge: How can we encourage sensible growth while preserving a healthy, sustainable Treasure Coast for our children and future generations?



Balancing growth with the desire to maintain the region’s natural beauty and tranquil lifestyle is paramount.

With this challenge in mind, Florida State Senator Ken Pruitt requested that Governor Jeb Bush issue an Executive Order creating the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast (CSTC). Thirty-seven dedicated leaders from public, private, and not-for-profit organizations came together to discuss the challenges and opportunities that face the region and the actions and tools that could be implemented to maintain a sustainable quality of life.

The Committee studied opportunities for collaboration and developed recommendations that will create short *and* long-term benefits. The Committee believes that the region needs a long-range vision that can be measured in

10, 25, 50 and 100-year increments. We recognize that both private and public actions are necessary for progress and that results must be monitored through *measurable, sustainable indicators* and well-publicized reports. Most important, we must act now, together, if we are to preserve a sustainable region for future generations.

A. CRISIS ON THE TREASURE COAST

The region is facing a crisis due to a broad array of factors that include population growth, development pressure and sprawl, agricultural challenges, economic needs, education and health concerns, hurricane vulnerability, and environmental issues. In addition, the existing tools and funding available to local, regional, and state governmental entities have proven insufficient to address the scale and complexity

The Treasure Coast is at a crisis point. Unless we come together as one region and take the steps to implement the recommendations outlined in this report, the quality of life we value will soon be a memory.

Melissa Meeker, CSTC Chair, and Florida Operations Manager, Tetra Tech EC

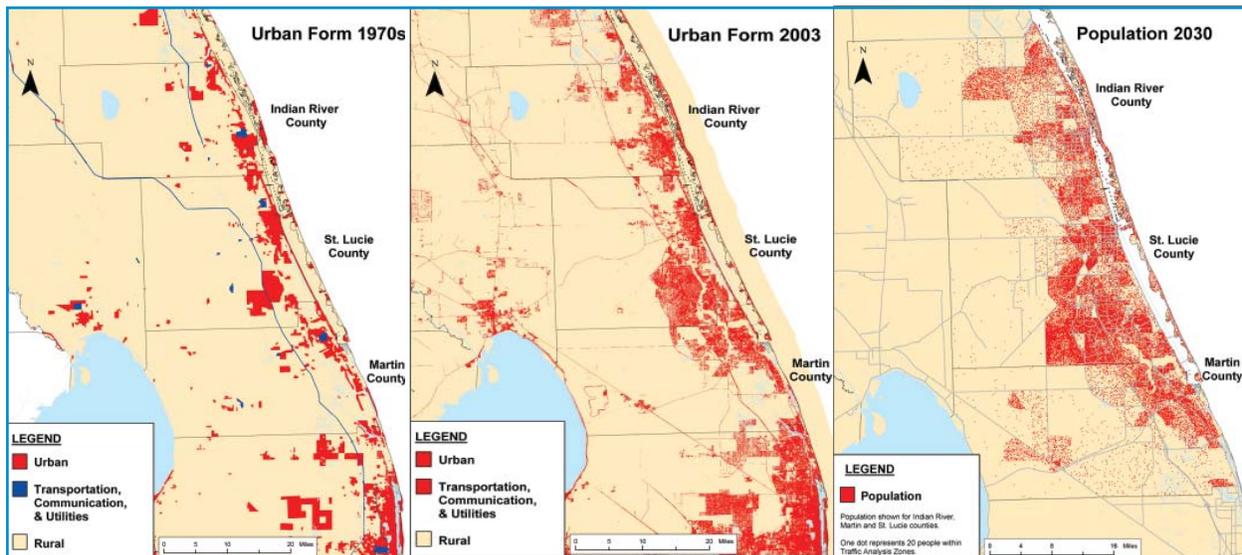
of the challenges facing the Treasure Coast. The quality of life on the Treasure Coast is unique among all regions of Florida, and it is worth preserving. Unless we confront the following challenges and crises facing the region, we will sadly see our quality of life deteriorate, perhaps in irreversible ways.

Natural Resources and Water

A series of issues related to flood management, growth and development pressures, and natural disasters has had an impact on our unique natural systems, specifically Lake Okeechobee, the St. Lucie and Loxahatchee River estuaries, and the Indian River Lagoon. Frequent fresh water and stormwater discharges throughout the entire region have significant impacts on the entire lagoon, resulting in a substantial reduction in water quality, damage to critical estuary resources, such as seagrasses, oyster beds, and fisheries. The discharges frequently carry sediment loads and algae that result in shoaling and toxic blooms within the estuary and along the coastal reefs. Specifically, high water levels within Lake Okeechobee have resulted in almost continuous discharges into the St. Lucie River Estuary. The quality of the region's waterways has a direct impact on the region's quality of life and economy, such as the marine industry, and on the sustainability of its natural systems. It may also affect property values. The Indian River Lagoon North and South/Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (IRL/CERP), although projected to have significant benefits, has not been funded at the federal level.



The quality of the region's defining waterways, natural systems, and agricultural lands is in peril from growth, development, and natural disasters.



The accelerated conversion of land to urban uses over the past 30 years highlight the need to come together as a region to plan ahead for the growth that is coming and to sustain those desirable qualities that distinguish our region from anywhere else.

In addition, rapid development of the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River watersheds has had a number of impacts. These have included loss and fragmentation of important habitats such as scrub and pine flatwoods, and loss of seagrasses, mangroves, and wetlands. Rapid increases in the extent of impervious surfaces, such as roofs, driveways, streets, and parking lots, have resulted in an increase in runoff resulting in an increase in the amount of pollution, including phosphorous and nitrogen reaching these water bodies. These impacts can be expected to increase as development pressures continue in the region.

Development and Loss of Agriculture

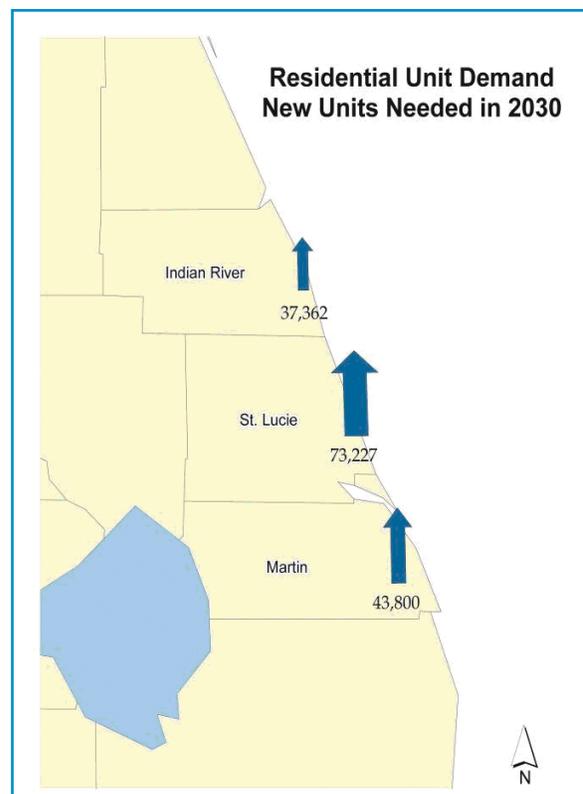
The region is rapidly losing farmland and agricultural heritage while development races ahead at an alarming pace. With agriculture income under duress, land values increasing, and a strong demand for additional development, farmers are confronted with very difficult decisions.

Citrus Industry

In September 2004, the Treasure Coast was ground zero for two major hurricanes. Agriculture was not spared the storms' fury, and citrus farmers were particularly hard hit. Both storms seriously damaged the valuable citrus crops in all three counties, stripping trees of their fruit and destroying the physical infrastructure required to produce and ship the crops. Within weeks, local growers received a second blow: the appearance of citrus canker. As of the date of this report, the mandatory destruction of over 25,000 acres of citrus to help stop the spread of this disease has left many growers unable to meet their financial obligations, forcing them to consider selling their land. Because the current real estate market is so strong in the area, developers are planning to quickly convert former citrus acreage into more residential and commercial projects, continuing the cycle that led to the creation of this Committee.

Built Environment

Breakdowns in intergovernmental coordination on land use, transportation, permitting, development, and services led to the formation of this Committee. Inconsistencies between annexation and growth management laws have added to the problem. The fifteen local governments and three school districts in the Treasure Coast region are increasingly confronted by difficult decisions that involve issues such as annexation, schools, transportation, and other public facilities. The decision-making processes are often characterized by confrontation rather than collaboration. In addition, the existing future land use plans are not coordinated and often encourage a sprawling development pattern.



In Martin County, the percentage of new housing units needed between 2000 and 2030 will increase by 49%, in St. Lucie County by 54%, in Indian River County by 48%.

Population Growth

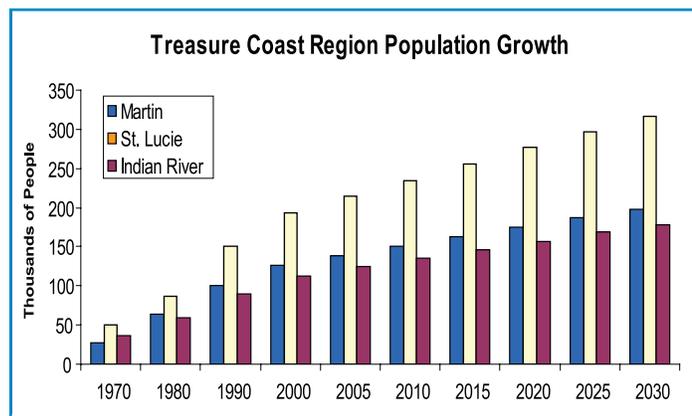
Local governments are currently faced with decisions regarding how to respond to population pressures. The population in the three-county region has grown to nearly 500,000 in 2005, and current projections estimate that the population of this region will increase by at least another 50 percent by 2030 and become more diverse.ⁱ Our current population growth pressures are already challenging the carrying capacity of our infrastructure, schools, recreational services, water and wastewater facilities and disposal options, water resources and natural environment. Over the long term, increasing population will raise questions regarding whether to extend urban service boundaries. In addition, local governments will face the challenge of meeting the needs of the region's increasingly diverse population.

Clearly our growth challenges are interconnected and affect a great many aspects of our lives. We have no choice but to work as one region to encourage well-planned growth that will preserve a healthy Treasure Coast for our children and for generations to come.

Frank T. Brogan, CSTS Co-Vice Chair,
and President, Florida Atlantic University

Hurricane Vulnerability

After the record setting 2004 hurricane season, residents of the Treasure Coast understand that they live in an area that is subject to the impacts of major hurricanes and their destructive consequences. Another major hurricane is likely to cause significant beach erosion and property and environmental damage throughout the barrier islands and coastal lands, and may endanger the dikes surrounding Lake Okeechobee. Floodwaters caused by the storms can disrupt the delicate balance of the estuaries. Power outages can affect the entire mainland, disrupting homes and businesses for months. Insufficient shelters are available, especially for special needs populations during these events.



The three Treasure Coast counties are predicted to grow by 60 percent between now and 2030, adding 300,000 more people than are here today and bringing the total population to 720,000.

Health Care

Like many regions experiencing rapid growth, a surprisingly large section of the Treasure Coast's population is uninsured, and access to quality health care is a challenge no longer limited to low-income residents. There are also challenges facing the region related to managing chronic disease and health concerns stemming from water pollution, mercury, lead, pesticides, and contaminated properties.

Education

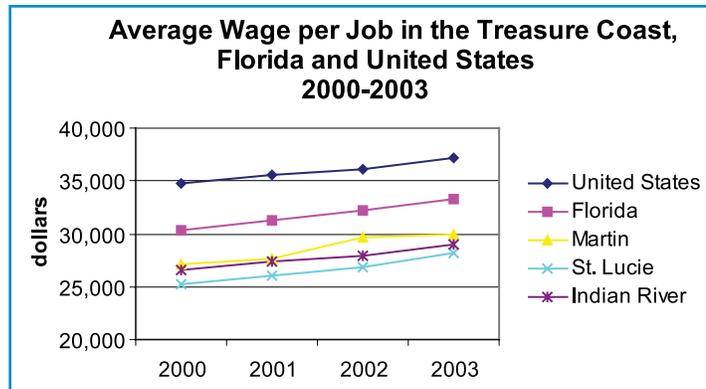
There is an ever-growing shortage of highly qualified teachers and administrators and school facilities. Schools are not distributed equitably throughout the region and portable classrooms are used extensively. The quality of education varies from county to county.

Workforce Housing

Due to increasing property values, the Treasure Coast region is losing housing that is accessible to the workforce, seniors, and underprivileged residents. In parts of the Treasure Coast, higher housing costs have created a large number of working homeless who cannot afford to maintain basic housing. In addition, existing workforce housing is not equitably distributed throughout the region.

Economic Diversity

The Treasure Coast region has evolved from economies based primarily on ranching, citrus, and fishing to include a significant number of service-based industries, specifically construction, tourism, and retail, that are often not considered contributory businesses. An economy based on lower wage jobs is not sustainable over time, places an additional burden on the social services system, and creates workforce housing concerns. In addition, an increasing number of citizens in the three-county region are at or below the poverty level, and the rising costs of insurance and gas, coupled with a decreasing amount of usable income, present challenges.



The number of middle and high-end jobs in the Treasure Coast lags behind the state and nation.

B. OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK TOGETHER ON REGIONAL ISSUES

In order to understand the opportunities for working together as a region, it is important understand the definition of what constitutes a region and the barriers to regional cooperation.

Definition of a Region and Barriers to Regional Cooperation

In 2005, the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Florida Committee for Regional Cooperation issued a report after a year of fact-finding throughout Florida. The report, *Building Florida's Future: State Strategies for Regional Cooperation*, defines a region as an area of distinct communities, cities and counties where residents share:

- a geographic identity and social, economic, and cultural, interdependence;
- a capacity for planning and functioning cohesively for communication, education, transportation, housing, and protection of natural resources, and;
- a capacity to create competitive advantage to promote opportunity and prosperity for all.

Florida's successful communities will be those where citizens and their public and private leaders are unified behind a shared regional vision and set of actions that address pressing issues such as transportation planning, housing affordability, natural resource protection, and economic development.

Thaddeus Cohen, CSTC Co-Vice Chair, and Secretary, Florida Department of Community Affairs

The report also identified four principal barriers that deter many Florida communities from undertaking initiatives to build regional collaboration:

- the lack of a shared regional identify, vision, and goals;
- the absence of regional leadership;
- a fragmented state regulatory system; and
- lack of coordination and incentives for regionalism.

To remove these barriers, and to identify opportunities for solutions, the report highlights, it is essential to establish a clear, consistent definition of a region. A region “emphasizes the common attributes that bind together distinct and different communities within a region, the capacities of regions for collective action, and the important balance between preserving local identity and coming together for regional benefit.” The ULI report calls on the Governor, the Legislature, and state and regional agencies to support regional visioning and action plans. (ULI is a nonprofit education and research institute that works with a broad cross section of community leaders around the country to develop and implement policies and practices addressing regional cooperation, workforce housing, transit oriented development, open space preservation, and smart growth.)

Working Together

Recognizing that the Treasure Coast is a region composed of interdependent jurisdictions highlights the need for cooperation, collaboration, and partnering. The Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast believes that by functioning as a region, we have the opportunity to maximize resources and create a sustainable future. The challenge facing the Treasure Coast is how local governments in the region can work together to address a myriad of regional problems while still maintaining control over their local destinies. Local decisions often have regional implications, which means that local governments need to consider the impacts of their decision-making on neighboring communities. From tiny Orchid in the north to the largest city in the region, Port St. Lucie, the cities of the Treasure Coast, along with the three counties, need to have a regional perspective as they work to provide services for an ever-growing number of residents and tourists. The successful and cost-effective creation of new infrastructure and services necessitates collaboration with neighbors. Preserving natural resources, enhancing education, healthcare, and the economy, and maintaining our quality of life on the Treasure Coast will require a regional approach.

All organizations in our region must work together to plan for the growth that is coming. By partnering to address issues that cross county lines and considering the impacts of decisions on others, we can maximize our resources and create a more livable, competitive region.

Dr. Edwin R. Massey, CSTC Co-Vice Chair, and President, Indian River Community College

The time is right to build on current regional initiatives and seize on a one-time opportunity to use the market forces of growth to preserve our character-defining natural resources and rural lands, create highly livable communities, and ensure superior job and educational opportunities for all residents.

Michael J. Busha, CSTC Economic Systems Committee Member, and Executive Director, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

A number of existing regional forums have been effective in bringing local governments and private interests together. These forums include the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (the three counties plus Palm Beach County), Indian River Community College, and the Treasure Coast Workforce Development Board (the three counties plus Okeechobee County). Citizens within individual counties have initiated forward-looking visions such as 2020 Vision for a Sustainable Martin County, the Citizens' Master Plan for North St. Lucie County, and the countywide vision for Indian River County. These groups and efforts have been essential for addressing growth concerns in the past; however, with an increasing number of urgent challenges, our citizens and public officials must provide comprehensive leadership in order to effectively guide the Treasure Coast through this century.

Natural System Opportunities for Regional Action:

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), approved by Congress on December 11, 2000, as part of the Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) of 2000, presents a regional opportunity for investment and cooperation on restoration efforts related to the Indian River Lagoon. Pre-CERP projects, such as the Kissimmee River Restoration, are also vital to Everglades restoration and to the Treasure Coast. As part of the first five years of CERP implementation, a Project Implementation Report (PIR) was prepared for the Indian River Lagoon South (IRL) project. Congressional authorization of the IRL project is critical to

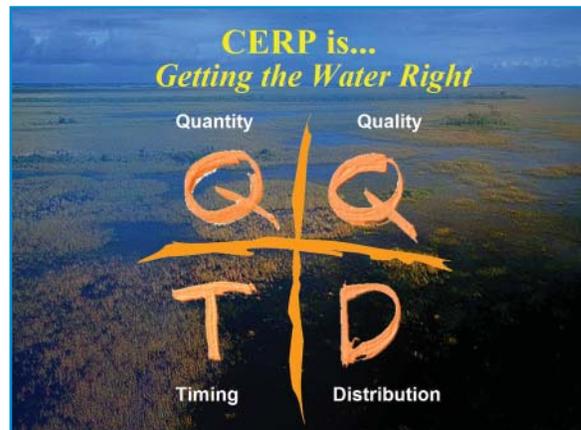
a sustainable estuary, and local efforts and leadership are critical to moving the project forward. The U.S. House of Representatives has passed a WRDA bill for 2005 that includes the IRL. As of the date of this report, the proposed WRDA legislation is awaiting action in the U.S. Senate.

The State of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District have created the Acceler8 initiative to provide over \$1.5 billion in additional state funds to advance CERP projects. The creation of water storage along the C-44 canal is part of Acceler8 and is a critical project for restoring the Indian River Lagoon.

Many of these projects and other publicly held lands fall within larger environmental features that have been identified by this Committee for conservation, preservation, conservation, and restoration. The Committee proposes to identify the gaps and work towards restoration of natural functions.



The Treasure Coast's uninterrupted expanses of rural lands distinguish it from other regions and provide a diverse quality of life to residents, including open space, wildlife habitat, water treatment, food security, and a net benefit to the tax base.



Full funding of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is critical to regional sustainability.

Rural Lands Opportunities for Regional Action:

The retention of rural lands is essential for the continuing functioning of the region's natural systems and a more sustainable development pattern. Rural lands provide a vast array of benefits to residents of the region such as open space, wildlife habitat, water treatment, aquifer recharge, food security, and quality of life, and provide a net benefit to the local tax base. Opportunities exist today to preserve a connected network of rural lands before they are impacted by development.

Built Environment Opportunities for Regional Action:

In May 2005, the Florida Legislature passed major amendments to Florida's growth management laws that present opportunities for the Treasure Coast. The legislation provided new planning and financial requirements for local governments, particularly with regard to transportation, schools, and water supply, and created the Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida to develop a long-range vision for the state using 25- and 50-year planning time frames. The Legislature also provided significant funding for the implementation of the new provisions, including technical assistance funds for local governments. While some of the legislative changes can be addressed by the region's fifteen local governments during the evaluation and appraisal process, other provisions must be implemented on a more advanced schedule.

Education, Health, and Cultural Opportunities for Regional Action:

Through collaboration, an opportunity exists to increase the pool of highly qualified school teachers and administrators among the school districts and among post-secondary education professionals, enhance the education system, deal with school siting issues, and provide greater access to educational opportunities for all. There are opportunities to strengthen research and development in the region.

Greater collaboration among health care professionals can lead to a more effective, efficient, and equitable distribution of services throughout the region. Health care planning can prepare the region for future health-related disasters. Likewise, greater collaboration among culture and arts professionals can strengthen existing local efforts and create greater regional opportunities.

SCHEDULE FOR UPDATING LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS IN THE TREASURE COAST:

Martin County	10-1-2008
Stuart	10-1-2009
Ocean Breeze Park	11-1-2009
Sewalls Point	12-1-2009
Jupiter Island	01-1-2010
St. Lucie County	11-1-2008
Fort Pierce	02-1-2010
St. Lucie Village	03-1-2010
Port St. Lucie	04-1-2010
Indian River County	12-1-2008
Fellsmere	05-1-2010
Indian River Shores	06-1-2010
Orchid	07-1-2010
Sebastian	08-1-2010
Vero Beach	09-1-2010

In the next five years, decisions will be made by local governments on land use issues that will either encourage the preservation and enhancement of our remaining natural systems or promote the further fragmentation and likely degradation of those systems to the detriment of us all.

Michael D. Minton, CSTC Natural Systems Committee Co-Chair, and Managing Shareholder, Dean, Mead, Minton & Zwemer

Economic Diversity Opportunities for Regional Action: Cooperation and collaboration of local economic development initiatives provide opportunities for increased competitiveness of the region. Economies of scale are achieved by leveraging local and regional marketing efforts, both public and private. Combining all of the educational, transportation, cultural, and social assets of the region enhances our position as a location for a diversity of business and industry clusters.

The region's three economic development organizations have joined together to prepare a marketing plan to recruit, maintain, and grow the businesses that will provide high wage jobs and help make the region even more competitive as a desirable location for new businesses.

Ted Astolfi, CSTC Built Environment Committee member, and Executive Director, Business Development Board of Martin County

II. STRATEGIC VISION FOR REGIONAL ACTION

Our vision for the Treasure Coast is a region with:

- a diversified and prosperous economy,
- a healthy natural environment,
- an attractive landscape made possible because of intelligent development and preservation,
- popular cultural facilities and events,
- world-class research and education,
- healthy and vital citizens and communities, and
- citizens and decision-makers who collaborate to achieve a shared regional vision.

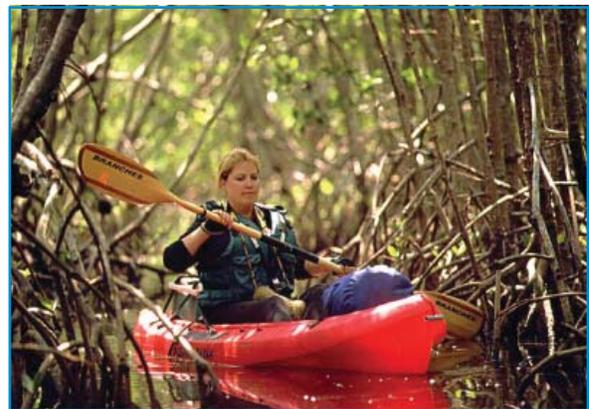
As part of Martin County's participation in the Florida Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project, the County created the nonprofit Sustainable Martin Alliance for the purpose of promoting principles of sustainability. The organization spent a great deal of time defining sustainability and how it relates to our communities. The concept it developed can easily be adapted for the entire Treasure Coast region:

What makes an area a community is shared interactions among the people there. These interactions include: economic transactions, social relationships, and environmental interdependence. Sustainability is related to the quality of life in a community – and whether the natural environment, the built-environment, the economy and the social systems that make up the community are providing a healthy, productive, meaningful life for all residents, now and in the future. There

are deep connections and relationships between all the parts of a community. When problems arise, sustainable communities look for solutions that take into account all the parts of the community instead of applying a quick fix in one area that causes problems in another.ⁱⁱ

With this concept in mind, the CSTC began its deliberations with a strategic visioning exercise that helped to frame the members' work in the context of sustainability outcomes for a successful region in 2030. The Committee believes the Treasure Coast should strive for excellence in all areas in a region and world that are rapidly changing. The topics they addressed included the region's natural systems, built environment, rural lands, social systems, and economic diversity and prosperity. Their strategic vision for the future can be summarized as follows:

- The Treasure Coast region will have a diversified and prosperous economy that focuses on creating, retaining, and expanding higher wage jobs within the region's businesses. This will enable us to have high per capita income, high wages, and low unemployment when compared to the nation. Our regional approach will



A preserved and enhanced natural environment provides recreational attractions for residents and visitors seeking an eco-tourism destination.

establish a business environment that supports innovation and risk taking and balances collaboration with competition.

- The Treasure Coast region will have a healthy natural environment that has been preserved, conserved, enhanced, and restored to a quality significantly higher than it is today. A diversity of recreational opportunities will be available for families and residents of all ages, including natural recreation activities in a variety of settings. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project's Indian River Lagoon South Project has been constructed, and our region is a national eco-tourism destination due to our pristine waterways, old Florida ecosystems, and outstanding species diversity.



Development in the Treasure Coast provides a range of housing choices and protects our green space and natural systems.

- Intelligent development and preservation on the Treasure Coast will have created an attractive landscape that is admired by all who visit or live here. Our built environment will accommodate the demands of new growth while retaining agricultural lands and preserved green space and natural systems. This will include a highly effective infrastructure design, a multi-modal transportation system, and a full array of housing choices including workforce housing for all segments of the region. Adequate and appropriate locations for schools, parks, and other community facilities will be planned, constructed, and maintained.



Our educational and research facilities provide life-long learning and stimulate a healthy, high-wage paying economy.

- The Treasure Coast region will have popular facilities, institutions, and events that promote the fine and performing arts, preserve and communicate the unique heritage of the Treasure Coast region, and respond to a culturally diverse and changing population.
- The Treasure Coast region will support world-class research and education, including life-long learning opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse and growing population, and provide programs tailored to the economy, culture, and environment of the region. The region's well-educated students will have local, national, and international career opportunities, and collaboration between various research centers and educational institutions will be a model for the nation.

- Citizens and communities within the Treasure Coast region will be healthy and vital, have access to the finest health care, and enjoy a quality of life that is unrivaled in the nation. The region's communities will successfully promote healthy lifestyles and greater self-sufficiency for the young, the elderly, and those with special needs.
- Citizens and decision-makers in the Treasure Coast region will collaborate to develop and achieve a shared vision. Intergovernmental and interagency communication will enable effective planning and build a strong consensus to reach this vision, and innovative public-private partnerships will be successful in producing solutions. State of the art education and widespread public involvement will enable our region to sustain its vision and prosperity.



Collaborative actions to implement a shared vision yield a high quality of life for all citizens.

To accomplish the strategic vision, the Committee created five subcommittees to draft Principles and Action Steps in the areas of:

- Natural Systems
- Rural Lands
- Built Environment
- Social Systems
- Economic Diversity

The Committee followed a deliberate, open process building on the diverse experiences and expertise of its members while seeking advice from CSTC's Technical Advisory Committee (Appendix B), expert speakers, and the public.

III. SUSTAINING QUALITY NATURAL SYSTEMS

A. BACKGROUND

Our vision for the Treasure Coast is a region with:

- The Indian River Lagoon Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is fully implemented.
- A viable, healthy, and connected network of natural systems is protected throughout the region.
- The right quantity and quality of water are available to sustain natural systems.
- The air remains clean.
- Land use planning, development regulations, and design standards support healthy natural systems.

The Committee believes that connected, functional natural systems that are viable and protected in perpetuity are essential for long-term sustainability. To achieve this result, the Committee believes that it will be necessary to return the region’s natural systems to a healthy status. Natural systems provide a range of benefits to the region, from quality of life to support for important economic sectors such as the marine industry. The ultimate outcome of efforts to guarantee the sustainability of natural systems should be that we live and act in ways that ensure that future generations enjoy the full range of opportunities to appreciate and benefit from natural systems.

The Committee believes Natural Systems in the Treasure Coast should be understood as a concept with two components.

a) Natural can be understood as a continuum, and refers to the degree to which these systems have been altered by humans. At one end of the continuum are the few remaining “natural” areas on which the original plant and animal communities are largely present, and where they function as they did before large-scale human activity. At the other end of the continuum are a variety of areas, including some lands in agriculture, that, although heavily altered, nevertheless contribute to habitat, to connectivity, and to sustainability of the “natural” areas, or to natural functions such a maintaining water quality.

b) Systems refer to the presence and composition and configuration of plant and animal communities, terrestrial, aquatic, and aerial, to how those interrelated communities function, and to the air, land, and water on which they depend.



Maintaining a connected, functional natural system for future generations is dependent on how residents of the region live and plan

Very few if any areas in the Treasure Coast are truly unaltered by human activity. At the same time, large areas of the Treasure Coast that have been altered still provide significant value from an environmental point of view, or have the potential to be restored to a more functional role in the natural system of which they are a part.

The Treasure Coast faces three central crises rooted in the region's past, and all are made more acute by the wave of population growth and the form of development expected in the region.

Water Quality and Quantity

To a very great extent, the region's natural systems are dependent on receiving the right quantities and quality of water. The quality and quantity of water received by the natural system in the past have been affected by altered drainage, loss of wetlands, agricultural and urban runoff, and discharges from Lake Okeechobee. Currently, the regional flood control system is delivering poor quality and inappropriate quantities of water to key regional water bodies, creating a crisis that threatens the viability of those bodies as ecosystems.

Loss of Habitat and "Natural" Areas

Increasing development pressures threaten to significantly reduce the extent of undeveloped wetland and upland areas, such as endangered scrub habitat and pine flatwoods. The crisis facing the region's agricultural industry is reducing the amount of land in agriculture. Whether natural or altered, agricultural lands serve important natural systems functions, such as habitat and aquifer recharge.

Development and Natural Area Fragmentation

Many species require large, contiguous expanses of habitat for their survival, and many natural systems can only function as part of a larger integrated whole. Already, many of the region's significant natural systems are fragmented by urban areas or by agricultural uses. This trend can be expected to accelerate significantly as the region develops and its population grows.

B. CURRENT EFFORTS IN THE REGION

Efforts are underway regionally, as well as in many Treasure Coast jurisdictions, that contribute significantly to addressing natural resource issues in the region. These include habitat restoration and preservation activities, as well as water quality improvement measures.

The Treasure Coast has an opportunity to do something no other region has accomplished. By working and planning together, we can preserve an interconnected system of rural lands and natural systems and, and by doing so, maintain a healthy environment and create a wonderful place to live.

Mary Dawson, CSTC Rural Lands and Natural Systems Committee member, and Director, Friends of Martin County

What happens on the region's land directly affects the water. The challenge for local decision-makers is to implement land use policies that compliment regional efforts to restore and protect water resources. Working together is the only way to sustain water resources for the future.

Carol Wehle, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

In August 2004, the Corps of Engineers approved the collaborative effort encompassing the Indian River Lagoon (IRL)-South project that will improve water quality within the St. Lucie Estuary and the Indian River Lagoon by reducing the damaging effects of watershed runoff, reducing high peak freshwater discharges to control salinity levels, and reducing nutrient loads, pesticides and other pollutants. The main components of this plan included natural area preservation, habitat restoration, muck removal and the construction of reservoirs to hold water currently being discharged to tide. As a component of the larger Indian River Lagoon South Project, the District has included the C-44 reservoir as a component in Acceler8, a program that steps up the pace on eight specific restoration projects. The C-44 project consists of a 4,000-acre, 10-foot-deep above-ground reservoir that will provide additional water storage for the C-44 basin. The project also includes a 4,000-acre stormwater treatment area to capture and treat excess stormwater runoff.

In addition, the St. Lucie River Issues Team is an example of a local regional effort to prioritize and fund turn-dirt projects identified to improve water quality within the St. Lucie Estuary and downstream waterbodies. To date, \$35 million worth of projects, including local cost matching, have been awarded and have been or are being implemented. Projects include stormwater retrofits, habitat restoration projects, and land acquisition.

The Indian River Lagoon in all three counties has been designated a priority waterbody by the Florida Legislature. In Indian River County, the St. Johns Water Management District is conducting a range of restoration activities.

Also critical to the protection of our natural systems are the proactive county-based initiatives that further resource protection measures. For example, Martin County has enacted wetland and upland protection measures to preserve wetlands and native upland habitats and maintain their ecological functions. All wetlands in Martin County are protected, and buffer zones are required to provide an upland transition area. In addition, upland protection measures, including preservation of 25 percent of the upland habitat in a development, have been implemented.



Full funding for the restoration of the Indian River Lagoon, a critical regional waterbody, is essential to a sustainable and successful Treasure Coast.

LEARNING FROM TREASURE COAST BEST PRACTICES

Developed by the South Florida Water Management District and the Army Corps of Engineers, the multifaceted *Indian River Lagoon (IRL) South Restoration Plan* will reestablish a more natural pattern of freshwater flows to, and improve water quality and estuarine habitat in, the St. Lucie Estuary and the IRL. Implementation of the IRL plan creates a win/win for the environment, the economy, and residents and visitors. Project components and benefits include:

- Large-scale reservoirs for water storage
- Storm water treatment areas to cleanse water
- Increased extent and function of wetlands and uplands
- Flood plain restoration
- Flow diversions
- Increased water supply

In St. Lucie County, staff has used a mitigation bank as a creative tool to restore contiguous wetlands adjacent to the Indian River Lagoon to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat. The bank is funded by credits purchased by individuals whose projects impact wetlands within the service area that runs from Sebastian Inlet to the St Lucie Inlet in the Indian River Lagoon. After the regulatory agencies determine that impacts are reduced as much as possible, the ratio of mitigation to impacts required is 4:1 or higher, creating a net benefit to the natural system.



Land use regulations, local funding for acquisition, and mitigation banks can be used to protect wetlands, wildlife habitat, and water quality

Voter approved referendums in all three counties have generated hundreds of millions of dollars for land conservation. Indian River County established the Indian River County Environmental Lands Program, which has been repeatedly funded by a county ad valorem tax bond referendum. Efforts are underway to make these lands available for recreation.

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C. PRINCIPLES AND ACTION STEPS

Principle 1

The Indian River Lagoon Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is fully implemented.

The full implementation of the CERP, including the north and south Indian River Lagoon Plans, is vital to the region. Lake Okeechobee, the St. Lucie River, and the Indian River Lagoon are of tremendous importance to the quality of life and the economy of the entire region. Unless major actions, including CERP, are implemented, the existing water management system will not prevent the further deterioration of these water bodies.

The Indian River Lagoon component of CERP will provide multiple benefits to the region. It will begin to clean up and attenuate discharges to the estuary. The project will also provide alternate water supply sources that will reduce saltwater intrusion problems in the Floridian Aquifer. It will complement on-site Best Management Practices in assuring appropriate water quality in runoff. In addition, the Natural Area component of the IRL Plan will serve as the backbone for the planned regional greenway system.

To prevent future deterioration of our water bodies, full funding and authority to implement CERP and the north and south Indian River Lagoon plans, as well as related initiatives to restore Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie River, are imperative.

Sandra Bowden, CSTC Natural Systems Committee member, and Commissioner, Indian River County Board of County Commissioners

The long term CERP will provide for a biologically healthy and sustainable Lake Okeechobee so that harmful discharges of water to the estuary are reduced or eliminated. Both the Lake and

the estuary are currently being damaged because of high water levels in the Lake that destroy the waterbody's littoral zone and require emergency discharges to the estuary. Those same high water levels increase the chance of levee failure around the Lake.

Action Steps

- a. Develop a coordinated regional effort to assure authorization of the IRL Plan in this session of Congress.
- b. Identify new funding sources and other voluntary, incentive-based mechanisms to assure that all lands needed to implement the IRL Plan are acquired within ten years.
- c. Continue to support authorization and implementation of CERP and related state initiatives to restore Lake Okeechobee.

Principle 2

A viable, healthy and connected network of natural systems is protected throughout the region.

Those natural systems that have regional, statewide, or national significance or that affect quality of life throughout the three counties are especially important to the Treasure Coast. To effectively protect, conserve, enhance, and restore these systems (including altered and unaltered areas), local, regional, state, and federal governments and agencies must agree on a coordinated proactive vision for a network of viable natural systems as well as a plan and strategies. Viable partnerships with the private sector are also essential to achieving the vision. Efforts should address the range of natural communities in the region, including but not limited to seagrasses, mangroves, scrub, and pine flatwoods.

Governmental entities will not have the resources to acquire all of the lands necessary to ensure the functioning and viability of the Treasure Coast into the future. The Committee recommends the use of a wide range of existing and innovative tools, including many that capitalize on the resources development will bring, to achieve the plan.

We must act now to develop a bold vision that will protect and enhance the natural systems which define our region and its quality of life. To succeed, a strong public-private partnership is essential; a single county or single sector approach will fail.

Stefan K. Matthes, CSTC Natural Systems Committee Vice Chair, and Senior Vice President, Culpepper & Terpening, Inc.

Action Steps

- a. Develop, in cooperation with stakeholders, a coordinated plan and policies that conserve, protect, restore, enhance, connect, and manage natural systems, including those that transcend local boundaries and those that are of local importance, so that they remain functional, un-fragmented, and viable in perpetuity. This plan should address natural areas and altered areas that contribute to the function of natural systems. The plan should include:
 - a coordinated vision for a network of connected natural systems and greenways and trails;
 - a baseline identification and assessment of natural areas and systems that transcend local interest;

- identification of gaps in current protection and function of the system suitable for restoration (areas that should form part of the network but are not currently protected); and
- implementation strategies, including strategies for connection of key natural areas.

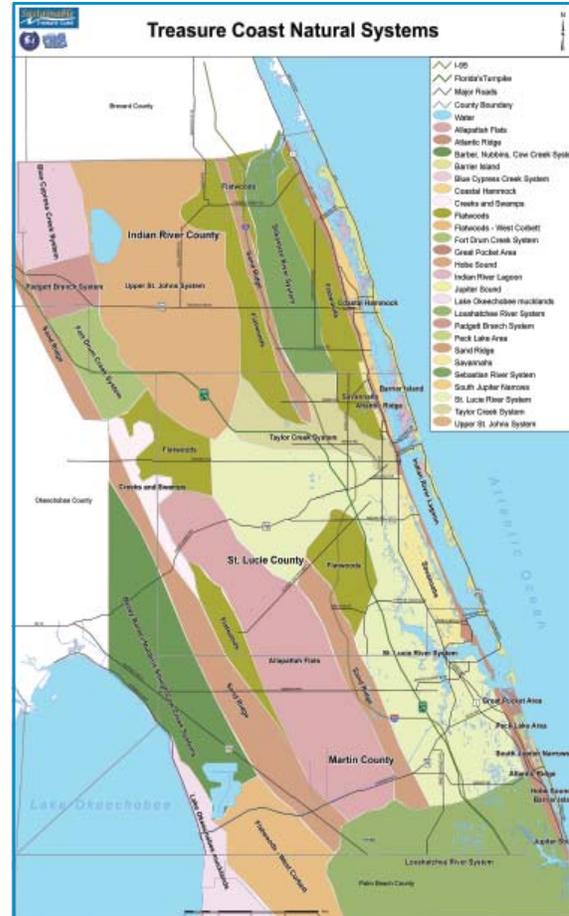
b. Protect, conserve, restore, enhance and connect, at a minimum, lands in the following areas as key pieces of the connected network of natural systems. These are important to the region as a whole, and in some cases have national or global significance, such as the continuous network that reaches from the St. Johns River to the Everglades including:

- Allapatah Flats
- Allapatah Slough/Cow Creek
- Atlantic Ridge
- Beaches, barrier islands, and reefs
- Green Ridge
- Indian River Lagoon
- Lake Okechobee and canals/connections
- Palm Beach Heights/PalMar, Dupuis, Corbett Wildlife Management Area
- Savannahs
- St. Johns River Upper Basin/Ft. Drum Marsh, Blue Cypress Lake
- St. Lucie River
- St. Sebastian River system
- Upper Loxahatchee

c. Develop dedicated, reliable funding sources for implementation, including for continuing acquisition.

d. Develop regional mechanisms and methods to develop and maintain natural systems data. Decisions regarding the natural environment should be made on the basis of coordinated, updated, and comprehensive data.

e. Protect areas of special regional environmental concern in comprehensive plans when they are updated.



Transcending local boundaries, the natural systems from the St. John’s River to the Everglades provide an opportunity to create a connected natural system of regional, state, national, and global importance.

If, as a region, we are to be successful in maintaining our highly valued natural environment, we must join together regionally to put in place the dedicated funding sources needed to preserve a core connected network of natural systems.

L. Kevin Stinnette, CSTC Natural System Committee member, and President, Indian RiverKeeper

Principle 3

The right quantity and quality of water is available to sustain natural systems.

Water is the lifeblood of the Treasure Coast. The right quantity and quality of water are essential to the health of the aquatic ecosystems in the Treasure Coast. Water quality is a key indicator of the health of all natural systems. Restoring water quality and ensuring appropriate water quantities should be central to efforts to protect and enhance natural systems in the Treasure Coast.

Action Steps

- a. Develop on a priority basis a new Lake Okechobee regulatory release to eliminate current and future pollution and damage to downstream waterbodies, including the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River. This should be treated as an urgent emergency measure.
- b. Fund existing programs and, where necessary, initiate new activities to protect and restore the Loxahatchee and St. Sebastian Rivers and Blue Cypress Lake.
- c. Develop easily understood measures of water quality such as nitrogen, phosphorous, and oxygen that can be reported in the media and increase public awareness of and support for efforts to improve water quality.
- d. Accelerate the implementation of Basin Management Action Plans to meet Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) set for impaired waters in their area.
- e. Implement programs to regionalize wastewater treatment and move away from reliance on septic systems where they are not appropriate.
- f. Develop, fund, and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all land uses including citrus and cattle. This should include residential BMPs and other available options that minimize the use of nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer and pesticides.
- g. Request EQUIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for environmental restoration cost-share programs for the IRL.
- h. Provide continued state, local, and regional agency funding and support for the St. Lucie River Issue Team projects.
- i. Develop policies to move away from reliance on wells and septic systems near waterbodies if there are indications of a water quality problem.



Ensuring appropriate water quantities and eliminating current and future pollution to the region's water bodies are essential to the health of the region's natural systems, people, and economy.

- j. State, regional, and local agencies with jurisdictional responsibilities for the IRL should increase coordination of their existing regulatory oversight of the IRL. The agencies should review current state statutes for addressing the Loxahatchee, Myakka, Hillsborough, and Wekiva Rivers and recommend appropriate legislation that will enhance the restoration of the IRL.

Principle 4

The air remains clean.

While air quality is currently quite good in the Treasure Coast, expected growth over the coming decades has the potential to degrade that quality. The increase in automobile use and emissions that is likely to accompany population growth, some industrial and infrastructure projects, and power plants all may affect regional air quality. Improved coordination among local governments would enhance the ability of the region to maintain air quality and address future threats to it.

Action Steps

- a. Develop a comprehensive regional approach with coordinated strategies to ensure that air quality in the Treasure Coast remains high. The approach may address, among other issues:
 - A common approach to power plant issues;
 - Strategies to reduce vehicle emission by reducing vehicle miles traveled;
 - Strategies to improve the accessibility and availability of alternative fuel sources in the region; and
 - Strategies to increase carbon sequestration in agricultural and rural areas.
- b. Provide clearinghouse notice to local governments during agency permitting reviews of proposed industrial and infrastructure projects that may affect regional air quality.
- c. Protect and plant trees and vegetation to improve air quality.

Principle 5

Land use planning, development regulations, and design standards support healthy natural systems.

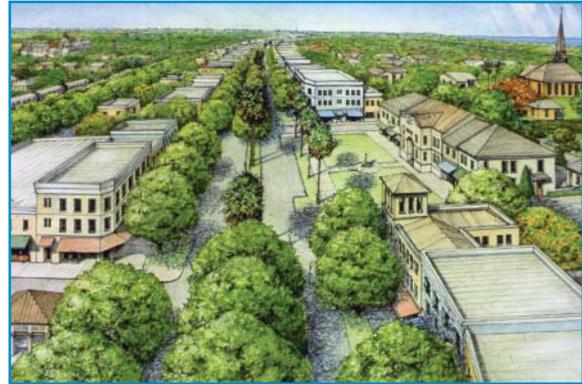
As growth occurs in the Treasure Coast, the single most influential factor determining whether natural systems are sustainable into the future will be the decisions made about the location and character of development. It is essential that planning, regulation, and design of development enhance the sustainability of natural systems.

Today, development approvals are subject to an array of federal, state, regional, and local plans and regulations. They provide an initial basis for addressing protection of natural systems. Local

governments have begun to evaluate and update their comprehensive plans and land development regulations. Over the next five years, the potential exists to rewrite all existing regulations to enhance the sustainability of natural systems in the Treasure Coast. The South Florida Water Management District is “revisiting” their development regulations to see if drainage rules can be strengthened for the benefit of natural systems

Action Steps

- a. Ensure that land use planning, land development codes, and development decisions are compatible with the sustainability of natural systems.
- b. Steer development to lands where it would have the least impact on the functioning of natural systems.
- c. Develop and adopt minimum development standards, including urban landscape codes and tree protection ordinances, for the region that effectively protect natural systems, including native trees and vegetation.
- d. Create development that restores water tables, increases water storage, protects groundwater from contamination, and enhances natural systems.
- e. Use a range of existing and new innovative tools as alternatives and supplements to regulatory actions to achieve the vision, including those listed below.
 - Additional acquisition programs
 - Clustering
 - Community Stewardship Organizations
 - Conservation easements
 - Conservation zoning and development
 - Coordinated land use plans
 - Mitigation banks
 - Planning for new towns and villages
 - Regulatory options
 - Rural Lands Stewardship Program
 - Transfer of Development Rights



Reducing the need to drive cars and protecting and planting trees improve air quality

Nearly half of what will be the Treasure Coast’s built environment in 2030 doesn’t exist today. This gives us a tremendous opportunity to plan for development in ways that will enhance, not degrade, our natural systems. Our local comprehensive plans are the critical starting point.

Stacy W. Ranieri, CSC Built Environment Committee member, and President, Firefly Communications, Inc

IV. RETAINING RURAL LANDS

A. BACKGROUND

Our guiding principles for Rural Lands:

- A combination of tools and strategies work effectively to retain a functional, connected network of rural lands (open space, agriculture, and natural areas).
- Rural lands retention supports natural systems restoration.
- A sustainable agriculture sector contributes to the retention of rural lands and is a public purpose that justifies local, state, and federal support.

The continuing presence of rural lands in the form of a functioning network of agriculture, open space, and natural areas is essential for regional sustainability. It is literally essential for the continued functioning of the natural systems. It is also essential to protecting the quality of life that Treasure Coast residents cherish. Traditionally, the rural landscape has been defined and maintained by the presence of working agriculture.

However, today the Treasure Coast is changing as a result of a “perfect storm”: a “vacuum” caused by weakness in the agricultural sector – resulting from global competition, citrus canker, hurricane damage, and existing planning practices – combined with pressure from increasing land values and demand for development.

If the income generated from agriculture is not sufficient to sustain farming or if development offers a higher return, agricultural land will be converted. Since currently all counties of the region provide for residential ranchette development on agricultural lands, ranchettes may become the predominant pattern of land use in currently agricultural areas. Alternatively, piecemeal development and annexation may lead to a patchwork of sprawling urban development that requires great amounts of land to accommodate the region’s growing population.

To bring about a different future for agricultural lands, three things must happen:

- Agriculture must be profitable both now and in the future, providing farmers sufficient revenue to remain in farming.
- A working Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program must be developed to maintain the value of lands that remain in agriculture.



Working agriculture maintains the region’s character, defining rural lands that residents cherish. However the future of agriculture is at risk from natural and economic forces, increasingly leaving development as the only choice.

- The combination of future revenue and TDR value must provide a value to the landowner as high as or higher than the ranchette or other urban development alternative.

The principles and action steps in this report outline an approach to retaining rural lands that is based on the following concepts:

- Pressures on agricultural revenue and on the value of agricultural lands must be addressed in any preservation or protection strategy.
- The approach should be based on the services, benefits, and values provided by rural lands, in addition to the commodities they produce. The services, benefits, and values include
 - a wide range of environmental functions, including stormwater attenuation, wildlife habitat, and sites for restoration;
 - services that urban areas have to pay for when provided in other ways, including wastewater and stormwater treatment (through retention, filtration, or reuse on appropriate lands) and recreation;
 - open space and a sense of place;
 - the fact that rural landowners frequently pay more in taxes than they demand in services; and
 - a safer, more secure, and reliable food supply.
- The services, benefits, and values provided by rural lands have a clear economic value that can be quantified and are important whether the rural area in question is within a city or in unincorporated areas of a county. The economic value of these services, benefits, and values can represent an additional revenue source or other financial advantage to agricultural landowners.
- A new, mutually supporting relationship between urban and rural communities should be the basis for making use of these services, benefits, and values. The relationship will include farmers, local citizens, government, regulatory agencies, and special interest groups, since each has a stake in the outcome of rural land retention.



The citrus canker crisis in the citrus industry, which has long defined the Treasure Coast's rural lands and economy, could have a profound impact on the region's character and quality of life.

The region's rural lands and natural systems are in crisis. Unless we take bold steps to protect and restore large natural areas, contiguous expanses of open space, and agricultural lands, and change how and where we develop, the crisis will only accelerate as the population grows.

Doug Coward, Rural Lands Subcommittee Co-Chair, and Commissioner, St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners

A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program:

- Allows landowners to transfer the right to develop from one parcel of land to a different parcel of land.
- Helps shift development from agricultural areas to designated growth areas with access to services.
- Enables communities to conserve farmland using the market forces of growth.
- Enables agricultural landowners to retain the underlying agricultural and natural resource values in their land while realizing the development value.

(For more information on TDRs, see Appendix G, Tools, Resources, and Recommendations.)

Preserving large areas of open space and a viable agriculture industry will depend on a new supportive urban-agricultural-environmental relationship based on a shared vision. Solutions must include profitable agriculture and viable Transfer of Development Rights programs that together provide sufficient value to landowners.

Peter D. Spyke, CSTC Rural Lands Subcommittee Co-Chair, and President, Arapaho Citrus Management, Inc.

landowners to sell the development value of their land without selling the land itself, thereby providing the ability to continue in agriculture if desired. The TDR/PDR component will be a cornerstone of efforts to preserve or enhance existing land values, so it must be successful.

Other components

Local governments, regional agencies, citizens, and landowners should develop a coordinated vision of the future of rural lands that addresses the location and extent of rural lands to be

These concepts can be applied as follows:

New Sources of Revenue for Rural Lands

Crops should be viewed as only one of a range of “products” that include the services, benefits, and values associated with rural lands. The production and marketing of as many of these as possible should become part of the rural landowner’s business plan, and the payments received for these services should contribute to making it financially feasible to keep private lands in agriculture or open space.

Local, regional, and state governments should create programs that, whenever possible, look first to rural lands to provide needed services that rural lands are well suited to provide. These programs should use resources that would otherwise be paid to other service providers to pay rural landowners for these services (not subsidies) to help sustain agriculture and open space.

Maintaining the Value of Agricultural Lands

A range of innovative tools should be used to maintain the value of agricultural land. These tools include continuing public acquisition programs, revised open space requirements, community agriculture, and programs that make use of the development associated with growth to protect some rural lands in perpetuity in ways that protect the value of those lands that remain in agriculture. Such programs include Transfer of Development Rights and Rural Lands Stewardship programs.

In particular, Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights programs allow the separation of the development value associated with land from the underlying agricultural or natural resource financial values. TDR/PDR measures, applied as part of various programs, will allow

retained and the kind and extent of development appropriate in rural areas, protection of the value and quality of life that rural lands provide, and achieving CERP goals.

Continuing outreach and public information programs should be developed and will be a key component of helping residents understand the value of retaining rural lands so that they can participate in the relationships that need to be formed and support leaders in designing programs to accomplish rural lands retention over the long-term.

Local, regional, and state governmental entities should take significant measures that are within their power to make the continuation of agriculture easier and likelier.

B. CURRENT EFFORTS IN THE REGION

Current approaches to rural lands vary across the three counties in the region. Comprehensive plans in all three counties provide for large lot “ranchette” zoning in rural areas. The required lot sizes are smaller on limited portions of each county near the urban service area. In these areas, lot sizes include 5 acres per unit in Indian River, 2 acres per unit in Martin, and 2.5 acres per unit in St. Lucie. The lot sizes are larger on more extensive portions of each county further from the urban service area. There the lot sizes include 5 acres per unit in St. Lucie County, 10 and 20 acres per unit in Indian River County, and 20 acres per unit in Martin County.

St. Lucie County is proposing use of the state’s Rural Lands Stewardship program, as well as a Towns Villages and Countryside plan (TVC) in the north county. These plans would use Transfer of Development Rights to provide for compact urban development surrounded by open space or agriculture.

Continued agriculture, preserved or restored natural areas, water storage and treatment areas, recreational areas, compact new towns, and ranchettes, in different combinations, may all be appropriate components of the future of rural lands in the region. Each community will need to make decisions regarding these that reflect the unique circumstances and values of each community.



Land use regulations, local funding for acquisition, and mitigation banks can be used to protect wetlands, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

LEARNING FROM TREASURE COAST BEST PRACTICES

The citizen vision-based *Towns, Villages, and Countryside Plan* for the 28-square mile North St. Lucie County area will replace the current planning instructions with a new model that shapes future growth into sustainable towns and villages and uses the market forces of growth as a tool to:

- retain large areas of the countryside;
- comprehensively plan for water management;
- address traffic and infrastructure needs;
- maintain the urban service boundary in its current location; and
- accommodate the next 50 years of growth in a predictable manner that ensures the preservation of the residents’ quality of life.

C. PRINCIPLES AND ACTION STEPS

Principle 1

A combination of tools and strategies work effectively to retain a functional, connected network of rural lands (open space, agriculture, and natural areas).

Agricultural and open space benefits to natural system restoration and CERP:

- Attenuation of stormwater
- Provision of wildlife habitat
- Protection or connection of environmentally sensitive or important lands
- Protection and enhancement of water supply
- Re-establishment of historic north-south movement of water
- The potential for carbon sequestration and carbon trading

The large amount of growth expected over the coming decades presents opportunities as well as challenges for the retention of rural lands. A variety of financial and planning tools exist or can be developed to ensure that new development contributes directly or indirectly to the retention and enhancement of rural lands. The services and benefits provided by rural lands provide an additional opportunity to develop new tools and programs that can contribute to rural lands retention.

Efforts to retain rural lands should include incentive-based approaches, acquisition, and regulations that preserve existing land values and protect private property rights. The protection offered by strategies to retain rural lands must be durable over time, sufficient to survive future development pressures, and result in the retention of a rural landscape in perpetuity.

Action Steps

- a. Fund the retention of some rural lands (including open space and natural lands), in perpetuity, with resources provided by new development through the use of innovative tools, including but not limited to, Transfer of Development Rights programs, Rural Lands Stewardship programs, clustering, and open space requirements.
- b. Develop innovative partnerships between urban areas, local and regional governmental entities, and rural landowners that take advantage of the services and benefits that rural lands can provide to urban areas and the region as a whole. Examples might include compensating rural landowners for wastewater/storm water disposal or user fees for recreation on private rural lands.
- c. Comprehensive plans and land development regulations should include incentives and requirements for preservation of



Revenues provided by new development can be used to fund the retention of rural lands.

rural lands. These incentives and requirements should be incorporated in land development codes that provide visual representations and illustrations of the spatial designs that maximize the desired relationship between development and open space, agricultural lands, or natural lands in rural areas and establish parameters for allowable uses based on the physical form of development.

- d. Develop strategies, programs, and activities that foster new, stronger, and more direct relationships between urban and rural leaders and residents (through Community Stewardship Organizations (CSOs), for example).
- e. Establish an on-going stakeholder group to advocate for and evaluate implementation of these recommendations and to refine them further.
- f. Establish acreage targets for the preservation of rural lands.

Principle 2

Rural lands retention supports natural systems restoration.

Rural lands, and especially agricultural lands, have the potential to enhance the functioning of natural systems in many ways. These include attenuation of stormwater flowing to water bodies, provision of habitat for threatened and endangered species, protection and connection of environmentally sensitive or important lands, protection and enhancement of water supply, and, potentially, carbon sequestration and the possibility of carbon credit trading.

Agriculture and open space that increase stormwater attenuation contribute to the achievement of CERP goals and support reestablishment of historic north-south movement of water that enhances restoration efforts.



The region's agricultural lands are a critical part of restoring and enhancing two highly valued regional assets - our ecosystem and the quality and supply of our water.

Natural areas and habitat, undisturbed and impacted, uplands, and wetlands are steadily being lost in the Treasure Coast. Public purchases will preserve some natural areas. Additional habitat can be preserved, restored, or recreated through rural lands retention strategies or as part of open space management plans associated with new development.

Currently, urban and agricultural water users and natural systems compete for water supplies. Integrated planning and management of these three primary uses can allow water re-use, treatment, and supplementation that can significantly reduce the total amount of water necessary to supply all users and improve water quality. Urban wastewater can be treated by agricultural crop production and the clean water made available for restoration of receiving bodies.

Action Steps

- a. Use rural lands for stormwater attenuation to enhance the outcome of CERP and enhance restoration of water bodies such as the St. Johns River, the Indian River Lagoon, and the Loxahatchee River. (This supports implementation of CERP as outlined in Natural Systems Principle 1.)
- b. Cooperate to identify and implement a connected system of greenways and corridors on rural lands that allow wildlife movement and enhance biodiversity.
- c. Cooperate to identify and reestablish historic north-south movement of water.
- d. Ensure that comprehensive plans and land development regulations result in arrangement of land uses and agricultural activities in rural areas in ways that enhance ecological function.
- e. Use Best Management Practices to enhance environmental restoration.

Principle 3

A sustainable agriculture sector contributes to the retention of rural lands and is a public purpose that justifies local, state, and federal support.

From the regional perspective, a working landscape in which agriculture continues to play a significant role is an important part of rural lands retention. From the state perspective, retention of rural lands has been identified as a goal in statutes and in the state comprehensive plan. From a national perspective, continuation of agriculture contributes to the safer food supply provided by domestic food production. As more of America's food supply is imported, its citizens have no way of knowing if the food they buy was grown under the United States' strict environmental standards or if food supplies may be interrupted by international events. Agriculture also contributes to the balance of trade.

To continue some production agriculture, farmers may require the flexibility to change crops and methods of cultivation to adapt to changing markets and environments. In addition, the number of instances where agricultural lands are in close proximity to urban areas will increase as the Treasure Coast grows. In these areas, specialty agriculture or community agriculture may prove more viable than traditional production agriculture. An overall strategy to support agriculture should address all of these possibilities. Many of the most promising strategies for retention of rural lands will be significantly more effective if supported by new sources of revenue.



A top CSTC priority is securing assistance for our citrus industry and other affected agricultural sectors so that business owners can survive the dual calamities of hurricanes and the spread of canker and avoid selling their land for development.

Action Steps

a. Develop a comprehensive strategy in cooperation with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Services (IFAS) to promote the continuation of agriculture as a viable industry involving state agencies and universities and regional and local public and private sector interests.

To retain rural lands and the many public benefits they provide, it is important that agriculture remain economically viable. Doing that will require local, as well as state and federal, leadership and support and strong public-private partnerships.

Chuck Aller, Director, Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

b. Create a planning and regulatory climate that allows agriculture to evolve and change so it can be economically competitive or adapt to increasing urbanization. This should include the availability in comprehensive plans of sufficient land for the continuation of agriculture.

c. Focus United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and IFAS agricultural research efforts on issues related to the value and continued viability of agriculture in proximity to urban areas, and to shifts in farm size and other changes needed in agricultural practices to maximize the services, benefits, and values agriculture can provide to urban areas.

Increased dedicated state and local funding for innovative programs and creative research is essential if, as a region, we are to preserve the rural lands that we treasure and the natural habitat and systems that rural lands provide us.

Richard Baker, CSTC Member, and President, Pelican Island Audubon Society

d. Promote direct sale of agricultural products in ways, such as local markets, that connect local production with local consumption. These connections will also promote awareness among urban residents of rural lands and their benefits.

e. Develop an interim agricultural support strategy to assist the recovery of citrus and other affected agricultural sectors from the effects of the 2004 hurricanes and canker or similar natural disasters in the future. This strategy should include immediate financial relief through a bridge program to enable citrus growers to continue in sustainable agriculture rather than sell their groves for development as a result of the current crises. Programs developed under this strategy should identify the obligations of landowners who accept assistance.

f. Provide funding for implementation of state programs such as Rural Lands Stewardship areas and the Florida Rural and Family Lands Protection Act.

g. Increase funding for preservation of rural lands in the current Florida Forever program and its successor.

h. Develop partnerships between the public and private sectors and local and national non-profit organizations to implement rural lands protection programs.

V. CREATING A SUSTAINABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

A. BACKGROUND

Our guiding principles:

- Effective comprehensive planning is guided by a shared long-term vision for the region and local communities.
- Decisions regarding the location, scale, and timing of future development support sustainability.
- Vibrant city centers and redevelopment in urban areas contribute to sustainability.
- Communities and the region are served by an interconnected, multi-modal transportation system that maximizes access and mobility, supports sustainable forms of development, and promotes economic prosperity.
- A regional water policy equitably shares the costs and benefits of a sustainable water supply while addressing storm water and wastewater issues.
- A regional approach coordinates hazard resiliency, preparedness, and response efforts.
- Community design enhances safety and security.
- Development, redevelopment, and construction incorporate energy efficiency and conservation.

Building livable communities is essential to the sustainability of the Treasure Coast region. The goal of the built environment recommendations is the creation of livable and sustainable communities. It should serve as a guide for local government planning and decisions that will be made about how to achieve a sustainable vision for success in the Treasure Coast region.

In terms of planning for the built environment in the Treasure Coast region, there are many benefits to be gained from greater and more effective regional collaboration. Many of these benefits have been demonstrated in other communities and regions. These include:

- Access to federal funding and financial incentives is increasingly being targeted and provided for regional level economic development and transportation initiatives. (For instance, under federal guidelines for economic development, local economic development districts no longer receive federal funding. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) formed a new Regional Economic Development District (EDD), and its applications for federal funding receive priority and an additional 10 percent increase in funding for being a regional EDD.)
 - The pooling of resources at the regional level leads to greater planning capacity and expertise to be shared and less unnecessary duplication.
 - Regional approaches allow for cost sharing between local governments and minimize the need for duplicative expenditures.
- Regional collaboration can help to prevent conflict by mutually agreeing in advance to establish a path for problem solving on regional and intergovernmental challenges.

- When policies are developed at the regional level, there is a better opportunity to more effectively inform decision-making by melding legitimate local (i.e., bottom up) concerns with legitimate state (i.e., top down) concerns.

The planning and decision-making regarding the built environment are the primary responsibility of local governments in the region with the cooperation and involvement of citizens, stakeholders, and other public agencies. These guiding principles are intended to be applied in a conceptual way to communities in the region.

A well-planned, high quality built environment can provide for the current and projected population while protecting investments in natural system preservation, conservation, and restoration and allowing retention of viable agricultural and natural lands. The built environment relies on a backbone of natural and physical infrastructure that should be resilient to disasters, as well as being effectively and efficiently planned, developed, and maintained by local, regional, and state partners. Building livable and sustainable communities is essential to the future of the Treasure Coast region and will be a product of intelligent and practical growth policies. In order to act as a good steward of the built environment in the region as well as to sustain today's community, the regional development principles in this report should serve as a guide for local government planning and decisions that will be made about how to achieve the 2030 vision for success in the Treasure Coast region.

Applying the lessons learned from the growth challenges experienced in the past provides the local governments of the Treasure Coast an opportunity to plan a true sustainable form of growth that will result in livable communities, preserve natural systems, and maintain a viable agricultural economy.

Doug Smith, CSTC Built Environment Committee Chair, and Commissioner, Martin County Board of County Commissioners



As urban service boundaries near capacity, local governments looking to expand into the countryside should have a plan describing how they want these newly opened areas of the countryside to be settled.

B. CURRENT EFFORTS IN THE REGION

The planning and decision-making regarding the built environment is the primary responsibility of local governments in the region through their comprehensive plans, with the cooperation and involvement of citizens, stakeholders, and other public agencies.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) is the primary regional planner for the three counties. The TCRPC includes Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, and Palm Beach counties. In 1995 the TCRPC developed a Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) to help guide development in the region. The SRPP includes a vision for the future of the region that is expressed by four

guiding principles related to future growth: (1) Preserve the Environment, (2) Revitalize Existing Urban Areas, (3) Create New Towns, and (4) Prevent Sprawl. The SRPP is not intended to be a mandate or dictum to local governments, special districts, and citizens in the region. It is an instruction manual to be used for guidance in building a more healthy and sustainable region. TCRPC policies have shaped the local governments' policies regarding town planning, urban design, downtown redevelopment, community consensus building, traffic and public facility concurrency, disaster preparedness and sheltering, upland habitat protection, wetland habitat protection, urban growth boundaries, workforce housing and inclusionary zoning, hazardous materials and waste, endangered and threatened species, revenue sharing, school concurrency, and water management and water quality. Over the next ten years, TCRPC will send hundreds of recommendations and messages to local governments about the future of the region based on its regional vision and plan.

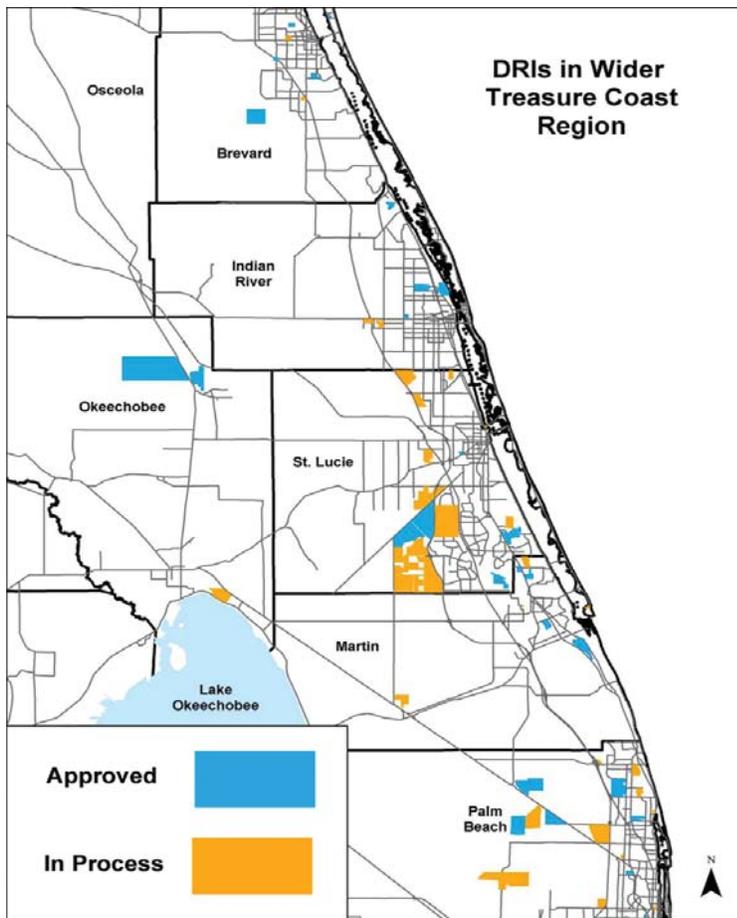
THE TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REGIONAL GROWTH:

- Preserve the environment
- Revitalize existing urban areas
- Create new towns
- Prevent sprawl

In addition, significant regional planning activities are ongoing in the following areas:

In addition, significant regional planning activities are ongoing in the following areas:

- 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan development for Martin/St. Lucie and Indian River Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- North St. Lucie County Charter and Towns, Villages, and Countryside Comprehensive Plan Amendments
- Urban Land Institute Advisory Council reports for Port St. Lucie.



Planning for the Developments of Regional Impact(DRI) currently approved or under review underscores the need for a shared long-term vision for the future.

C. PRINCIPLES AND ACTION STEPS

Principle 1

Effective comprehensive planning is guided by a shared long-term vision for the region and local communities.

The choices we make today will shape our future. The region's future built environment should be shaped by design, not by default, and this can only take place if the various sectors in the region invest in effective planning to help achieve a sustainable region. A well-planned, high quality built environment can provide for the current and projected population while protecting investments in natural system preservation, conservation, and restoration and allowing retention of viable agricultural and natural lands. Comprehensive plans should serve as roadmaps that provide a shared vision of a desired destination for the communities in the region.

Action Steps

- a. Develop a regional vision and complementary community visions that
 - serve to guide the path, place, and timing of future redevelopment and new development;
 - take advantage of community and regional assets; and
 - emphasize joint use of community and regional facilities, both public and private.
- b. Establish policies and joint planning agreements that address the interconnectedness of communities in the region and the impacts that one community's vision and planning decisions can have on neighboring communities regarding future annexations, future utility service areas, future development patterns, transportation areas, and hazardous material storage areas.
- c. Offer rewards such as expedited permits and infrastructure improvements to development that conforms to the shared regional vision.

2030 PROJECTED POPULATION LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Indian River	208,480
St. Lucie*	610,000
Martin	194,735
Total for Region	1,013,215

* Projection for Port St. Lucie is 331,857.

2005 Treasure Coast Metropolitan Planning Organizations' plans predict a higher rate of growth than prior projections, underscoring the need for communities to work together as they decide where and how growth occurs.

To provide a high quality environment for our residents, public and private sectors must work together to develop a long-term vision for the Treasure Coast. Community visions should be sensitive to issues that interconnect with other communities and their related impacts.

Robert E. Minsky, CSTC Built Environment Committee member, and Mayor, City of Port St. Lucie

Principle 2

Decisions regarding the location, scale, and timing for future development support sustainability.

Local land use decisions can be an effective way to support regional strategies for livable communities that offer a wide range of housing, work, education, leisure, and recreation choices. Local land use decisions also affect land conservation and preservation efforts. Without land use decisions that support regional strategies for sustainability, the quality of life in the region will diminish.

Action Steps

- a. Consistent with the new 2005 growth management legislation, revisit and coordinate urban service boundaries through a three county regional inter-local agreement.
- b. Work collaboratively during the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) process to build consensus among local governments regarding:
 - appropriate locations and scales for future development;
 - land use, infrastructure, and service delivery issues;
 - creative strategies and incentives that promote diverse, distinctive, attractive, and walkable communities;
 - promotion of a diversity of recreation opportunities and options for all residents that includes access to active recreation facilities, regional parks, water front parks, urban open spaces, bike lanes, and publicly owned lands.
- c. Reflect the results of this process in an illustrated land use map for the region.
- d. Ensure that land use planning and land development regulations produce land use and development decisions that are compatible with the sustainability of natural systems and steer development to lands whose contribution to natural systems and the suitability of agriculture is minimal.



By making collaborative decisions about the location, scale, and timing of development, Treasure Coast counties can avoid the fate of so many regions where sprawl has degraded the natural environment, countryside, and quality of urban life.

The upcoming updates of local land use and development regulations provide Treasure Coast communities an opportunity to shape and time future growth so that it is compatible with our natural systems and the housing, recreational, and economic needs of our residents.

Jerry Mabus, CSTC Social Systems Committee member, and Broker and Salesman, AFRS Commercial Division, All Florida Realty Services, Inc.

- e. Use full cost accounting tools as outlined in Principle 4 in Section VIII to review proposed developments and make decisions on alternative development patterns for the region.
- f. Develop a program where developments set aside land, build infrastructure and schools, and/or provide other fair share contributions for schools.

Principle 3

Vibrant city centers and redevelopment in urban areas contribute to sustainability.

Local governments in the region should encourage the use of compact, mixed-use development and redevelopment in-fill projects that are less costly to serve, have less impact on the natural environment, and help to strengthen and diversify the economies of existing urban areas. Any increases in density to accommodate future growth must be consistent with the community's vision.



Shaping new development into compact, mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods that get people out of their cars and are less costly to serve and live in will help protect the natural environment and strengthen local economies.

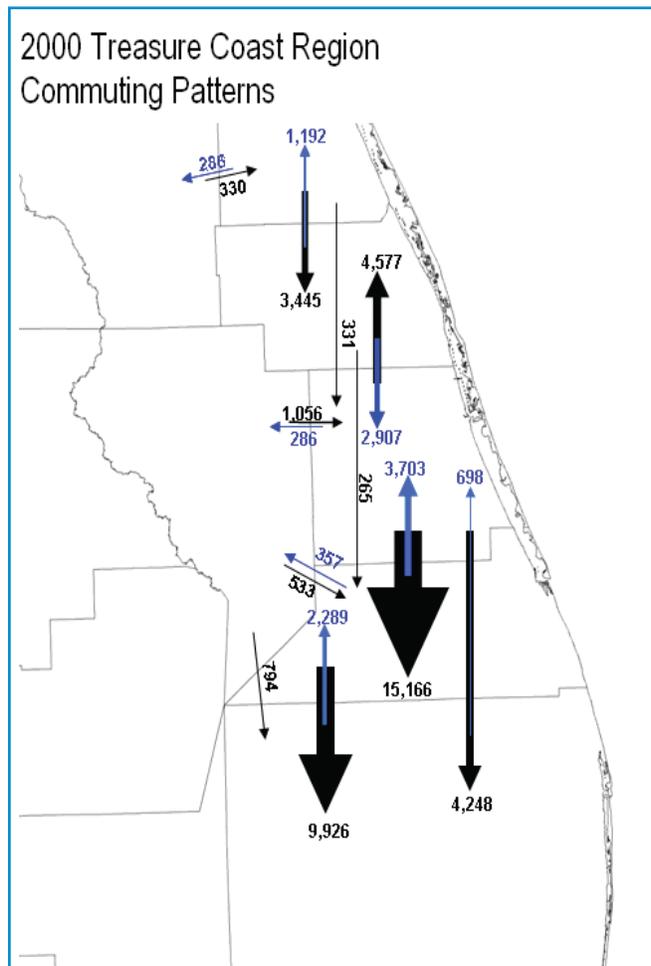
Action Steps

- a. Create vibrant city centers.
- b. Provide incentives for the preparation and implementation of redevelopment and revitalization master plans for distressed and incomplete neighborhoods and underutilized commercial districts.
- c. Prioritize infrastructure investments for redeveloping urban areas.
- d. Work together in the EARs process to develop and implement a design element as a part of each comprehensive plan. These should utilize quality architectural and urban design standards in the rehabilitation and construction of public buildings consistent with the context and historic architectural character of the redevelopment area. Urban design and architectural studies should be performed when evaluating residential and commercial projects within redevelopment areas. Such studies analyze building typology and compatibility, land use mix, and the overall impact of the project on the surrounding neighborhood or district.
- e. Give preference to development forms and designs, such as transit villages, that minimize dependency on the automobile while encouraging and accommodating public transit, reduce the number and length of vehicle trips, and promote dispersal of traffic through interconnections among developments and retention or establishment of grid street networks.

Principle 4

Communities and the region are served by an interconnected, multi-modal transportation system that maximizes access and mobility, supports sustainable forms of development, and promotes economic prosperity.

Reliance in the region on the automobile as the primary mode of transportation has promoted sprawling development, proven to be very costly, and left significant segments of the population (e.g., the young, the elderly, the disabled, and low-income residents) with limited transportation choices. New development and redevelopment need to provide for various interconnected modes of transportation. Intra-regional and inter-regional mobility needs to be assured through effective, well-coordinated, and adequately funded transportation planning and programming efforts. The linkages between land use and transportation need to be better understood to promote mutually beneficial land use and transportation investment decisions.



North-south and east-west automobile traffic within the region continue to increase as more and more residents commute to jobs and have no choice but to rely on their cars.

Intra-regional and inter-regional mobility needs to be assured through effective, well-coordinated, and adequately funded transportation planning and programming efforts. The linkages between land use and transportation need to be better understood to promote mutually beneficial land use and transportation investment decisions.

Transportation planning and programming responsibilities relevant to the region currently fall to local governments, transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) designated for urbanized areas (UZAs), the TCRPC, and the state. The MPOs and the TCRPC, in particular, are charged with addressing transportation from a regional perspective and in relation to land use. The two MPOs for the UZA in eastern St. Lucie and Martin counties are developing a single 2030 regional long range transportation plan and related regional-level plans addressing transit, bicycles/pedestrians/greenways, freight and goods movement, and congestion management. The third MPO in the

region, serving the UZA in eastern Indian River County, will join the other two MPOs in identifying a regional (tri-county) multimodal transportation system and prioritizing projects on the system. All three MPOs are exploring transportation/land use alternatives as part of their long range planning efforts. The state is leading implementation of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) designed to provide for inter-regional and statewide mobility.

Action Steps

- a. Have the MPOs in the region continue to work together to identify and effectively address local and regional multimodal transportation needs through their planning, programming, and public involvement functions.
- b. Further efforts to improve transportation and land use linkages, particularly in support of increased transportation choices, through MPO partnerships with local governments and the TCRPC.
- c. Continue the evolution of transportation planning structures, products, and processes so they are able to meet challenges and opportunities in the region while ensuring efficient and effective utilization of available resources. The Port St. Lucie urbanized area MPO has already committed to exploring formation of a Regional Transit/Transportation Authority.
- d. Increase public and private efforts to close the large gap between funding required and funding available to meet local and regional transportation needs while ensuring equitable generation and distribution of funding.
- e. Use a combination of local government comprehensive plan and land development regulation requirements and incentives to ensure provision of a full range of interconnected transportation modes (walking, biking, and public transit) and protection of transportation investments.
- f. Promote development forms and designs that maximize use of existing transportation infrastructure, reduce the number and length of vehicle trips, and disperse traffic through interconnections among developments and retention or establishment of grid street networks.
- g. Plan for and implement a fixed route public transit system for the region and ensure that development and redevelopment around stations and along corridors, where appropriate, have transit-supportive characteristics (e.g., adjacent compact, higher density/intensity and mixed land uses with emphasis on workforce housing and surrounded by a fine-grained network of streets usable by pedestrians and bicyclists).

LEARNING FROM TREASURE COAST BEST PRACTICES

The three *Treasure Coast Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)* are taking major steps forward to plan innovatively and together for the region's growth. Their planning processes to guide major transportation investments now employ visioning tools to engage the public and local governments in exploring trends, understanding transportation/land use connections, and considering alternative futures. Also, their plans are beginning to include regional-level components to reflect shared goals, shared facilities, and a shared responsibility for delivering improvements to the regional transportation system. Past practices yielded MPO plans focused on separate parts of the region and adopted local land use plans.

The interrelationship of transportation and growth will have a profound effect on the economic vitality and quality of life of tomorrow's Treasure Coast. The MPOs and their partners must plan for a full range of interconnected transportation modes, lessening our reliance on single passenger vehicles and long trip lengths.

James A. Wolfe, P.E., District
Secretary, FDOT District 4

- h. Secure access to the FEC Railway corridor as part of a regional corridor redevelopment initiative through purchase, lease, or negotiated use.
- i. Design neighborhoods to provide for housing, schools, services, and facilities conducive to meeting special access and mobility needs of the young, the elderly, the disabled, and low-income residents.
- j. Employ innovative approaches to meeting transportation needs associated with accessing jobs, educational services, and health care (e.g., transportation demand management and school pools).

Local, regional, and state planning processes and incentives should help ensure a full range of connected transportation options that will decrease traffic congestion and reduce the need for our residents to drive so far to work or for housing and basic services.

Thomas A. Gonzalez, CSTC Economic Diversity Committee member, and Owner, Sunflower Educare Center

Principle 5

A regional water policy equitably shares the costs and benefits of a sustainable water supply while addressing storm water and wastewater issues.

Action Steps

- a. Local governments should commit to working together to strengthen existing comprehensive plan policies that require the protection and conservation of potable water supplies, water resources, and recharge areas and protection of wellfields by including regional recognition and strategies that are developed in the Regional Water Supply Plans of the South Florida Water Management District and the St. Johns Water Management District. This should be undertaken as a joint effort by all local governments in the region as part of the upcoming EAR process for local government comprehensive plans.
- b. Conduct an engineering and water supply study and needs assessment for the region.
- c. Implement programs to regionalize wastewater and stormwater treatment, develop central sewer systems, and move away from reliance on septic systems in urban areas.
- d. Integrate urban areas, agriculture, and natural systems within regional water supply, waste water, and stormwater management plans to minimize competition for water, restore natural systems, and maximize the financial value of services and benefits provided by agriculture.
- e. Make future development consistent with the availability of water supply infrastructure that provides a sustainable source of water.
- f. Encourage and implement programs to maximize water reuse and conservation in lieu of current disposal options.

- g. Provide public outreach and education and develop Best Management Practices for all land uses regarding water conservation, water quality, and landscaping. This should include residential information on the use of nitrogen fertilizer and pesticides.
- h. Develop and implement stormwater Best Management Practices.

A regional approach, along with local cooperation, is needed to ensure that we protect the quality and quantity of our water and address storm and wastewater, as well as water conservation, issues. Alternative sources of fresh water will need to be part of the future.

Thomas P. White, CSTC member, and Vice Mayor, City of Vero Beach

Principle 6

A regional approach coordinates hazard resiliency, preparedness, and response efforts.

Disasters of all types can have a profound economic and social impact on communities. The rapid development of the Treasure Coast suggests that now is the time to substantially advance regional hazard mitigation efforts by focusing on building resiliency, strategic land use planning and regulation, appropriate infrastructure investment, comprehensive emergency preparedness, support of financially sound insurance practices, environmental disasters, and health epidemics. The region would best be served by a hazard mitigation planning framework that embraces the principles of sustainable development, such as environmental quality, economic vitality, quality of life, inter- and intra-generational equity, and community participation.

During its deliberations, the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast reacted to the unprecedented occurrence of two major hurricanes and a tropical storm impacting the Treasure Coast in the 2004 tropical storm season. A special “Storm Report” was prepared by the Committee for the Florida Legislature and is an appendix to this report. Further, the catastrophic damage caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the upper Gulf Coast demonstrates the need to address these issues.



Hazard mitigation planning, including comprehensive plans, needs to promote sustainable development practices and address the unique needs of agriculture and high hazard coastal areas.

The emergency management system in the region operates through a coordinated process connecting the federal, state, and local (primarily county) governments. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council is involved in improving the hazard mitigation planning for the region. In addition, local private and not-for-profit service providers play very important roles in the recovery and long term planning processes. More can be done to be sure that the numerous not-for-profit providers are coordinated and trained in their roles.

The comprehensive plans identify the Coastal High Hazards area, but little is said as to how this area is or should be planned differently from other parts of the counties. Current state planning mandates and administrative code requirements provide a good context for local governments to properly address critical hazard mitigation issues. As local and regional mitigation policies are also nested within an array of federal policies and programs administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Army Corps of Engineers, and others, careful consideration is needed with regard to the influence of these factors on local goals.

Action Steps

a. Collaborate on a regional integrated hazard mitigation plan that anticipates disasters, responds to recovery needs of residents and visitors, and mitigates against future human injury.

b. Conduct a detailed regional vulnerability assessment of multiple hazard risks that is geographically detailed and comprehensively addresses the built and natural environments and the social and economic dimensions of the community. The assessment should address

- functional and operational aspects of emergency and special need shelters;
- the need for a regional catastrophic incident response plan;
- the development of social service provider disaster response plans, especially crisis responders;
- County staff as points of contact in the Emergency Operations Centers to help coordinate social service first responders throughout the region;
- the current capacity of county Health Departments to react and respond to problems resulting from environmental health disasters;
- the ability of new public buildings to act as shelters, especially special needs shelters; and
- the ability of community buildings within private development to serve as shelters.

c. Develop a public information program to inform consumers of hazard risks and potential strategies such as installing storm shutters, retrofitting buildings, and emergency planning.

The not-for-profit sector and governments must work together to develop a seamless, comprehensive disaster response plan that addresses the safety and health needs of all residents, as well as the needs of the region's built and natural environment.

Patricia Austin, CSTC Built Environment Committee member, and Consultant and Facilitator, Martin County Community

- d. Relocate wastewater treatment facilities from coastal high hazard areas.
- e. Participate in proposed state review of coastal high hazard programs and policies that impact the region’s barrier islands.

Principle 7

Community design enhances safety and security.

Crime, public safety, and security have become major planning issues in the region’s urban areas. Careful consideration of the physical structure of a neighborhood or district can help in the prevention of crime and enhance security while contributing to establishing a sense of pride and ownership throughout the community. Placing emphasis on public spaces by having “eyes on the street” can also deter crime. Building streets that facilitate not just traffic conveyance but also human interactions and are designed with safety in mind for all modes of transportation is part how safety and security can be enhanced through the region’s built environment. Design steps such as having the front of buildings toward the street, having appropriate uses and compatible building types, and building wide, shaded sidewalks that encourage pedestrian activity all contribute to safer communities in the region.

Action Steps

- a. Establish and support an initiative to incorporate and embrace best development practices for providing safer and more secure communities for future development and redevelopment in the region.
- b. Build upon the goals and strategies set forth in the Regional Strategic Policy Plan in order to encourage the design of neighborhoods and districts in the region which emphasize:
 - informal surveillance of public spaces (streets, squares, parking areas, and the like) by encouraging appropriate building types and building orientations;
 - safe calm streets, where pedestrians and bicyclists can share the space with automobiles; and
 - integration of police and fire station facilities into neighborhoods and districts.



Development practices and public spaces that promote building “eyes” on pedestrian-friendly streets deter crime and encourage social interaction.

How we design our communities and neighborhoods can make them more secure. More walkable sidewalks and calmer streets lined with the windows and doors of buildings can help prevent crime by creating more activity on the street and encouraging interaction.

Robert L. Crowder, CSTC
Committee member, and Sheriff,
Martin County Sheriff’s Office

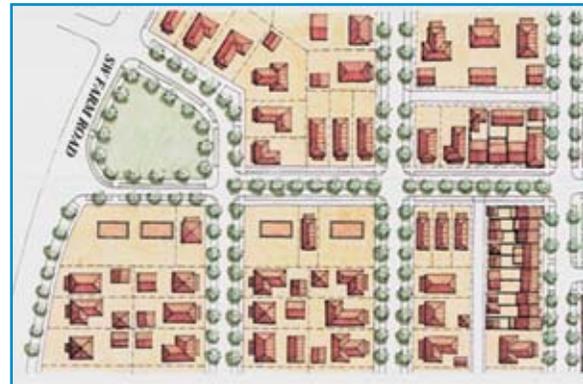
- c. Consult with local law enforcement when major building projects are proposed for suggestions on the safety and security of the design and the adequacy of existing law enforcement resources to provide protection.

Principle 8

Development, redevelopment, and construction incorporate energy efficiency and conservation. The design of towns and cities can play an important role in energy and water efficiency and the amount of material needed in construction. Compact development requires fewer resources to build, needs less water for irrigation, and encourages walking and bicycling, thereby reducing dependency on fossil fuels.

Action Steps

- a. Set goals and establish and support an initiative to encourage energy efficient building throughout the region.
- b. Set “green building” goals for all types of buildings. All public buildings should meet green building standards.
- c. Amend land development regulations to include model provisions addressing energy efficiency and conservation in the built environment. Examples of strategies that might be addressed include proper siting according to solar orientation, design of passive architectural systems, site designs that provide shade to buildings, use of sustainable building materials, and use of solar mechanical systems, etc.



Compact, walkable development and green-building practices use fewer resources.

VI. ENHANCING ACCESS TO EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

EDUCATION

A. BACKGROUND

Our guiding principles:

- An exemplary system of life-long learning meets the needs of a diverse and growing economy and reflects the culture and environment of the region.
- Affordable and accessible healthcare services provide physical, mental, and preventive care.
- Institutions, programs, and events promote the arts, preserve and communicate the unique heritage of the region, and respond to a culturally diverse and changing population.

A quality educational system will enable our youngest citizens to our life-long learners to meet their potential. It also will attract new jobs and businesses, supply companies with a qualified workforce, and provide opportunities for our youth to create their future in the Treasure Coast.

Dr. Sara A. Wilcox, CSTC Education Committee member, and Superintendent, Martin County School District

Education is the cornerstone of a sustainable region. Education provides greater opportunities for students of all ages. Education increases the possibilities that students can reach their greatest potential. A sustainable Treasure Coast needs to be a “learning community,” emphasizing quality education starting with birth, pre-kindergarten, K12, post-secondary, graduate research, career and technical training and retraining, and life-long learning for adults that will prepare individuals of the Treasure Coast for a brighter future.

Quality pre-kindergarten programs provide children with a greater opportunity for success in school. Readiness to start school continues to be one of the highest predictors of success. Helping all parents to enhance school readiness has become an important component of the work of the three school districts in the region. It is critical to focus on assisting families with lower incomes to access strong pre-kindergartens in order to close achievement gaps for students so they will not enter school behind their peers.

The education system is closely linked with the economic prosperity of the region. A quality education system will attract new businesses and skilled workers to the Treasure Coast and provide retraining for existing workers. Relocating adults are looking for good schools for their children as well as for continuing educational opportunities for themselves. Conversely, higher paying jobs are needed to keep the

best performing students and employees in the region. Businesses and educational leaders need to continue working together to identify specific workforce needs and to provide an educational system that can supply a workforce skilled in language, math, science, and technology.

Every effort should be made to enhance regional cooperation between providers of educational services and to address disparities in equity, quality, and performance across the region and to insure that the region produces the highest performing students in the state and country.

B. CURRENT EFFORTS IN THE REGION

A great deal of collaboration exists throughout the region among the various public and private educational providers. There is increasing attention on public and private partnerships as the vehicles to leverage available resources and focus on solving shared problems. Joint legislative agendas are discussed for the region in cooperation with adjacent counties in order to pursue new funding and facilities that are critical to improving educational access in the region.

The pre-kindergarten system is maturing due to recent state legislation, although there are still problems with access to the system by families with lower incomes.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council has taken the lead in working with the district school systems to create a consistent set of data on student projections and to assist them in complying with the new school concurrency requirements. The Treasure Coast Educators Coalition is a unique effort to annually bring together educational providers to examine how to collaborate on educational programs and new technology.

The Treasure Coast Research Coalition provides a forum where representatives of Florida Atlantic University (FAU), Indian River Community College (IRCC), the University of Florida, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, and other institutions of higher learning can meet and agree on joint research priorities important to the region.

The three superintendents and the boards of education of the three public school districts are working together on articulation agreements to make the region among the highest performing regions in the state. The districts collaborate with FAU and IRCC and the region's economic development agencies to encourage advance placement programs. FAU and IRCC are focusing on the need to increase baccalaureate programs.

LEARNING FROM TREASURE COAST BEST PRACTICES

Created in 1991, the *Treasure Coast Educators Coalition (TCEC)* provides a forum where educators can collaborate on current and emerging educational programs and new technologies and address concerns common to all educational levels. Results include increased funding and partnering to create new math, science, and technology programs. TCEC members include Indian River Community College; Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie county school systems; Florida Atlantic University Treasure Coast Campus; Barry University Treasure Coast site; and the University of Florida Indian River Research and Education Center.

The Treasure Coast Educators Coalition is well positioned to address critical regional issues, including secondary school reform and teacher qualifications, training, pay, and housing, and to advocate for education funding that will place Florida in the top 10 percent of all states for dollars spent per pupil.

Michael J. Lannon, CSTC Built Environment Committee member, and Superintendent, School District of St. Lucie County

C. PRINCIPLES AND ACTION STEPS

Principle 1

An exemplary system of life-long learning meets the needs of a diverse and growing economy and reflects the culture and environment of the region.

Access to education includes the availability of educational facilities, the ability to travel to the educational facilities, including access to distance learning, and the affordability of educational options. Lack of resources and affordability are especially problematic in the pre-K system. Lower income families are at a distinct disadvantage in trying to access this critical resource. K12 challenges include a shortage of highly qualified teachers, a lack of land set aside for schools, and few devices available to local governments to raise funds for construction. Higher education facilities will continue to be stretched as the number of college age students increases and the need for expanding the baccalaureate degrees continues to expand.

By working together, the three Treasure Coast school districts can meet the educational needs of a growing, diverse population and economy, as well as address funding and new state school concurrency requirements.

Thomas B. Maher, CSTC member,
and Superintendent, School
District of Indian River County

In order for the Treasure Coast public schools to compete nationally, additional funding and resources from all public and private funding sources are necessary. Schools must rely on local, state, and federal revenues, as well as on bond and lottery funds, to support teachers, curricula, administrators, and infrastructure. The need to keep pace with population growth, class size reduction requirements, concerns about renovating older school facilities, and the increasing costs of land and materials means that every source of funding should be explored, and existing sources, such as impact fees, should not be restricted.

Action steps to address these issues need to build on the existing regional collaborations and should focus on regional solutions and agendas to address new state educational requirements such as those found in the 2005 growth management legislation.

Action Steps

Pre-Kindergarten

- a. Improve the quality and accessibility of Pre-K programs in the region, including access for children from lower income families to transportation, health services, and meals.

K-12th Grade

- b. Using the existing TCRPC collaborative process, develop a regional response by the three local school districts and local governments to create inter-local agreements required to meet new school concurrency requirements.

c. Create partnerships with the public and private sectors to address the impact of population growth when the impacts occur in the schools.

d. Develop land banking programs in conjunction with early site selection to ensure the availability of sites in appropriate locations.

e. Move toward neighborhood school designs, where applicable, and support school designs and programs that maximize the ability of students to safely walk or bike to school.



Investment in state of the art schools makes students and the region more competitive.

f. Provide access to workforce housing at all price levels for teachers and administrators throughout the region.

g. Consider expanding the membership and broadening the agenda of the Treasure Coast Education Coalition to examine all possible regional solutions, including teacher qualifications and pay commensurate with high performance and funding alternatives for secondary and post secondary education.

h. Enhance language programs:

- to meet the emerging needs of an increasingly diverse regional population;
- so that every student learns a second language;
- so non-English speaking students achieve fluency in English.

i. Ensure that per pupil spending is in the top 10 percent in the nation.

j. Identify the needs of regional businesses that offer high wage and high skill jobs, in order to help educators design curriculum. Develop a profile of a high-wage, high-skill workers that would include abilities in areas such as problem solving, critical thinking, math, and science.

k. Develop continuing adult education programs that enhance life skills.

l. Create a science and technology high school that will accept students statewide and from throughout the region.

Post Secondary Education (colleges, universities, adult education, continuing education, vocational programs, and technical programs)

m. Provide creative new programs that meet the demands of the workplace.

n. Expand the Treasure Coast Education Coalition to include representatives of regional business organizations and find new ways to integrate the educational research and training infrastructure to meet the future needs of business. This should include recruiting students for identified career paths needed by business.

o. Expand advanced degree options to meet the needs of the next generation of high school graduates, including expanded advanced placement and dual enrollment, to advance the skills of the workforce and to attract high quality businesses to the region. This may be done through the expansion of existing institutions and/or the creation of new ones.

p. Strengthen the collaborative efforts of the business community, Indian River Community College, Florida Atlantic University, Barry University, and the University of Florida to develop workforce training.



A world-class education system, starting with the pre-K system and continuing to our higher education facilities, prepares residents for future challenges and supports the needs of businesses in our region.

HEALTH

A. BACKGROUND

Sustainability of the Treasure Coast depends upon having a healthy population, one in which individuals and families lead active lives and have access to a strong primary care system consisting of basic health services, clean water and air, sufficient housing with basic sanitation, and adequate nutrition. Persistent disparities exist in health status between racial and ethnic groups, men and women, and high and low levels of both income and education.

There is strong evidence that behavior and environment are responsible for more than 70 percent of avoidable mortality (McGinnis and Foege, 1993).ⁱⁱⁱ The Treasure Coast is no exception in this trend of underestimating and overlooking the role of the community in achieving health gains (Institute of Medicine, 2003).^{iv} It is critical that we recognize and act on addressing healthy behaviors and a healthy environment for the Treasure Coast, outside of the traditional health care delivery system.

Access by all citizens to quality, affordable health care and to a healthy environment where they can lead active lives and have adequate nutrition is essential to a successful and sustainable Treasure Coast.

Jean Kline, CSTC Social Systems
Committee member, and Administrator,
Indian River County Department of Health

The uninsured and the underinsured – about one in five working-age adults and one in seven children – are the most visible and troubling sign of the nation’s failure to assure access to health care. In February 2005, the Agency for Health Care Administration reported a number of findings from a household telephone survey entitled *A Profile of Uninsured Floridians*.^v In this report, Treasure Coast Counties are included with Brevard as District 11. District 11 has 5.3 percent of the state’s population and 5.2 percent of the uninsured. Being uninsured, although not the only barrier to obtaining health care, is by all indications the most significant one.

Demographically, the Treasure Coast reports a significantly larger percent of the population over 65 years of age, which brings with it higher demands on health care, special medical needs shelters, home health agencies, meals on wheels, and limited public transportation.

PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO HEALTH CARE IN THE TREASURE COAST:

- Economic
- Geographic and transportation
- Socio-cultural

If we are to be successful as a region, we must be able to offer affordable and accessible quality health care for all residents – for all ages and for all incomes.

Darrell J. Drummond, CSTC Committee member, and President/CEO, Council on Aging of St. Lucie, Inc.

A survey that identified principal perceived barriers to health care for Treasure Coast residents was documented in the Treasure Coast Health County District 9 Health Plan, 2003.^{vi} For economic barriers, the following were cited: high cost of services, limited hours for publicly funded primary care, and limited providers for Medicare and Medicaid. For geographic and transportation barriers, the following were cited: inadequate transportation and long distances to travel from rural areas to clinics. For socio-cultural barriers, the following were cited: health disparities between whites and non-whites, cultural beliefs and practices, and the fact that immigration/naturalization/citizenship status affects access to care.

Certainly, there are many issues involved in considering sustainability for health care in the next 30 years on the Treasure Coast. However,

the most important issue is ensuring a healthier tomorrow. In order to achieve this, we must ensure that all of our residents have access to a strong primary care system consisting of basic health services, clean water and air, sufficient housing with basic sanitation, communities that are elder-ready and support active lifestyles, and adequate nutrition.

B. CURRENT EFFORTS IN THE REGION

Several commendable partnerships have formed in the Treasure Coast, but the impetus has been primarily on individual county initiatives. Better organization would help address issues of access, manage chronic disease, and provide medical preventive services, including oral, mental health and substance abuse services, known nationally as neglected health care services. Palm Beach County and Indian River County have created health care districts. The capacity of our health care delivery system must be addressed to better serve the population in terms of cultural competence, quality, the workforce, financing, information technology, and emergency preparedness.

C. PRINCIPLES AND ACTION STEPS

Principle 2

Affordable and accessible health services provide physical, mental, and preventive care. Health care efforts in the region must address physical, mental, and preventive services. Health care must be affordable and accessible for all residents of the Treasure Coast.

Action Steps

- a. Formulate collaborative local approaches based upon the essential public health services to address issues of access, managing chronic disease such as HIV/AIDS, clinical preventive services, oral and mental health care, and substance abuse services.
- b. Provide support for basic health care services for the poor and other special populations.
- c. Address the role of our local communities in achieving health gains and eliminating disparities through a coordinated comprehensive health planning approach.
- d. As the population grows, regional collaboration will be necessary for tertiary specialty care including trauma care, such as a level five trauma center in the region.
- e. Address environmental health concerns in the region, such as those stemming from water pollution, mercury, lead, pesticides, contaminated properties, and brownfield sites.
- f. Participate in the Elder Ready Community Programs sponsored by the Department of Elder Affairs.
- g. The Treasure Coast Health Council should publicize annual data and assist communities in health services planning.
- h. Develop funding for a professional nurse at every school site.
- i. Encourage greater regional collaboration between public safety, homeland security, and public health agencies for response to emergencies.
- j. Encourage health care providers to provide consistent insurance coverage for residents in the region.
- k. Establish a regional health care district, modeled on districts established by Palm Beach County or Indian River County, to help generate revenue.



Regional cooperation is needed to ensure that, as the population grows, health care efforts address physical, mental, and preventive care.

- I. Establish and monitor an agreed upon sustainability indicator set for health care using a national indicator set such as the National Healthy Communities Indicators.

CULTURE AND THE ARTS

A. BACKGROUND

Arts and cultural resources help define, build, connect, promote, and celebrate the many wonderful and diverse communities on the Treasure Coast. Our diverse populations help make the Treasure Coast unique, and arts and cultural resources help build greater understanding and cooperation among our diverse populations. They connect us in creative ways, strengthen the fabric of our communities, and add to the quality of all our lives.

Arts and culture are connected and intertwined throughout every aspect of our communities and lives. Each year, the health profession – senior care centers, hospitals, rehabilitation programs, and treatment facilities – adds more arts and humanities programs into their overall approach to improve patients’ health and their spirits. The Society for the Arts in Healthcare continues to incorporate arts and humanities into the education and treatment of patients. Health professionals realize that these programs have demonstrated their positive impact on the quality of life of their patients and families.

Arts and culture are important in the development of our children. Research demonstrates the power of the arts to transform our schools and strengthen student achievement and engagement in learning. The arts can provide effective learning opportunities to the general student population, yielding increased academic performance, reduced absenteeism, and better skill-building. Involvement in the arts is one avenue by which at-risk youth can acquire the various competencies necessary to become economically self-sufficient over the long-term, rather than becoming a financial strain on their states and communities. An increasing number of community-based organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, youth museums, libraries, and parks and recreation departments are using arts programs to reduce risky behaviors and build critical self-discipline, communication, and job skills.

Arts and culture contribute to the economy. Cultural tourism is an important component of tourism. Visitors often include cultural events and facilities in their visits to the Treasure Coast. The



The arts can transform schools and increase student performance and love of learning.

Arts and culture are essential components of a truly prosperous and healthy community. They enable us to celebrate diversity and can be used to enrich, educate, and heal.

Elizabeth Whittles, CSTC Social Systems Co-Chair, and Director of Program Development, Children’s Services Council of Martin County.

diversity of history and culture in the region, from the unique cultural history of Ft. Pierce to the magnificence of the Indian River Lagoon system, offers a wealth of experiences to residents and visitors alike.

B. CURRENT EFFORTS IN THE REGION

The Sunrise Theater, the Lyric Theater, the Riverside Theater, and the Indian River Community College Performing Arts Department are examples of excellent local cultural efforts in the region. More support is needed for these types of local efforts in order to provide quality cultural opportunities throughout the region. In addition to these local efforts, some regional approaches could increase cultural opportunities. A regional center could provide a venue for larger events and activities. A regional heritage trail could be developed that would include all of the important historical, cultural, and environmental locations in the region. An oral history of the region could be developed in various forms and presented in kiosks around the region. Because much of the culture of the region is based on water activities, an environmental tourism program could be developed, capitalizing on the Indian River Lagoon and the ocean.



The region's natural beauty provides a venue for celebrating the arts and the environment.

C. PRINCIPLES AND ACTION STEPS

Principle 3

Institutions, programs, and events promote the arts, preserve and communicate the unique heritage of the region, and respond to a culturally diverse and changing population.

Arts and culture are a critical piece to creating sustainability. It has been shown that more people attend arts and cultural events in community venues – such as open air spaces, schools, and places of worship – than in conventional arts venues such as concert halls, theaters, museums, and art galleries. These findings confirm the wisdom of one strategy employed by many arts organizations: presenting arts and cultural activities in places normally used for other purposes. The Treasure Coast has a rich heritage of culture and diversity that should be preserved and communicated through the arts.

Action Steps

- a. Coordinate the efforts of the three Treasure Coast counties to support existing facilities and expand cultural and arts opportunities in the region for all in the region, including low-income residents.

- b. Establish community centers throughout the region that can provide places for cultural and community programs and serve as emergency shelters.
- c. Develop hotels and conference centers that can support regional cultural activities.
- d. Develop regional projects that expand cultural opportunities.
- e. Create cultural and arts after-school opportunities accessible for all children in the region.
- f. Develop a regional oral history program based on the work of the Indian River Community College.
- g. Develop of a Treasure Coast heritage trail to promote tourism and provide opportunities for residents to learn more about the region.
- h. Allocate areas in comprehensive plans for arts and culture in urban centers and new communities.

VII. ACHIEVING ECONOMIC DIVERSITY AND PROSPERITY

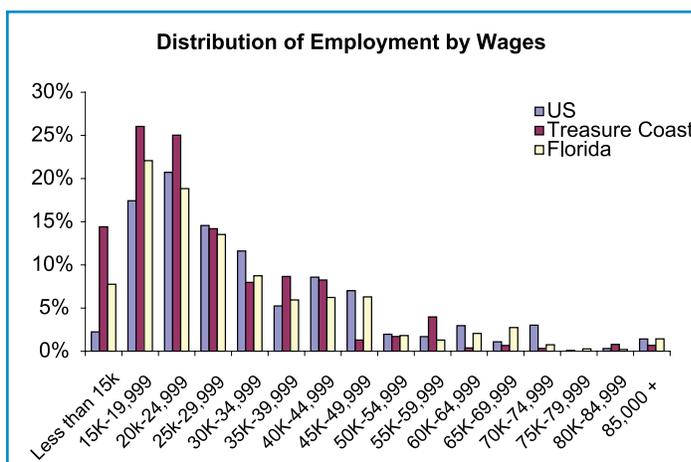
A. BACKGROUND

Economic diversity and prosperity are essential to a sustainable region and are directly tied to economic development. Economic diversity refers to the mix of businesses and industries found in a locale. It implies that a prosperous economy is best supported by many different types of businesses and industries that together to smooth out the ebb and flow of different economic cycles, offer better wages and working conditions, provide opportunities for advancement, and add income to the local economy. Economic development involves developing industrial areas, marketing, helping existing businesses with regulatory problems that stymie expansion, tax subsidies, customized worker training, and informational programs.

The Treasure Coast's economic prosperity depends on attracting higher wage jobs and more diverse, year-round employment opportunities that close the gap between residents earning higher incomes and the majority of the population earning less than \$30,000 annually.

Gwenda Thompson, CSTC Economic Diversity and Prosperity Committee Chair, and President and CEO, Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast

An economically diverse and prosperous community is characterized by year-round jobs, higher wages, more tax revenues, better trained workers, retention of local talent, a strong work ethic, and an overall improvement in the quality of life. Historically, the Treasure Coast's primary economic engines were agriculture, tourism, and construction. Agriculture and tourism are typically cyclical, creating high unemployment during specific times of the year. Construction may be up or down at any given time due to swings in the real estate market. Because of tourism, the retail trade and hospitality industries flourished, resulting in high employment in low wage jobs. This did little to build the region's wealth and accelerated a growing divide between residents earning higher incomes and the bulk of the population earning less than \$30,000 per year. Industry diversification is needed to create year-round job opportunities that pay middle-income salaries for residents.



The Treasure Coast lags behind Florida and the country in wages.

Currently, Florida's Treasure Coast may lack the unique infrastructure needed by today's high technology industries such as state-of-the-art laboratories, the latest in fiber optic telecommunications, and mass quantities of clean water. However, it has many assets demanded by business and industry. The region possesses access to major transportation corridors (Florida's Turnpike, I-95, U. S. 1, the Florida East Coast Railway, CSX rail lines, a customs-serviced airport,

general aviation airports, and a deep-water port) that are necessary for moving products nationally and internationally. There remains abundant land to the west of the populated coast that may be suitable for industrial development, and the counties have designated industrial, research and business parks.

The region is home to Indian River Community College, one of the nation's best and most technologically advanced community colleges. Several of the nation's leading educational/research facilities, such as Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution (HBOI), the Smithsonian Institution Indian River Lagoon Research Station, University of Florida Indian River Research and Education Center operated by IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Science), Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory, and the United States Department of Agriculture Laboratory, are also located in the region. These research and educational facilities are supplemented by specialized programs offered by public universities and private educational institutions and the new Florida Atlantic University/HBOI research facility. The local school districts are developing and implementing business-focused educational programs for youth. Further development of these assets and the infrastructure demanded by other high-tech industries is critical to sustaining the region's economic vitality.

LEARNING FROM TREASURE COAST BEST PRACTICES

Florida's *Research Coast Economic Development Coalition (FRCEDC)* is a partnership initiative of the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County, and the Business Development Board of Martin County – the Enterprise Florida designated primary economic development organizations in their respective counties. The partners have a Memorandum of Understanding to work collaboratively rather than competitively, in their economic diversification efforts within the tri-county region. The overall goal of FRCEDC is to expand the region's industry base and facilitate high-wage job creation for residents while maintaining the region's quality of life. The coalition has produced a marketing brochure and maintains a website: www.FloridaRC.com.

B. CURRENT EFFORTS IN THE REGION

Since empirical research shows that economic development is best pursued on a collaborative basis across an entire regional labor market, there are efforts currently underway to coordinate economic development efforts in the Treasure Coast Region. The region's economic development entities formed an informal consortium that meets regularly to discuss, strategize, and collaborate on economic development projects. This consortium recently agreed to market the region, formally known as the Treasure Coast, as Florida's Research Coast. This brand is reflective of the region's potential for drawing research and development firms supporting Florida's Scripps Research Project slated for northern Palm Beach County, which is less than 40 miles from the region's center, and the existing research facilities already located within the region. The Economic Development Consortium is currently collaborating with the Workforce Development Board, education, and private business to develop and implement a regional economic development plan focused on attracting new businesses, growing and retaining existing contributory businesses, and creating a formal regional entity for marketing the region.

Other regional government planning workshops and collaborative efforts are underway. The region is experiencing a population explosion that crosses the region's county lines, expanding over into Palm Beach, Okeechobee, and Brevard counties. As a result, local governments find

it necessary to plan projects and initiatives jointly. Joint planning is facilitated by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDSC). The TCRPC maintains a regional strategic plan and a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). These plans provide guidance to local governments on development and redevelopment and serve as a basis for government funding of economic development and community redevelopment projects. They represent an integrated, collaborative approach to regional planning.

In recent months, representatives from the Treasure Coast have participated in South Florida planning initiatives related to economic development, education, and workforce development. There is an effort to tie the entire south Florida east coast, from the Keys to Indian River County, together into one economic region with a common purpose. These efforts should be encouraged to increase the clout of our local region and to maximize opportunities that expand our local economy.

The region has several existing industrial parks, and efforts are underway to secure additional land for new and expanded sites. Special attention has been given to allocating sites for research and development enterprises. St. Lucie County is cooperating with the University of Florida and the state Legislature to create a Treasure Coast Research and Education Authority. Focusing on lands owned by the University and the St. Lucie County School Board, the Authority hopes to develop facilities to focus on existing agricultural research and expand to include other hi-tech activities.

We must act regionally if we are to accelerate the economy in ways that benefit each Treasure Coast community. This means working together to make our region more competitive for national and international investments and promoting the region through the Florida Research Coast Economic Development Coalition.

Michael Mortell, CSTC
Economic Prosperity Committee
member, and Vice Mayor,
City of Stuart

C. PRINCIPLES AND ACTION STEPS

Principle 1

A regional strategy for economic development promotes economic diversity, prosperity, and sustainability.

In order for the Treasure Coast to be competitive with other regions of the state and the country, local jurisdictions must come together and develop a common vision for the region. This does not mean that all jurisdictions need to approach economic development in the same way. Even with differing county philosophies toward economic development, there can be a spirit of cooperation that allows the counties to work together. Promoting regional equity and reducing local and regional disparities by involving and cooperating with communities in the region in planning for economic development will strengthen the region's ability to compete for national and international opportunities and help the region achieve its vision for success. A regional vision takes into account the needs of all communities.

Recently, the Florida Research Coast Economic Development Coalition formed to discuss and address regional economic development issues. It includes representatives from the three counties and a number of other organizations. This informal, representative stakeholder group is uniquely positioned to help develop a consensus regional vision for the Treasure Coast and advocate for its implementation. The Economic Development Coalition is collaboratively developing and implementing a regional economic development plan focused on attracting new businesses, growing and retaining existing contributory businesses, and creating a formal regional entity for marketing the region. The counties and cities in the Treasure Coast should participate and support this regional economic development group and formalize its existence.

Action Steps

- a. Ensure that individual county economic development plans are compatible with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.
- b. Develop a formula to ensure that communities equitably share in the costs and benefits of economic development associated with the region's planning decisions.
- c. Use GIS-based techniques to map the assets of the region and match those assets to the weaknesses across county lines to create a regional picture, strengthen the region, and support individual counties' economic development efforts.
- d. Formalize and fund the Florida Research Coast Economic Development Coalition, an organization that addresses the full range of economic development in the region and that currently includes the three coastal counties and Okeechobee County.
- e. Educate the public and decision-makers so that they understand sustainability and the need for economic development across the region to maintain and improve the quality of life in the Treasure Coast.
- f. Partner with the economic development efforts of surrounding or adjacent counties.

Principle 2

Existing businesses are supported, and new businesses are attracted.

A wide variety of healthy businesses will promote sustainability in the region and support a valued way of life for Treasure Coast residents. When the business community is healthy, the overall community benefits. A business-friendly environment enables small and large businesses to remain viable and employ residents. Diversity in employment opportunities provides jobs for all segments of society. Special consideration should be given to those businesses that promote sustainability and provide some net benefit to the community.

Institutions and research facilities, such as Harbor Branch, IFAS, United States Department of Agriculture, Florida Atlantic University, and Indian River Community College are tremendous assets to the business community, and efforts should be taken to ensure that these institutions flourish.

In addition, the business community must be supported by an adequate supply of housing and a trained workforce.

All types of jobs are important, but sustainability requires high skill, high wage jobs. On the Treasure Coast, there is a growing gap between individuals earning low wages and those with high incomes. Strategies to create higher wage jobs in the region must be a priority for government, education, and workforce and economic development. In a diverse and prosperous economy, the percentage of people earning high and middle wages should increase. High wage jobs bring more tax dollars and more discretionary income into the region. The additional tax revenue helps to fund services, and the discretionary spending supports businesses of all types.



A well-trained, educated workforce is important to maintaining healthy businesses and a growing economy for all.

Action Steps

For supporting existing business

- a. Assess existing businesses and industrial sectors for expansion opportunities;
- b. Identify what services and supports are needed and assemble the community resources necessary to meet the needs.
- c. Sustain, expand and diversify agricultural activities throughout the region through an extended agricultural season, expanded agricultural activities, and a sufficient agricultural land base.
- d. Develop financial and regulatory incentives to retain businesses.
- e. Create a criteria-based approach to identify businesses to retain.
- f. Create a regional revenue source that supports economic development efforts, including flexible up-front funds and tax deferrals.

To be truly successful as a region, we must take every step to create the higher wage jobs needed to give our residents a higher quality of life. All will benefit if we put our resources behind transforming our region from a low-wage to a high-wage economy.

R. Duke Nelson, CSTC Economic Prosperity Committee member, and City Commissioner, City of Fort Pierce

For supporting attracting business

- a. Seek legislative funding to increase closing incentives for the region.

- b. Create competitive financial and regulatory incentives programs that attract clean, high/skill-high/wage industry.
- c. Partner to attract middle income jobs paying living wages to the region.
- d. Continue to promote the Treasure Coast as the “Research Coast” in economic development efforts.
- e. Fully fund current economic development programs.
- f. Develop a streamlined permitting review process for those contributory businesses that meet the criteria for sustainability.

Principle 3

Economic Development professionals emphasize sustainable growth principles in their economic development efforts.

Sustainable smart growth promotes livable communities. Highly livable communities that offer residents a wide range of choices for housing, work, and leisure are necessary to attract businesses and a skilled workforce to the region. Without sustainable smart development, the quality of life on the Treasure Coast will diminish due to congestion and sprawl. Redevelopment and infill can help reduce sprawl and make commutes shorter for workers.

In the end, our region will not be attractive to new business if we’re not smarter about how we grow and start creating communities where our residents can live close to where they work and shop, reducing demands on our transportation network.

Don Santos, CSTC Social Systems Committee member, and President, Santos Construction Company

Action Steps

- a. Develop educational programs based on the principles of smart growth to help the public understand the value of smart growth.
- b. Use livable smart growth efforts in the region to attract new businesses to the region.

Principle 4

Comprehensive planning decisions address the needs of economic development.

Land use planning and infrastructure decisions should be integrated with economic development. New businesses need land zoned for their needs, with the infrastructure to support their operation. Existing businesses need a transportation network that is efficient and other infrastructure that can facilitate their growth. Economic development should be considered in all land use decisions.

Action Steps



A well-planned inter-modal hub approach to transportation facilitates business growth.

- Create an inventory of all types of property in the Treasure Coast, including a regional inventory of available properties with appropriate land use and infrastructure approvals to attract industry.
- Include in comprehensive plans sufficient appropriately zoned land and infrastructure for sustainable expansion and diversification of contributory businesses.
- Include a cost/benefit analysis in all recruitment/expansion projects.
- Create a regional strategy for developing and funding industrial sites.
- Continue to provide funding options in support of contributory businesses.
- Consistent with local government comprehensive plans, develop an inter-modal transportation system that focuses on hubs, e.g., port and airports, as well as corridors and facilitates public transit to support economic diversity.

Principle 5

Housing is attainable, affordable, and accessible to the current and future workforce.

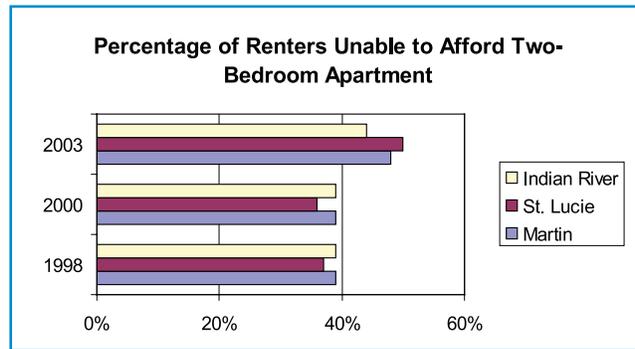
Maintaining and developing workforce housing are challenging for most communities in the country because of the complexity of the issues. The Treasure Coast is facing these same challenges. The ability of families in the region to buy or rent existing or new housing is limited by their incomes. A significant number of families in the Treasure Coast cannot and will not be able to purchase or rent a dwelling in the Treasure Coast unless something is done. Families who are finding housing unaffordable include families that are homeless, migrant working families, and some elderly. Increasingly, families made up of two wage earners

Each day more people who work in our region cannot afford a house here. Couple this with the fact that we lag behind the state in average wages, and we have a housing crisis that needs to be fixed.

Larry Lee, Jr., CSTC Social Systems Committee member, and Agent, State Farm Insurance

working as police, firefighters, teachers, and hospital workers are finding housing difficult to afford. Rising transportation costs, tied to increased commuting and other factors, cut into income available to families for housing.

There is currently a lack of mid and low-end housing in the region, and housing for the workforce is a growing problem. This is due to a rapid escalation in the cost of land, rising cost of construction, negative reactions from neighbors, and a lack of political will. The State Housing Improvement Program (SHIP) is one program to help with workforce housing, but it is currently under funded.



Basic housing in the Treasure Coast is becoming less attainable to the region's workforce.

Action Steps

- a. Create a regionwide Community Land Trust that would use public and private funds to purchase or finance property for affordable housing and insure affordability over time.
- b. Create a planning/regulatory climate that is conducive to the production of affordable housing.
- c. Create and expand public/private partnerships among entities involved in the provision of workforce housing.
- d. Ensure all areas have a reasonable mix of housing, employment opportunities, and services.
- e. Find ways to preserve workforce housing and rehabilitate substandard housing.
- f. See that the special housing needs of the elderly are adequately addressed in the EARs of local government comprehensive plans.
- g. Address workforce housing in comprehensive plans.
- h. Educate the public about the need for workforce housing.
- i. Develop incentive programs to include density bonuses for workforce housing.
- j. Amend land development regulations to speed up processing of workforce housing.
- k. Encourage the inclusion of a percentage of affordable units as a part of new projects.
- l. Fully fund the State Housing Initiatives Program (SHIP) trust fund for affordable housing.

- m. Develop a workforce housing indicator to measure progress toward increasing the availability of workforce housing in the region.
- n. Explore and implement means of increasing income available for housing by reducing income needed for transportation.

VIII. MAINTAINING A SUSTAINABLE REGION

A. BACKGROUND

Our overarching principles provide the foundation for implementation:

- All sectors and citizens share a long-term vision for the region that includes natural and built communities, the social system, education, and the economy.
- Leaders, governments, and all sectors of the community collaborate.
- An informed public is effectively involved in regional solutions.
- Decisions take full account of the value of regional assets and the costs associated with alternative courses of action.
- Timely, reliable data and information and a set of sustainable indicators promote public understanding of regional challenges and assist public and private decision-makers.
- A broad range of tools and techniques are used to create sustainability in the region.
- Regional planning and decision-making are guided by community and individual interests and respect for private property rights.

The Committee believes that a sustainable region recognizes, balances, and builds on the interconnections among economic, political, social, environmental, and educational factors. This section contains Principles and Action Steps that emerged as overarching because they reflected those interconnections and provide a critical foundation for the implementation of the other recommendations.

B. PRINCIPLES AND ACTION STEPS

Principle 1

All sectors and citizens share a long-term vision for the region that includes natural and built communities, the social system, education, and the economy.

Sustainability in the region and the implementation of the recommendations in this report are dependent on active and informed involvement of citizens, organizations, and agencies in creating a shared vision for the region. A shared vision acknowledges and incorporates all of the different interests and perspectives of Treasure Coast communities and residents. A shared vision for the region would address the interconnections in the region that include natural systems, rural lands, growth and development, transportation, education, health, and economic diversity. A shared vision must have the support of all the citizens and local governments in the region.

Action Steps

- a. Develop a shared vision of a sustainable future that addresses:
 - the creation of a connected system of natural areas, agricultural lands, and greenways;

- criteria for the location and urban form of new development;
 - collaboration among educational institutions to meet the needs of the region;
 - ways to address health and culture needs and concerns; and
 - the development of a coordinated strategy for economic development.
- b. Local governments in the region should work together and reflect the vision in comprehensive plans.
- c. Local governments should work together on establishing boundaries and addressing annexation efforts consistent with the vision.
- d. Local governments, in partnership with state and regional agencies and the private sector, should provide funding for regional visioning and the related tools, research, and information needed to inform it.

Principle 2

Leaders, governments, and all sectors of the community collaborate.

Regional cooperation and leadership are essential to achieving the vision of success for the region. Leaders from government, non-profits, and the private sector must collaborate in the review of common concerns, the protection of common resources and assets, and the building of consensus on efficient regional and related local solutions.

Action Steps

- a. The leaders of the local governments in the region should commit to building a better region by adhering to a set of principles supporting civil and inclusive discourse and collaboration.
- b. A Treasure Coast Leadership program should be developed to further understanding of the assets and perspectives in the region and to promote regional collaboration among all stakeholders.
- c. The Legislature and agencies should provide additional support and incentives for regional cooperation.
- d. The region should build on the incentives provided in the new growth management legislation to strengthen regional cooperation.

A successful, sustainable Treasure Coast will require public and private leaders who think and act regionally and who are able to actively involve citizens in developing plans and architectural standards that will enhance our built environment and expand open space and park space in and outside urban service areas.

Tom Weber, CSTC member, and Publisher, Scripps Newspapers Treasure Coast

Principle 3

An informed public is effectively involved in regional solutions.

Implementation of the recommendations in this report will require strong public and private leadership and continuing efforts over time. Such an ongoing effort will only be possible if the public is aware of the importance and value of sustainable communities. Ongoing education and community involvement programs will help residents remain informed about issues relating to the built environment, natural systems, rural lands, social systems, and economic diversity.



Action Steps

- a. Encourage and support community and stakeholder involvement and collaboration in reviewing regional and local decisions.
- b. Provide citizens with the resources, timely information, opportunities, and education necessary to effectively participate.
- c. Develop and implement a pilot project for on-line public involvement.
- d. Develop lifelong learning programs to increase public awareness of the benefits rural lands and natural systems provide to urban areas and the region.
- e. Implement programs that maximize appropriate access to natural areas and allow the citizens to contribute in their management, thereby promoting connections between urban residents and natural systems.
- f. Develop educational programs that promote sustainability.

Sustainability means that decisions are based on an understanding of the cumulative social, fiscal, and environmental costs and benefits of development.

Principle 4

Decisions take full account of the value of regional assets and the costs associated with alternative courses of action.

Full cost accounting is a tool that helps elected and appointed public officials take into account the range of costs and benefits associated with individual development proposals and regional patterns of development as they relate to the surrounding community and the region. Full cost accounting should consider costs and benefits that are intangible and tangible, present and future. Costs and benefits associated with the following issues, among others, should be considered in full cost accounting:

- the economic and ecological value of natural resources or agricultural land converted to development or preserved;
- infrastructure;
- urban services;
- cumulative effects of patterns of development;
- social benefits, such as production of workforce housing, or effect on quality of life;
- provision of social services, including education and health services; and
- economic viability.

Use of full cost accounting has the potential to result in reduced costs to taxpayers and the public and increased value in new development as the region grows. However, its use should not work to preclude the provision of workforce housing in the region.

Action Steps

- Identify or develop and use full cost accounting tools that are capable of addressing the full range of relevant costs and benefits.
- Develop and maintain estimates of the economic value of natural resources, rural and built lands, and social and economic assets. The methodology used should be consistent across the region.

Principle 5

Timely reliable data and information and a set of sustainable indicators promote public understanding of regional challenges and assist public and private decision-makers.

Accurate and current information is the key to informed decision-making and public support. A recognized and agreed upon set of sustainability indicators would help provide timely reliable data and track progress on regional sustainability.

Action Steps

- Identify a lead organization to work in collaboration with key public, educational, and private institutions to refine and monitor a formal set of sustainability indicators.
- Develop a recognized set of sustainability indicators that can be used to measure progress toward the vision of sustainability and toward the implementation of the recommendations in this report.
- Develop regional mechanisms and methods to develop and maintain natural systems data and reach agreement among the local governments in the region to fund, share, and utilize them.
- All data and information should be easily understandable and accessible to the public.

Principle 6

A broad range of tools and techniques is used to create sustainability in the region.

The amount of growth and change anticipated over the coming decades will require the use of innovative tools and techniques to maintain a high quality of life in the region. There are innovative tools that provide incentives to promote desirable patterns of development. Other tools promote landowner and developer contributions for a wide variety of community benefits and have the potential to leverage public dollars. There are tools to protect rural land and natural areas. Other types of tools and techniques can help public and private leaders make informed decisions that will promote livability and prosperity in the region.

Action Steps

- a. Local, state, and regional agencies should join to create GIS tools as soon as possible.
- b. Use innovative planning, tools, programs, software, and techniques, including those in the Toolbox Section of this report, to promote sustainability in the region. This may require changes to statutes, regulations, and comprehensive plans.
- c. Provide demonstrations of new tools that can be used to improve sustainability, such as determining the carrying capacity of natural resources and social systems.

Florida's Rural Lands Stewardship program created a win/win for St. Lucie County, using new development to make preservation possible. Thanks to this program, a large expanse of Treasure Coast environmental and agricultural lands are preserved in perpetuity by transferring landowner development values to a high quality development.

Alto "Bud" Adams, CSTC member, and Chairman, Adams Ranch, Inc.

Principle 7

Regional planning and decision-making are guided by community and individual interests and respect for private property rights.

Action Steps

- a. Protect citizen property rights while developing a shared sustainable and implementable vision for the region and its communities.
- b. Conduct cost effective, timely interaction with citizens to obtain feedback on concerns, issues, and levels of satisfaction.

IX. MOVING FORWARD

The Committee strongly recommends that a new not-for-profit organization called Sustainable Treasure Coast (STC) be created soon as possible. The mission of the STC should be to support the implementation of the important Principles and Action Steps in this report. The STC should draw its membership from the region's leaders, including members of the CSTC. It is critical that the region's business leaders support and participate on the STC.

The STC should work closely with and support other regional entities, such as the TCRPC, while avoiding duplication of activities. The STC should work with representatives of local governments, regional entities, educational institutions, and with the Treasure Coast legislative delegation to gain public support necessary to successfully achieve the recommendations contained in the CSTC Final Report. It is the Committee's intent that the principles in this report serve as a guide to the STC and that the STC have the flexibility to develop further action steps consistent with these Principles.

Concurrent with the creation of the STC, and in order to provide continuity for the research and data collection called for in this report, Florida Atlantic University (FAU), in cooperation with Indian River Community College (IRCC), should create an Institute for a Sustainable Treasure Coast (ISTC). The ISTC should serve to support the data and research needed to implement the principles and action steps of this report and to ensure that the Committee's report is widely disseminated to decision-makers and the Treasure Coast public. Special efforts will be undertaken to provide educational activities and tools for all parts of the community to further understand the regional linkages identified in this report. Research, periodic reports, development of regional indicators, creation of a data base based on the CSTC's compilation of data, and progress reports on the implementation of the CSTC final report should also be issued. The ISTC should collaborate and cooperate with existing regional institutions, including the proposed Sustainable Treasure Coast organization, local governments, not-for-profits, and local citizen groups to assist in implementing and monitoring progress in achieving the principles and Action Steps in the CSTC Final Report. Examples of such assistance could include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Developing indicators for each section of the CSTC Final Report and issuing periodic reports on progress in achieving the action steps.
- Providing forums and technical workshops, in cooperation with other interested organizations, on such topics as community land trusts, conservation stewardship organizations, and other issues referred to the Institute for a Sustainable Treasure Coast for further research.
- Facilitating regional visioning exercises.
- Coordinating a regional data atlas based on data compiled by the CSTC.
- Providing information on regional trends to state, regional, and local agencies and private and not-for-profit organizations operating in the region.

The recommendations in this report represent a rare coming together of diverse people who agreed on what needs to happen today if our Treasure Coast is to be the livable region we all want it to be tomorrow. I cannot think of a stronger foundation for moving forward

Gerri McPherson, Vice President,
Florida Atlantic University Treasure
Coast Campus at Port St. Lucie

ENDNOTES

- i Nelson, Arthur C. 2004. *Toward a New Metropolis: The Opportunity to Rebuild America*. Brookings Institution.
- ii Adapted from Sustainable Martin Alliance, www.sustainmartin.com.
- iii McGinnis J. M. and Forge, W.H. 1993. "Actual Causes of Death in the United States." *Journal of the American Medical Association*.
- iv Institute of Medicine, Committee on Assuring the Health of the 21st Century. 2003. *The Future of the Public's Health in the 21st Century*. the National Academies Press, Washington, D.C.
- v Duncan, R. Paul; Porter, Colleen K.; Garvan, Cynthia Wilson; and Hall, Allyson G. 2005. *A Profile of Uninsured Floridians: Findings from the 2004 Florida Health Insurance Study*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, Department of Health Services Research, Management and Policy.
- vi Jacobowitz, Barbara H. 2004. Treasure Coast Health Council, Annual Report FY 2003-2004.

MAPS

1. **Urban Form 1970s Map:** The data layer used to create this map was produced by the US Geological Survey with data from 1972-1974. The land use classification categories are in accordance with the Florida Land Use and Cover Classification System (FLUCCS) - Level II. "Urban and Transportation, Communication & Utilities" classifications = 11 (residential), 12 (commercial & services), 13 (industrial), 14 (transportation, communications & utilities), 15 (industrial & commercial complexes), 16 (mixed urban or built up land), 17 (other urban or built up land), 71-77 (barren land). "Rural" classification = 21-24 (agricultural land), 31-33 (rangeland), 41-43 (forest land), 51-54 (water), 61-62 (wetland), 81-85 (tundra), 91-92 (perennial snow or ice). SEE PAGE 2 OF THIS REPORT
2. **Urban Form 2003 Map:** The data layer used to create this map was produced by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission in 2003. The vegetation classification is based on spectral classes determined from a remote-sensing procedure. "Urban and Transportation, Communication & Utilities" classifications = high impact urban, low impact urban, extracative. "Rural" classification = coastal strand, beach/sand, xeric oak scrub, sand pine scrub, sandhill, dry prairies, hardwood hammocks & forests, pinelands, cabbage palm-live oak hammock, tropical hardwood hammock, freshwater marsh & wet prairie, sawgrass marsh, cattail marsh, shrub swamp, bay swamp, cypress swamp, cypress/pine/cabbage palm, mixed wetland forest, hardwood swamp, hydric hammock, bottomland hardwood forest, salt marsh, mangrove swamp, scrub mangrove, tidal flats, shrub and brushland, grassland, bare soil/clearcut, improved pasture, unimproved/woodland pasture, sugarcane, citrus, row/field crops, other agricultural, exotic plants, australian pine, melaleuca, & brazilian pepper. Open water values are displayed as a water layer. SEE PAGE 2 OF THIS REPORT
3. **Population 2030 Map:** The data layer used to create this map was produced using 2030 ZData1 and ZData2 travel demand forecasting data generated for development of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Indian River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the 2030 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan for the Martin and St. Lucie MPOs. A dot density method was used to represent the data, which approximates population counts at locations within each Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ). Each dot shown represents 20 people. SEE PAGE 2 OF THIS REPORT
4. **Residential Unit Demand Map:** The residential unit demand was calculated using a methodology developed by Dr. Arthur Nelson for his book, *Toward a New Metropolis: The Opportunity to Rebuild America*. It was calculated by multiplying the current number of units per person and the projected population numbers, then adding the number of units lost from 2000 to 2030 to determine the number of units needed. Data sources for this map include US Bureau of the Census SF1, US Census Bureau SF2, Bureau of Economic & Business Research, Florida Population Studies (Feb 04) and the 1989 and 1999 US Census Bureau American Housing Surveys. The rate of units lost calculated by Dr. Nelson applies to the entire South region of the United States. There will be variation across the region as well as across Florida based on building cycles and the age of the housing stock. Therefore, the rate for South Florida could be lower or higher than .63% and would affect the total number of housing units needed. SEE PAGE 3 OF THIS REPORT
5. **DRIs in the Wider Treasure Coast Region Map:** The data used to create this map was obtained from the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Application for Development Approval Database. "Approved" projects are DRIs with approved development orders from 1973 to May 2005. "In Process" projects are DRIs at any stage prior to development order approval from 1973 to May 2005, including pre-application and pending status projects. Projects that have not received development order approval and have not formally withdrawn their applications from DCA remain perpetually in the database under a pending status. SEE PAGE 32 OF THIS REPORT
6. **2000 Commuting Patterns Map:** The data used to create this map was obtained from the 2000 US Census County-to-County Worker Flow files. Arrows showing commuting patterns are scaled to the number of trips. SEE PAGE 36 OF THIS REPORT
7. **Regional & Local Multimodal Transportation System Map:** The nine data layers used to create this map were obtained from the Florida Department of Transportation, the US Department of Transportation, the University of Florida Geoplan Center Greenways Project, and the Federal Aviation Administration. The roadway data represents roadways maintained by the FDOT, roadways maintained by individual counties, and roadways maintained by other local governments. A railway layer is represented by a network database of all mainlines in the region. The navigable waterway layer is represented by a geographic database of navigable waterways. The recreation trails layer shows all existing recreational trails in the region. The airport layer shows all public use airports in the region. Rail stations and seaport locations were obtained from the FDOT Statewide Intermodal System map. SEE PAGE 59 OF THIS REPORT

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Executive Order

Appendix B: CSTC, Subcommittee, Technical Advisory Committee Members

Appendix C: Summary of Meetings

Appendix D: Consensus Process and Procedures

Appendix E: Facilitation Team

Appendix F: Glossary of Terms

Appendix G: Tools, Resources, and Recommendations

APPENDIX A - EXECUTIVE ORDER

**STATE OF FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 04-61
CREATING THE COMMITTEE FOR A SUSTAINABLE TREASURE COAST**

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State of Florida to protect and manage its natural resources for the health, safety, and enjoyment of all citizens; and,

WHEREAS, managing Florida's growth is critically important, and local governments should be encouraged to work together to adopt a regional approach to planning and growth management; and,

WHEREAS, the counties of Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River are located in Southeast Florida within the jurisdiction of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and form a coherent, three-county planning area that will benefit from joint long-range planning for a sustainable future and improved inter-governmental coordination; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Florida has acquired over 32,330 acres of public conservation lands in the planning area, at a cost in excess of \$216 million. Local governments have also passed dedicated taxes to fund land preservation; and

WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida, this three-county area experienced tremendous growth of approximately 100,000 residents between 1990 and 2000 and anticipates growth of an additional 250,000 residents between 2000 and 2030, causing growing demands on economic, social, educational, health care and environmental resources; and,

WHEREAS, many wage earners in the three-county area are in low-wage/low-skill jobs in primarily the wholesale/retail trade and services sectors, and broadening the industry base will attract new workers from outside the area and increase job opportunities and career mobility; and,

WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida, the demand for housing in the three-county area is expected to increase approximately 60% by 2030 and access to affordable, workforce housing will become increasingly more difficult; and,

WHEREAS, demand for access to higher education at the community college and university levels is rapidly increasing within the three-county area; and,

WHEREAS, the population of the three-county area has a higher median age of 35, with the over-65 age group accounting for one in every four residents, thus emphasizing the importance of available and high-quality health care; and,

WHEREAS, growing population requires continuing improvements in public safety; and,

WHEREAS, existing transportation infrastructure is suffering increasing congestion due to local traffic and inter-county commuting, causing significant impacts to the state's Intrastate Highway System and other regionally significant roadways in the three-county area; and,

WHEREAS, the three-county area is part of two regional water management districts that are engaged in long-range water supply planning, and it is crucial that the affected communities coordinate

their local water supply plans to ensure continued capacity to serve existing and future populations and industries; and,

WHEREAS, the three-county area is the location for premier research facilities focused on agricultural, marine, and ocean resources and is strategically located in proximity to the planned Scripps Florida biomedical research facility; and

WHEREAS, the three-county area is rich in agricultural resources, especially in citrus crops that provide a source of exports and employment and provide a use of the land compatible with the environment, and

WHEREAS, the natural environment in the three-county area includes the Indian River Lagoon, the St. Lucie and the Lower St. Johns River systems, and the Lake Okeechobee watershed, requiring a systematic approach to conserving and preserving the natural systems in the three-county area;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JEB BUSH, Governor of the State of Florida, by the powers vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Florida, do hereby promulgate the following Executive Order, effective immediately:

1. There is hereby created the "Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast," hereinafter referred to as the "Committee."
2. The following individuals are appointed to Committee:

Melissa Meeker, Tetra Tech, FW, Inc.; **Chair**
Frank T. Brogan, President, Florida Atlantic University; **Co-Vice Chair**
Dr. Edwin R. Massey, President, Indian River Community College; **Co-Vice Chair**
Thaddeus Cohen, Secretary, Department of Community Affairs; **Co-Vice Chair/Technical Advisory Subcommittee Chair**
Doug Smith, Martin County Commission
Doug Coward, St. Lucie County Commission
Caroline D. Ginn, Indian River County Commission
Michael Mortell, Stuart Vice Mayor
R. Duke Nelson, Ft. Pierce City Commission
Bob Minsky, Port St. Lucie Mayor
Sandra L. Bowden, Vero Beach Council member
Joseph Barczyk, Sebastian Vice Mayor
Elizabeth A. Whittles; Children's Services Council of Martin County
Tom Gonzalez, Sunflower Educare Center
Jean L. Kline, B.S.N., M.P.H., Indian River County Health Department
Dr. Sara Wilcox, Superintendent, Martin County School District
Michael J. Lannon, Superintendent; St. Lucie County School District
Thomas B. Maher, Superintendent; Indian River County School District
Mary Dawson, Director, Friends of Martin County, Inc.
L. Kevin Stinnette, President, Indian RiverKeepers
Richard Baker, President, Pelican Island Audubon Society
Dennis S. Hudson, III, Chairman/CEO, First National Bank & Trust Company
Larry Lee, Jr., Agent – State Farm Insurance
Daniel R. Richey, CEO, Riverfront Packing Company, LLC
Patricia Austin, Community Health Planning Initiative
Robert L. Crowder, Sheriff, Martin County

Thomas E. Weber, Jr., Publisher, Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers
Steph Mathes, Culpepper & Terpening Engineering
Robert Lowe, Broker, Lowes International Realty Plus, Inc.
Darrell J. Drummond, President/CEO, Council on Aging of St. Lucie, Inc.
Bud Adams, Jr., Chairman, Adams Ranch, Inc.
Michael D. Minton, Esq., Dean, Mead, Minton & Klein
Ted S. Astolfi, Executive Director, Business Development Board
of Martin County
Stacey W. Ranieri, President, Firefly Communications, Inc.
Gwenda Thompson, President/CEO, Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast
Don Santos, President, Don Santos Construction
Michael J. Busha, Executive Director, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

3. The Committee shall have a Technical Advisory Subcommittee (“TAS”) to provide information and guidance to the Committee to ensure consistency and coordination with state programs and policies. The TAS shall include the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, the Executive Director of the St. Johns River Water Management District, the Executive Director of the South Florida Water Management District, and the Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Agency Secretaries or Executive Directors may designate a senior staff person from their respective agencies to attend meetings of the Committee’s TAS. The Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs, or his/her representative, shall Chair the TAS and designate the times and places of the TAS meetings.
4. James F. Murley, Director of the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, shall serve as Facilitator to the Committee and the TAS. The Department of Community Affairs shall, as requested by the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, provide staff and other support services to the Committee and the TAS.
5. The Committee shall consider, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning issues of importance related to long-range planning to assure sustainable growth and development in the three-county area (Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie), including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. The Committee shall study and recommend strategies to improve intergovernmental cooperation and conflict resolution among local governments in the three-county area.
 - b. The Committee shall study and recommend actions that will assist the three-county area in diversifying the economy, ensuring access to affordable workforce housing, and promoting the continued viability of agriculture in the region.
 - c. The Committee shall study and recommend actions that will ensure that future residents of the three-county area will have access to educational and health care facilities.
 - d. The Committee shall study and recommend actions to ensure that the Three-county area is served by an intermodal transportation system.
 - e. The Committee shall study and recommend procedures and protocols that can be used to determine the full cost accounting of development in the three-county area.

- f. The Committee shall study and recommend ecologically sound actions to conserve the environmental resources in the three-county area.
 - g. The Committee shall study and recommend enhanced land use planning strategies and development standards that coordinate land use and water supply availability, that are consistent with property rights and which improve and assure protection of water resources.
 - h. The Committee shall consider, evaluate and develop methods for implementation of the recommendations.
6. All agencies under the control of the Governor are directed, and all other agencies are requested, to render assistance to, and cooperate with, the Committee.
 7. Members of the Committee shall not receive compensation or reimbursement for travel expenses or other expenses incurred while fulfilling their duties as Committee members; provided, however, that those members of the Committee who are employees of the State may receive reimbursement from their respective agencies to the extent allowed by Section 112.061, Florida Statutes.
 8. The Committee shall meet at times and places designated by the Chairperson. Any vacancy occurring in the Committee shall be filled in the manner of the original appointment.
 9. The Committee shall present an Interim Report of its findings and recommendations no later than January 31, 2005, and a Final Report no later than September 30, 2005, to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate.
 10. The Committee shall cease to exist on September 30, 2005, unless extended by amendment to this Executive Order.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and have caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, The Capitol, this 30th day of March 2004.

Jeb Bush
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

Glenda E. Hood
SECRETARY OF STATE

APPENDIX B - COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COMMITTEE FOR A SUSTAINABLE TREASURE COAST MEMBERS, ALTERNATES & SUCCESSORS

Alto “Bud” Adams, Jr., Chairman
Adams Ranch, Inc. - (Alternate: **Peter Harrison**)

Ted Astolfi, Executive Director
Business Development Board of Martin County

Patricia Austin, Consultant & Facilitator
Community Health Planning Initiative

Richard Baker, President
Pelican Island Audubon Society

Joseph Barczyk, Vice Mayor
City of Sebastian - (Served from April 2004 – January 2005: Succeeded by **Brian Burkeen** – Vice Mayor)

Sandra L. Bowden, County Commissioner
Indian River County –
(Former City Commissioner for City of Vero Beach)
[Succeeded **Caroline D. Ginn** – Indian River County Commissioner]

Frank T. Brogan, President (CSTC Co-Vice Chair)
Florida Atlantic University -
(Alternate: **Robert Friedman**)

Michael J. Busha, Executive Director
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC)
– (Alternate: **Kim Delaney**)

Thaddeus Cohen, Secretary
(CSTC Co-Vice Chair/
Technical Advisory Subcommittee Chair)
Florida Department of Community Affairs -
(Alternate: **Roger Wilburn**)

Doug Coward, Commissioner
St. Lucie County

Robert L. Crowder, Sheriff
Martin County Sheriff’s Office

Mary Dawson, Director
Friends of Martin County, Inc.

Darrell J. Drummond, President/CEO
Council on Aging of St. Lucie, Inc.

Caroline D. Ginn, County Commissioner
Indian River County -
(Served from April 2004 – November 2004:
Succeeded by **Sandra L. Bowden**)

Thomas A. Gonzalez, Owner
Sunflower Educare Center

Dennis S. Hudson, III
First National Bank and Trust Company,
Chairman/CEO
Seacoast Banking Corporation of Florida,
President/CEO

Jean L. Kline, RN, MPH,
County Health Dept. Administrator
Central Florida Domestic Security Taskforce Health
Co-Chair (Region 5)
Indian River County Health Department -
(Alternate: **Miranda C. Swanson**)

Michael J. Lannon, Superintendent
School District of St. Lucie County

Larry Lee, Jr., Agent
State Farm Insurance

Robert J. Lowe, CIPS/Broker

Lowes International Realty Plus, Inc. -
(Alternate: **Gerald C. Mabus**)

Thomas B. Maher, Superintendent -
(Alternate: **Gerard J. Koziel**)
School District of Indian River County

Dr. Edwin R. Massey, President
(CSTC Co-Vice Chair)
Indian River Community College -
(Alternate: **Dr. Raymond Isenburg** & **Dr. Alan Roberts**)

Stefan K. Matthes, P.E., Senior Vice President
Culpepper & Terpening, Inc.

Melissa Meeker, Florida Operations Manager
(CSTC Chair)
Tetra Tech FW, Inc.

Robert E. Minsky, Mayor
City of Port St. Lucie

Michael D. Minton, Esq.
Dean, Mead, Minton & Zwemer

Michael Mortell, Vice Mayor
City of Stuart

R. Duke Nelson, City Commissioner
City of Fort Pierce

Stacey W. Ranieri, President
Firefly Communications, Inc.

Daniel R. Richey, CEO
Riverfront Packing Company, LLC

Donald Santos, President
Santos Construction Company/Treasure Coast
Builders Association - (Alternate: **Gail Kavanagh**)

Doug Smith, County Commissioner
Martin County Administrative Center

L. Kevin Stinnette, President
Indian RiverKeeper - (Alternate: **Charles Grande**)

Gwenda Thompson, President/CEO - (Alternate:
Richard Stetson)
Workforce Development Board of the Treasure
Coast

Thomas E. Weber, Jr., Publisher
Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers

Tom White, Mayor
City of Vero Beach – (Succeeded **Sandra L. Bowden**
– Former City Commissioner)

Elizabeth A. Whittles,
Director of Program Development
Children’s Services Council of Martin County

Dr. Sara Wilcox, Superintendent
Schools of Martin County

CSTC SUBCOMMITTEES

Natural System Subcommittee

Chair - Michael Minton, Vice Chair - Doug Coward

Members: Kevin Stinnette, Darrell Drummond, Bud Adams, Sandra Bowden, Stefan Matthes, Mary Dawson,
Brian Burkeen

TAC: Karen L. Smith, SFWMD and others

Facilitator: Rafael Montalvo

Economic System – Diversity & Prosperity Subcommittee

Chair - Gwenda Thompson, Vice Chair - Michael Mortell

Members: Tom Gonzalez, Dennis Hudson, Michael Busha, Dan Richey, Sara Wilcox, R. Duke Nelson,
Bob Friedman

TAC: Florida Research Coast, EDCs and others

Facilitator: Chris Pedersen

Built Environment Subcommittee

Chair - Doug Smith

Members: Ted Astolfi, Bob Minsky, Patricia Austin, Robert Crowder, Richard Baker, Stacy Ranieri,
Michael Lannon

TAC: Lois Bush FDOT, Roger Wilburn DCA, Terry Hess TCRPC

Facilitator: Bob Jones

Social System Subcommittee

Chair – Elizabeth Whittles, Vice Chair – Larry Lee

Members: Elizabeth Whittles, Thomas B. Maher, Tom Weber, Don Santos, Tom White, Gerald C. Mabus, Jean Kline

Facilitator: Chris Pedersen/Jim Murley

Rural Lands Subcommittee

Co-Chairs: Doug Coward, Peter Spyke

CSTC Members: Mary Dawson, Doug Coward, Thomas B. Maher

Melissa Meeker, Ex Officio as CSTC Chair and Doug Bournique, Ex Officio as IRCL Exec VP

TAC: Jean Scott, CUES

Facilitator: Rafael Montalvo

Chairs Coordinating Committee

Chairs of the 5 drafting groups/subcommittees and Melissa Meeker. Jim Murley CUES

Special Report Drafting Group - October 19-December, 2004

Melissa Meeker, Chair, Larry Lee, Chair Social Systems Drafting Group: Doug Smith, vice chair Built Environment Drafting Group, Gwenda Thompson, Chair, Economic Diversity Drafting Group, Michael Minton, Chair Natural Systems Drafting Group, Mike Busha, Tom Gonzalez, Stacy Ranieri and Dan Richey.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

Agency Head

Thaddeus Cohen, Secretary (Chair)
Florida Department of Community Affairs

Colleen Castille, Secretary
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Jose Abreu, Secretary
Florida Department of Transportation

Kirby B. Green, Executive Director
St. Johns River Water Management District

Henry Dean, Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District

Kenneth Haddad, Executive Director
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Designee

Roger Wilburn
Florida Department of Community Affairs

John Moulton, Interim District Director
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Southeast District Office
Alternate: **Mary C. Murphy**

Rick Chesser, District Secretary
Florida Department of Transportation District Four
Alternate: **Lois Bush**

N/A

Karen L. Smith, Director
South Florida Water Management District
Martin-St. Lucie Service Center

Chuck Collins, Regional Director
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
South Region
Alternate: **Willie Puz**

APPENDIX C - SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

APRIL, 2004—SEPTEMBER, 2005

OVERALL GOAL

To reach a consensus with the Committee on a final report, with recommendations and tools needed to achieve a successful future for the Treasure Coast Region.

GENERAL STEPS IN PROPOSED COMMITTEE DELIBERATION WORKPLAN

1. Initial Agenda Setting- Strategic Vision and Key Issues/Questions & Information for Treasure Coast Region
2. Review and Discussion of Topic Areas/ Issues, Briefings, Public Input
3. Development of Proposals Addressing Issues Through Member Drafting Groups, Public Workshops
4. Develop a Special Report on Regional Response to Storms, December, 2004
5. Interim Report of Findings and Recommendations to the Governor and Legislature, January 31, 2005
6. Review, Consensus Ranking and Redrafting of Proposed Recommendations, Spring, 2005
7. Final Refining and Amendatory Process on Single Text, Summer, 2005, Public Workshops
8. Final Report, September 30, 2005

COMMITTEE WORKPLAN SCHEDULE

Phase I. Organizational (April-June, 2004, 3 Meetings)

1. March, 2004, Executive Order released, Governor appoints Chair, Co-Vice Chairs and members.
2. April 8, 2004, 1st Meeting, Port St. Lucie - IRCC (1/2 day)
 - Review of Charge
 - Successful Outcomes for the Committee
 - Review of Overall Work-plan
3. May 6-7, 2004, 2nd Meeting, Stuart - IRCC (1 1/2 days)
 - Organizational Session
 - Agreement on Vision Themes, Goals and Principles
4. June 16, 2004, 3rd Meeting, Vero Beach, IRCC (1 day)
 - Taking Stock of Plans, Regional Initiatives and Tools in the Treasure Coast
 - Adoption of the Consensus Guidelines
 - Refinement of the Mission, Principles, Vision, Goals and Key Questions

Phase II. Education and Initial Development of Recommendations (July, 2004 – January, 2005, 7 Meetings)

5. July 14-15, 2004, 4th Meeting, Harbor Branch - Natural Systems Vision Goal (1 1/2 days)
 - Receive information/briefing on the natural system vision goal area and key questions
 - Test consensus on possible objectives and outcomes for the natural system goal area
 - Appoint a member drafting group on natural systems and charge it to draft recommendations that build on the Committee input
 - Receive public comment on the Committees work and issues
6. August 5-6, 2004, 5th Meeting, Stuart IRCC - Economic Diversity/Prosperity (1 1/2 days)
 - Receive brief report from the Natural Systems drafting group
 - Receive information/briefing on the economic diversity/prosperity vision goal area and key questions
 - Test consensus on possible objectives and outcomes for the economic diversity and prosperity goal area
 - Appoint a member drafting group on Economic diversity and prosperity issues and charge it to draft recommendations that build on the Committee input
 - Receive public comment on the Committees work and issues
7. September, 2-3, 2004, 6th Meeting, St. Lucie County - Built-Environment Vision Goal
 - Canceled due to Hurricane Frances

8. October 7, 2004, 6th Meeting- Ft. Pierce
 - Social System briefing to be rescheduled
 - Focus on Recovery issues and development of a CSTC special report

Special Report Drafting Group conference call meeting(s), October 19 & 25, 2004

9. October 28, 2004, 7th Meeting - Development of a CSTC Special Report - Vero Beach
 - Briefings on Storm Impacts and Recovery issues related to affordable housing, agriculture and tourism
 - Development of initial draft recommendations

Special Report Drafting Group conference call meeting(s)

10. November 12, 2004, 8th Meeting, Stuart, Martin County - Special Report Development
 - Continue review of storm impact and recovery issues
 - Continue development of draft recommendations for the Special Report

Special Report Drafting Group conference call meeting(s)

11. December 2-3, 2004, 9th Meeting, St. Lucie - Adopt Special Report & Built Environment Briefings
 - Refine and adopt the Special Report to the Governor and Legislature
 - Receive information/briefing on the built environment vision goal area and key questions
 - Test consensus on possible objectives and outcomes for the built system goal area
 - Appoint a member drafting group on built environment issues and charge it to draft recommendations that build on the Committee input

- Appoint and charge a Rural Lands Subcommittee
 - Review and adopt draft outline for Interim Report
 - Receive public comment on the Committees work and issues
12. January 6, 2005, 10th Meeting, Indian River County- Social System
- Receive information/briefing on the social system and built system vision goal areas and key questions. Test consensus on possible objectives and outcomes for the social system and built environment goal areas
 - Charge a member drafting group on social system issues to draft recommendations that build on the Committee input
 - Receive public comment on the Committees work and issues
 - Drafting Group meetings and plenary report(s), consensus building and refinements
 - Review, refine and adopt draft “amendatory” Interim report text
13. February 3, 2005, Martin County
- Adopt the interim report as amended, discuss next steps

CSTC Interim Report due to Governor by February, 2005

**Phase III. Recommendation Consensus Building And Final Report Adoption
(February-September, 2005, 7 Meetings)**

14. February 3, 2005, Martin County
- Drafting Group meetings and draft principles development
 - Briefing and presentations as needed

Interim Drafting Group Meetings

15. March 3, 2005, St. Lucie County
- Drafting Group meetings and draft principles development
 - Briefing and presentations as needed

Interim Drafting Group Meetings

16. April 7, 2005, Indian River County
- Ad Hoc Drafting Group meetings and draft development
 - Briefing and presentations

Interim Drafting Group Meetings

17. May 5-6, 2005, Martin County
- Review and rank all first draft recommendations from the 5 drafting groups
 - Member drafting groups meet to refine or create new draft recommendations
 - Receive public input on draft recommendations

Interim Drafting Group Meetings

18. June 2-3, 2005, St. Lucie County
- Review and rank all 2nd draft principles from the 5 drafting groups

- Member drafting groups meet to refine or create new draft recommendations
- Receive public input on draft recommendations

Interim Drafting Group Meetings

19. July 7-8, 2005, Indian River County

- Review and rank all draft recommendations from the 5 drafting groups
- Member drafting groups meet to refine or create new draft recommendations
- Receive public input

Interim Drafting Group Meetings

20. August 4-5, 2005, Stuart, Martin County

- Review, rank and refine initial draft single text principles and recommendations

Public Workshops - August 15 Indian River County, August 17 St. Lucie County, August 18 Martin County.

21. September 1-2, 2005, St. Lucie County

- Review, rank and refine 2nd draft single text principles and recommendations.

22. September 22, 2005, Stuart, Martin County

- Review and refinement of 3rd draft

23. September 24, 2005, Stuart, Martin County

- Review and adoption of the 4th and final draft of the CSTC report

CSTC Final Report due to Governor by September 30, 2005

APPENDIX D - CSTC PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING TOGETHER - ADOPTED 7/14/04

Principle A: Listen and speak with an open mind, be honest, fair and respectful and be willing to learn from the diversity of views and interests involved in shaping Treasure Coast's future.

Principle B: Use a Consensus Building Approach to finding common ground on which to build for the future.

Principle C: Assist the Committee deliberations by drawing upon and using state of the art tools and technical resources and the best available information.

Principle D: Seek a shared vision to guide the Committee in its efforts to build consensus on actions to for the Treasure Coast

PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Principle E: Recognize that we share responsibility for the success or failure of our collective future.

Principle F: Recognize the diversity of the Treasure Coast's values, goals, and communities.

Principle G: Focus on building and supporting public-private partnerships both within and beyond the region, to achieve the shared vision and complementary goals.

Principle H: Retain, enhance and build on the region's assets, strengths and resources.

Principle I: Establish goals and actions to achieve the vision of success.

Principle J: Consider trends and expected changes in the region when developing recommendations that recognize and address the linkages among issues and systems in the Treasure Coast.

Principle K: The Committee will consider short and longer term fiscal implications as it builds consensus on recommended strategies and action

Principle L: Provide effective ways for the public's contributions and concerns to be heard and considered by the Committee in its work.

CONSENSUS GUIDELINES ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY AT THE 6-16-04 MEETING

- A. **Consensus Defined.** The Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast will seek consensus decisions on their package of advisory recommendations. General consensus is a participatory process whereby, on matters of substance, the members strive for agreements which all of the members can accept, support, live with or agree not to oppose. In instances where, after vigorously exploring possible ways to enhance the members' support for the final decision on a package of recommendations, and the Committee finds that 100% acceptance or support is not achievable, final decisions will require at least 80% favorable vote of all members present and voting This super majority decision rule underscores the importance of actively developing consensus throughout the process on substantive issues

with the participation of all members. The consensus process will preserve the opportunity for minority views to be expressed and reflected in the record of the Committee's deliberations.

- B. **The Consensus Building Process.** The Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast will develop its recommendations and reports using consensus building techniques with the assistance of facilitators. Techniques such as the use of brainstorming, ranking and prioritizing approaches will be utilized and consensus building procedures consistent with these guidelines reviewed and adopted by the Committee.
- C. **Open Public Process.** The Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast consensus process will be conducted as an open, public process consistent with applicable law. All meetings The Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast and any of its subcommittees will be noticed. The public will be afforded appropriate and timely opportunities for comment and input throughout the consensus building process and at each Committee meeting.
- D. **Chair's Role.** The Chair and the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast will work with the facilitators to design agendas that will be both efficient and effective. The Committee chair will be responsible, in consultation with the co-vice chairs, members and facilitators, for proposing meeting agendas. The Committee meetings will be chaired by the chair and the use of a facilitator will enable the chair to participate directly in the substantive process of building consensus and seeking agreement on recommendations. The Committee's staff and agency staff participating on the Technical Advisory Committee will help the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast with information and meeting logistics.
- E. **Vice Co-Chairs' Role.** The Co-vice chairs will serve as chairs in the absence of the chair and will engage in tasks as directed by the Chair.
- F. **Members' Role.** Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast members serve on the Committee representing key stakeholder interests as set out in the Executive Order. All members will directly engage in the consensus building process including the identification of issues and development of options informed by technical assistance, and will make consensus decisions on recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. Members of the Technical Advisory Committee and their alternates are encouraged to participate in the Committee's consensus building on the development of options, but will not participate in voting on the Committee's reports and decisions on recommendations.
- G. **Members Bring their Organization's Concerns to the Table.** There is an expectation that members should also bring information on matters and concerns of their organizations and public bodies to the Committee's table, where appropriate, for discussion and possible consensus building. It is also understood that many members participate in other initiatives at the local and regional level and may advocate in those forums for solutions on issues related to the Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast's work.
- H. **Committee for a Sustainable Treasure Coast Alternates.** If applicable, members should inform the Chair of their interest in having an alternate appointed in writing. The Chair and co-vice chairs will review the request in light of the Executive Order. Any alternate should be urged to attend all meetings of the Advisory Committee. Alternates will be invited to represent the perspective of the member in the member's absence, participating in the consensus building process. Alternates will not vote on final recommendations or reports of the Committee.

1. **Communication with the Public and Media.** To enhance the possibility of constructive discussions and dialogue as members educate themselves on the issues and engage in consensus building, members agree to be candid and respectful of the diversity of views on the topics the Committee will address. Members agree to avoid personal attacks both at the table and away from the table. In discussing the Committee's consensus process with the media, members should be careful to present only their own views and not the views or statements of other participants. Members may refer media requests to the Chair who shall speak on behalf of the Committee regarding the consensus building process.

CONSENSUS DRAFT DEVELOPMENT

1. The Chair may appoint drafting sub-committees to seek consensus recommendations for the Committee's consideration utilizing the consensus procedures and guidelines.
2. Drafting groups may meet between Committee meetings to develop recommendations.
3. Members may be asked to individually rank initial draft recommendations from subcommittee or drafting group using a consensus testing scale. Plenary review and discussion of the ranked recommendations will follow.
4. Subcommittees will be asked to address member concerns and suggestions in redrafting and refining the recommendations.
5. Redrafted recommendations will ultimately be compiled into a single text by the Chair for the Committee's review, refinement and amendatory process.

AMENDATORY REVIEW PROCESS

1. The Chair will present an "amendatory draft" of performance expectations for adoption by the Team at the conclusion of the September 1-2 meeting. This "amendatory draft" will be circulated electronically to the CSOP Advisory Team by September 8.
2. The deadline for submission of written member amendments to the performance expectations will be the close of business on September 15, 2005 for these amendments to be considered by the Committee at the September 22, 2005 meeting. Amendments received by the deadline will be circulated electronically to members for review by September 20.
3. The Committee will only address written member amendments received by the amendment deadline at the September 22 meeting. No amendments will be accepted by members from the floor.
4. Only the Chair may offer amendatory language from the floor, but only if it is designed to build greater consensus.
5. The Chair will organize amendments as editorial and substantive and will move adoption of editorial amendments as a consent packet. As necessary, the Advisory Team will review and vote on any editorial amendment if believed to be substantive by any member.
6. Amendment sponsors, at the chair's discretion, may be recognized for brief clarifying comments on meaning/intent of the amendment. Amendment sponsor(s) may accept "friendly" language to their amendments on the floor.

7. Voting members present in the room will express consensus or vote on amendments, sections and the overall report (no abstentions).
8. Non-voting members may participate in "straw polls" on amendments but not in votes on amendments.
9. Consensus reflecting support by at least 80% or more of those voting members present and voting will be required for inclusion of amendments, for sections as amended, and for adoption of the overall report as amended.

APPENDIX D - FACILITATION TEAM

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APPENDIX F - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Best Management Practices (BMP): Practices and/or structural controls to prevent or minimize non-point pollution and reduce the amount of and improve the quality of stormwater run-off in the most cost-effective and environmentally sound manner.

Compact Development: Compact development is a pattern of land development with sufficient density of development and proximity between uses and activities to encourage pedestrian movement and efficient provision of public facilities and services.

Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP): Addresses restoring natural flows of water, water quality, and more natural hydro-periods within the remaining natural areas of the Everglades. The plan is designed to result in a sustainable south Florida by restoring the ecosystem, ensuring clean and reliable water supplies, and providing flood protection.

Contributory business: In the areas of service or manufacturing, businesses that add money to the local economy through profits or high wages.

Economic Development Districts (EDDs): Multi-county development organizations, composed of representatives of the area, including, but not limited to, local government, the private sector, and community representatives. These organizations work in a local partnership to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for their area in order to foster and promote economic growth. (EDDs are authorized under Title IV of the U.S. Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965.)

Estuary: A partially enclosed body of water formed where freshwater from rivers and streams flows into the ocean, mixing with the salty sea water. Estuaries and the lands surrounding them are places of transition from land to sea, and from fresh to salt water. Estuaries are often known as bays, lagoons, harbors, inlets, or sounds.

Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR): A Florida regulation (Section 163.3191, F.S.) requiring that each local government adopt an evaluation and appraisal report (EAR) once every seven years assessing its success in implementing its comprehensive plan and suggesting how the plan should be revised to better address community objectives, changing conditions, and changes in state requirements.

Green Building Codes/Standards: Emphasize techniques that minimize environmental impacts, reduce energy consumption, and contribute to structures being more healthful places for people to live and work.

Hazard mitigation: Involves planning to reduce the loss of life and property due to manmade and natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented immediately following a disaster.

Heritage trail: Provides physical connections between historic sites and areas of interest to increase the public's knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of important cultural and natural areas.

Lifelong learning: Augments formal academic learning throughout the lifetime through means such as non-credit college courses, lectures, travel, and concerts and entertainment.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): Mandated by the Federal Highway Act of 1973 to develop, in concert with the state and public transit operators, transportation plans and programs for metropolitan areas. The plans and programs for each metropolitan area must provide for the development and inte-

grated management and operation of transportation systems and facilities, including pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities that will function as an intermodal transportation system for the metropolitan area.

Mixed-Use Development: Mixed-use development means an area or tract of land with several different uses such as, but not limited to, residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment, in an integrated, compact, pedestrian-oriented form. Mixed-use developments generally include mixed-use buildings. A mixed-use building means a building with two or more uses, such as retail and services on the ground floor and office or residential on upper levels.

Multimodal transportation system: Denotes the use of more than one mode (such as highway, rail, aviation, and seaports) to serve transportation needs in a given area.

Ranchette: Residence on typically 5- to 20-acre rural lots where owners typically do not participate in active farming or agricultural activities. Some ranchette properties are used for small-scale operations (equestrian or landscaping, for example).

Runoff: Rainfall that, due to paving or other construction, cannot be absorbed by the soil, often leading to drainage problems or flooding.

Rural lands: Encompass agricultural activities, open space for recreation, ecosystems, and wildlife habitat, filter stormwater and wastewater, and provide a buffer between intense urban uses and natural areas.

Smart growth: Carefully conceived and wisely implemented strategies (such as compact development and alternative modes of transportation) that protect natural systems while ensuring a strong economy, a superior quality of life, and a sustainable future.

Sprawl: Generally characterized as low density development with no discernable urban center, having distinct areas for homes, shopping, and workplaces and emphasizing the use of the automobile to get from one place to another.

Upland Habitat: Supports the growth of trees and other vegetation, provides habitat for wildlife, and is rarely or never inundated by water.

Wetland: An area where the water level often changes and plants are able to grow in wet soil. Wetlands contribute to stabilization of the soil and improvement of ground water as well as providing wildlife habitat.

Workforce development: Provides education and training to residents to help them gain employment to support themselves and their families, thereby contributing to the success of businesses and the quality of life of the community.

Workforce housing: Affordable and accessible housing within a community, either through ownership or rentals, which enables residents to live in the area where they work.

APPENDIX G - TOOLS, RESOURCES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

[Much of the information for the descriptions of farmland conservation tools is taken from the American Farmland Trust (www.farmlandinfo.org); The Purchase of Development Rights, Agricultural Preservation and Other Land Use Policy Tools—The Pennsylvania Experience, by Professor Tom Daniels (www.farmfoundation.org/1998NPPEC/daniels.pdf); and Holding Our Common Ground – Protecting America’s Countryside, by Tom Daniels and Deborah Bowers, Island Press, 1997.]

TOOLS

Tools to Conserve Farmland and Natural Systems

Agricultural Conservation Easements: Permanent and Term (Less than Permanent)

A conservation easement is a deed restriction landowners voluntarily place on their property to limit land to specific uses and protect it from development. Agricultural conservation easements are designed to protect farmland. Conservation easements can also be used to protect resources such as productive agricultural land, ground and surface water, wildlife habitat, historic sites, or scenic views. Conservation easements are flexible documents tailored to each property and the needs of individual landowners. They may cover an entire parcel or portions of a property. In a conservation easement, the landowner (grantor) authorizes a qualified conservation organization or public agency (grantee) to monitor and enforce the restrictions set forth in the agreement. Landowners granting an easement retain title to their property and the right to use their land for agricultural purposes, and can still restrict public access. Landowners can also use the land as collateral for a loan or sell their property and continue to be eligible for any state or federal farm programs that they were eligible for before entering into the conservation agreement. Most agricultural conservation easements are permanent. (Less-than-permanent or “term” easements impose restrictions for a specified number of years.) Regardless of the duration of the easement, the agreement is legally binding on future landowners for the agreed-upon time period. The value of an agricultural conservation easement is generally the fair market value of the property minus its restricted value, as determined by a qualified appraiser. Grantors can often receive tax advantages, depending on whether they meet Internal Revenue Service criteria.

Agriculture Coordinator or Manager

Some counties or cities interested in maintaining active agriculture employ an agricultural coordinator or manager. An agricultural coordinator or manager is typically charged with actively promoting agricultural activities, educating the public on the needs of agriculture, developing and implementing strategies that will result in more profitable farming, and providing technical assistance to farmers. Technical assistance can include assistance with economic development activities or with meeting city permitting and regulatory requirements. In Florida, both Miami-Dade and Hillsborough counties have agricultural coordinators.

Agricultural Research

Research related to agriculture and rural issues can play an important role in an overall program to retain and enhance agriculture. Research may be conducted by public and private individuals and institutions, often through grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture or other governmental entities. Research can be used to discover methods and strategies that make local agriculture operations more competitive. Research can also be used to document and quantify the economic, community, or environmental contributions of agriculture. In Florida, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) at the University of Florida (www.ifas.ufl.edu) is the primary source of agricultural research. IFAS is a federal-state-county partnership throughout Florida dedicated to improving the lives of residents by developing and providing knowledge about agriculture, natural resources, and life sciences.

Agricultural Zoning

Agricultural zoning is a specialized form of zoning where the type and intensity of land use and land development are compatible and consistent with food and fiber production. Agricultural zones are typically adopted in areas interested in protecting, stabilizing, or preserving the agricultural land base and, at the same time, keeping individuals employed in the production of food and fiber crops. There are two general types of agricultural zoning: exclusive and nonexclusive.

The more widely used and least restrictive is nonexclusive agricultural zoning, which recognizes agriculture production as the preferred use in certain areas but does not prohibit other land uses in the agriculturally zoned area. Non-farm uses of land are typically allowed, and the conversion of farmland to non-farm use is allowed if approved by a local zoning agency. Nonexclusive agriculture zones typically limit population density, large lot sizes are often required for residential units, and nonagricultural land use usually must be compatible with agriculture production. Compatible uses include livestock feed stores, farm implement dealers, and retail nurseries and greenhouses as examples. Minimum lot sizes are usually in the one to five acre range but can be much larger. The theory surrounding larger lot sizes is that they should represent the minimum sized land base needed for sustainable agriculture production.

Exclusive agricultural zoning is much more restrictive. Usually non-farm residences, non-agriculture activities, and retail businesses are prohibited. Of course, in some instances exceptions are granted after appropriate local review. Examples might be roadside farm sales from producing farms or nursery retail sales from producing nurseries within the agricultural zone. In some instances, other uses are allowed in exclusive agricultural zones, such as cemeteries, landfills, schools, churches, animal hospitals, etc., which can be placed on lower quality land but also provide services to the agricultural community.

Acquisition in Fee

Fee simple is the most basic type of ownership, wherein the owner has the right to use and dispose of the property at will. Fee simple acquisition for land conservation might involve a local government or agency or land trust purchasing farms outright from willing sellers. The farms are then deed-restricted to permanently preserve them for agricultural use and sold at auction to the highest bidders. Purchase criteria might include percentage of high quality soils; percentage of tillable acres; suitable boundaries and buffers, such as other adjacent preserved farms and open space; the local commitment to agriculture (e.g., right to farm ordinances, financial support); size of the farm; agricultural density of the area, and imminence of development. Fee simple acquisition for conservation can boost an area's agricultural industry by providing other farmers with opportunities to purchase farmland at affordable prices that reflect only farm value, not development value.

Community Stewardship Organizations

A Community Stewardship Organization (CSO) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization established to address the specific conservation needs of a community. CSOs allow community leaders, developers, and conservationists to work together to assure that development goes forward in the most environmentally-sound manner possible while taking into consideration the interests of the landowner, the natural area, and the surrounding communities. To fund a CSO, the parties involved agree to impose revenue-generating deed restrictions, binding future homeowners and businesses to underwrite and provide revenues for the CSO through the creation of long-term dedicated funding. Funding sources for a CSO may include fees (real estate transfer, commercial occupancy, golf course, etc.), monthly assessments, or other recurring revenues. Because CSO funding has an ongoing funding source tied to the development, it continues to benefit the community even after the development is completed.

A CSO allows developers to incorporate permanent conservation, natural systems restoration, and community-building into their developments through agreements with local stakeholders. A CSO can assist with the following:

- Conservation and management of natural resource and ecological restoration;
- Protection of farmland and community-supported agriculture;
- Research, monitoring, and environmental education; and,
- Community activities and other educational and outreach programs that enhance the values provided by open space in a rural landscape and connect people with the environment.

Use of a CSO provides multiple developer, community, and homeowner benefits. These benefits include higher real estate value because of the strong market for conservation-oriented communities, coupled with significant amounts of preserved open space, which minimizes the impacts of development on natural areas and farmland. The protected open space next to a development also provides many benefits to residents of a development associated with a CSO. These benefits include a greater connectivity to the protected open space, a wider variety of lifestyle opportunities, and a greater sense of place. A CSO can complement other conservation programs as well Homeowners' Associations (HOA) or Community Development District (CDD) activities.

Characteristics of a successful CSO include using a vision-driven, rather than entitlement-driven, planning process to identify where development should go and what lands should be protected, and designing the CSO early in development conceptualization, including being very clear about what issues the CSO will and will not address. Funding for the CSO should utilize a permanent, recurring revenue source tied to the development process, not to the developer, and the CSO's mission should extend beyond the associated development to reinforce the broader public role and benefits.

Community-Supported Agriculture

Community-supported agriculture is generally centered in or near urban areas and is used to help farmers direct market their products to residents of nearby communities. In one form of community-supported agriculture, farm customers agree to pay for farm products at the time of harvest and, in return, receive regular delivery of products during the growing season. The benefit to the farmer is less risk because of the guaranteed income. Other methods of supporting local agriculture include community-supported farmer markets and programs that enable farmers to sell their products directly to restaurants and other food retailers. A growing number of nonprofit organizations focus their work on encouraging and establishing a network among farmers and users of farm products.

Economic Incentives

Economic incentives are used to help farmers stay in business, keep their land in agriculture, and deal with the growing environmental, land cost, marketing, and other expenses they increasingly incur. Economic incentives can include the direct financial benefits of the program or tool, whether a rental rate paid on the land, the percentage split of cost-share between the agency and the landowner, or tax or other benefits. Incentives can also take the form of technical assistance or information sharing or assistance with marketing and distributing farm products. Incentive programs are based on the recognition that preserving rural character needs to make economic sense as well as achieve public objectives. Such incentives can be used by planning boards and governmental agencies to encourage good development and the implementation of other tools or incentives which developers and planners have at their disposal to facilitate environmentally and regionally responsible design that also makes economic sense.

Florida Rural Land Stewardship Program (RLSP)

The RLSP is an incentive-based system that uses the market economy to encourage preservation and private stewardship of natural resources, retain agriculture, and promote economic growth and diversification in a sustainable rural environment. Established by the Florida legislature in 2001 [Section 163.3177(11)(d), F.S.], the Rural Land Stewardship Program enables counties to designate all or portions of lands classified in the Future Land Use element as predominantly agricultural, rural, open, open-rural, or a substantively equivalent land use, as a Rural Land Stewardship Area. Within those areas, planning and economic incentives are applied to encourage the implementation of innovative and flexible planning and development strategies and creative land use planning techniques.

RLSP objectives are to direct development to suitable locations within rural areas; maintain the economic value of rural areas (agriculture, silviculture, mining, hunting/fishing, outdoor recreation and tourism); and protect valuable ecosystems and habitat areas. Steps involved in the process include:

- Designating the location of the Stewardship Area and assigning “transferable rural land use credits” to the Stewardship Area;
- Dividing the Stewardship Area into credit “sending” and credit “receiving” areas and transferring credits from sending to receiving areas;
- Within receiving areas, using credits to construct the desired development and transferring credits ensure protection of the rural economic base and environmental resources.

Rural Land Stewardship Areas may be designated within areas identified in a county’s future land use map as agriculture, rural, open or a similar category; outside municipal boundaries; or outside established urban growth boundaries. Stewardship areas may be multi-county. Collier County, Florida, is using the RLSP program to protect 17,000 acres of agricultural and environmentally important land by concentrating development in compact new towns and villages based on traditional planning principles. As a result, the overall development footprint is one-tenth of the prior Comprehensive Plan by accommodating the 2025 population in a compact development form. The stewardship credits are based on the natural resource value of the land, with the amount of credits driven by the land characteristics that the public most valued. The new towns and villages serve as the receiving area for the stewardship credits from the protected natural resource areas.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

In a PDR program, landowners voluntarily sell a conservation easement to a designated private conservation organization or a governmental agency to protect their land from development. An easement is placed on the landowner’s deed and runs with the land, either in perpetuity or for a period of time specified in the easement document. Landowners receive compensation in return for the restrictions placed on their land. As with conservation easements, landowners selling their development rights retain title to their property and the right to use their land for agricultural purposes and can still restrict public access. Landowners can also use the land as collateral for a loan or sell their property and continue to be eligible for any state or federal farm programs that they were eligible for before entering into the conservation agreement. The value paid for development right is typically the difference between the fair market value of the land and its agricultural or conserved value. A professional appraiser generally determines easement value. A numerical scoring system that evaluates suitability for agriculture or environmental conservation purposes can also be used to determine value.

A PDR program provides benefits to landowners and to communities. By selling only their development rights, landowners can convert some of the wealth tied up in their land into cash without relinquishing ownership of the land or use of its productive capacity. This benefits landowners who are land rich and cash poor (a high level of equity and little income). A PDR program provides landowners with a viable financial

alternative to selling for development and provides liquid capital that can be reinvested in farm operations or other forms of investment. Landowners may use proceeds from a sale of development rights in any way they choose – purchasing additional acreage, upgrading equipment, paying taxes, or investing for retirement. Removing the development potential from land can also help to reduce its market value, which facilitates the transfer of the land to children of farmers and makes the land more affordable for other farmers who want to buy the land for agricultural purposes. Removing the development rights may also offer significant tax savings by reducing the taxable value of the land or by reducing future inheritance taxes. PDR programs provide communities with a way to share with farmers the cost of maintaining farmland, realize public goals for the protection of farmland, open space, and environmentally important lands, and achieve a more cost efficient form of development.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

TDR programs enable landowners to transfer the development potential from one parcel of land to another parcel, either on the same site or on another site in a designated growth area, thereby shifting development from agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas to areas with full municipal services. TDRs are often used by local governments to protect farm and forest lands, scenic areas, and wetlands. TDR programs are established by a local government by identifying areas to be protected (called sending areas) and transferring development rights to other areas designated to receive the development rights (called receiving areas). The number of development rights that can be transferred depends on how many development rights credits the government allocates and how much development potential the government allows in growth areas. TDR programs need an active real estate market and growing population to ensure that developers will be willing to purchase a TDR in order to build more intensively in receiving areas. TDR programs also require government political support.

To establish a TDR program, a local government first identifies and maps areas for preservation (the sending areas) and then issues development rights credits to landowners in the those areas. Next, the government identifies and maps the receiving areas and requires that developers who wish to build at increased densities in the receiving areas first purchase a certain number of development rights credits from the landowners in the sending areas. Landowners in receiving areas are generally able to develop at higher densities because of the use of the transferred development rights. A permanent conservation easement is used to restrict the land after the development rights are transferred. In most TDR programs, the transaction is between a private landowner and a developer. The prices of development rights are determined by developers' bids and landowners' asking prices, the same as in private market real estate transaction. The role of government is to approve and record the transaction and to monitor the easement.

TDR programs provide benefits to landowners and communities. Landowners benefit by being compensated for placing land use restriction on their land, by keeping farmland prices affordable for agricultural uses, and by removing land uses that impede farming. The public benefits because private sector funds are used to purchase the development rights, thus avoiding large public expenditures; farmland and environmentally sensitive areas are protected; and development occurs in areas suitable for development, resulting in more efficient public services. Over time, a local government can preserve a significant amount of land and at the same time channel new development into growth areas that make full use of public infrastructure and services, thus helping achieve a balanced growth strategy. Successful TDR programs are a part of the locality's comprehensive plan, involve all stakeholders in the design of the program, and include strategies that nurture the program and create opportunities and incentives for using the program.

TDR Banks: TDR banks have been established by many local governments to provide a demand for TDRs from landowners in sending areas if developers are not interested in purchasing TDRs. The bank, which is funded by the government, purchases development credits from landowners if they are not otherwise able to sell them. Through a TDR bank, a local government can offer to purchase TDRs from landowners in a sending area either at a fixed price or a negotiated price. A TDR bank can also sell TDRs to developers, which is often a less costly option to developers than purchasing TDRs from several landowners. A

TDR bank can also serve as a center for contact between landowners and developers, facilitating sales and reducing transaction costs for participants.

1031 Like-Kind Exchanges: Section 1031 of the Internal Revenue Code provides, in general, that no gain (or loss) is recognized on an exchange of property held for productive use in business (e.g., land used for agriculture) or for investment solely for “like-kind property” also held for productive use or for investment. The exchange of different kinds of business or investment property is treated as “like-kind property” under Sec. 1031. For example, improved realty or agricultural land exchanged for apartments has been held to qualify as a like-kind exchange. The IRS has treated a conservation easement and a fee interest in real estate as like kind under Sec. 1031. Therefore, a properly structured sale of a conservation easement used to buy other agricultural land, or business or investment property should be treated as a like-kind exchange. Landowners should consult their own advisors about the tax consequences of a potential transaction.

Installment Purchase Agreements: An installment purchase agreement (IPA) is an innovative payment plan sometimes used by jurisdictions with PDR programs. IPAs are intended to make PDR programs competitive with developers by providing unique financial and tax advantages. In an IPA, a state or local government issues a long-term bond which is used to purchase development rights over time. In general, state and local governments can enter into IPAs if they have the authority to issue general obligation bonds. Because IPAs constitute long-term debt, agreements typically require the same approval process as bonds. An IPA program requires dedicated funds to cover the interest and principal payments. Use of an IPA benefits landowners and the participating government. IPAs spread out payments so that landowners receive semi-annual, tax-exempt interest over a term of years (typically 20 to 30). The principal is due at the end of the contract term. This payment option enables jurisdictions to use accumulated and future dedicated revenues to protect land while it is still available and relatively affordable.

Other Planning Tools

Compact Development

Compact development refers to the act of constructing buildings vertically rather than horizontally, and configuring them on a block or neighborhood scale that makes efficient use of land and resources and is consistent with neighborhood character and scale. Compact building design reduces the footprint of new construction, thus preserving greenspace to absorb and filter rain water, reduce flooding and stormwater drainage needs, and lower the amount of pollution washing into streams, rivers, and lakes. Compact building design is necessary to sustain transit ridership at levels necessary to make public transit a viable transportation option. In a rural or suburban area, compact development might take the form of cluster development, a land planning and development technique that groups structures or lots to provide larger amounts of common open space and achieve more cost-effective development. By permitting variations in lot size, shape, and orientation, developers can concentrate allowable units on the most buildable areas of the site, leaving the rest open and undeveloped. For example, if zoning allows one unit per acre, a 100-acre parcel typically would be permitted for 100 homes. Without cluster, the site would have to be divided into 100 one-acre lots. With clustering, homes might be built on half-acre lots, in which case 50 acres of the land could be left in permanent protection as open space. (This open land can be transferred to and maintained by a homeowners’ association, the local government, or a private non-profit land trust.)

Cluster development can also be used to preserve open space or to protect fragile or otherwise valuable natural resources, such as tree stands, natural drainageways, and outstanding scenery. Clustering can achieve cost savings to the developer and homebuyer because the more efficient site layout reduces costs associated with streets, utilities, and other site improvements. Cost savings to the local government are also achieved because the more efficient infrastructure pattern reduces maintenance costs, and the larger and more useable open space areas created by cluster reduces the number of public parks that are needed. In recent years, the cluster concept has embraced the preservation of larger, more valuable open spaces

rather than just “leftover” open space, and cluster techniques have been used to preserve large forests, wetland areas, and even working farms. For that reason, many people now refer to cluster development as open space development or conservation development.

Contingent Valuation Survey

Contingent valuation is a survey-based economic technique for the valuation of non-market resources, typically environmental areas. The contingent valuation method involves directly asking people, in a survey, how much they would be willing to pay for specific environmental services. In some cases, people are asked for the amount of compensation they would be willing to accept to give up specific environmental services. It is called “contingent” valuation because people are asked to state their willingness to pay, contingent on a specific hypothetical scenario and description of the environmental service. Contingent valuation surveys are useful for measuring the benefit people receive from having a view of a mountain or open-space, for example. Communities have used a contingent valuation survey to determine support for a bond issue to fund a PDR program or to make environmental planning decisions.

Existing Business Survey

An existing business survey is used to determine the needs of existing businesses within a community or region. The survey is designed to learn how an economic development organization or state or local government can help existing businesses grow and expand and overcome hurdles that interfere with day-to-day operations. Use of an existing business survey recognizes the important role that existing business growth plays in the local economy. Typically, some 80 percent of a community’s new jobs are created by the businesses already located there. A focus on existing businesses can include provision of assistance with incentives, programs, tax credits, land/building database, alternative financing resources, employee recruitment, utility technical services, and local business climate issues

Full Cost Accounting

Full Cost Accounting is a systematic approach for identifying, summing, and reporting the actual costs of solid waste management. It takes into account past and future outlays, overhead (oversight and support services) costs, and operating costs. Full cost accounting is not the same as cash flow or general fund accounting, as it focuses on the flow of economic resources (assets) and recognizes costs as resources that are used or committed, regardless of when money is spent.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping

GIS is used to display and analyze spatial data that are tied to databases, combining maps with computer graphics and databases. This connection is what gives GIS its power: maps can be drawn from the database and place or spatial-tied data can be referenced from the maps. When a database is updated, the associated map can be updated as well. GIS databases include a wide variety of information including: geographic, social, political, environmental, and demographic. The information gained from GIS mapping can be a valuable tool to public officials and citizens as they make decisions related to their community. GIS, for example, can be used to make decisions about siting new facilities, create hiking trails, protect wetlands, direct emergency response vehicles, designate historic neighborhoods, or redraw legislative districts.

Special Area Plans

Special Area Plans are generally intended to give communities the opportunity to define the identity, function, organization, and character of specific neighborhoods or developments in accordance with the general planning framework provided by the comprehensive plan. Successful Special Area Plans are based on a community’s vision for the area. The major elements of a Special Area Plan can provide a tiered land use framework to organize land uses in a way that supports a community’s vision. For example, a Special Area Plan could be used to create compact, walkable mixed-use centers or to preserve large tracts of land for conservation while designating locations for clustered residential development.

Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB)

Urban growth boundaries (or what some call an urban development boundary) are a proven planning tool that limits land development beyond a politically-designated area. (The first UGB was established by Lexington, Kentucky, in 1958.) A UGB establishes a line on a map that is drawn to concentrate new development within the UGB boundary, where there are existing urban services and facilities, and limit development in rural areas with a high resource value. Typically, urban services are offered only within the UGB. Communities have used UGBs to curb sprawl, protect open space, encourage more compact and cost efficient development patterns, and promote redevelopment. UGBs can be effective in preventing development in rural areas and encouraging or requiring higher density development within the UGB, thereby reducing the amount of land needed to accommodate future population growth. UGB boundaries are established to accommodate growth over a particular period, generally 20 years. To avoid limiting the supply of land, resulting in higher housing costs, the UGB should have growth potential that is greater than the market demand for housing.

Visioning

A visioning process allows public officials, residents, and businesses to discuss major issues facing their community and decide what that community's future should look like. The vision can serve as the basis for designing a practical and desirable strategic plan for the future. Visioning exercises usually include a representative cross-section of the key stakeholders in the area and allow participants to brainstorm and discuss options without the constraints of many kinds of planning processes. Visioning processes have been successful in exposing participants to a variety of viewpoints while fostering face-to-face communication and compromise.

RESOURCES

Natural Systems and Rural Lands

American Farmland Trust (www.farmland.org)

Conservation Fund (www.conservationfund.org)

Farming on the Edge by American Farmland Trust
(www.farmland.org/farmingontheedge/downloads.htm)

Florida Rural Land Stewardship Program
(www.dca.state.fl.us/fdcp/dcp/RuralLandStewardship/index.cfm)

Land Trust Alliance (www.lta.org)

Scenic America (www.scenic.org)

The Biodiversity Project (www.biodiversityproject.org)

The Economics Benefits of Open Space, a bibliography by the Trust for Public Lands
(www.tpl.org/tier3_cdl.cfm?content_item_id=1076&folder_id=726)

Trust for Public Lands (www.tpl.org)

US Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov/livability; cfpub.epa.gov/sgpdb/sgdb.cfm)

Sustainable Built Environment

Center for Sustainable Communities (www.naco.org/sustainable)

National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education (www.smartgrowth.umd.edu)

New Urban News (www.newurbannews.com)

School maps (www.indian-river.k12.fl.us/school_links/boundary_maps.htm,
www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/SLCSBNET/pdf/school_map.pdf)

Smart Growth Network (www.smartgrowth.org)

Smart Growth Network Partners (www.sustainable.org)

Smart Growth Online (www.smartgrowth.org/Default.asp?res=1600)

The Congress for the New Urbanism (www.cnu.org)

The Florida Chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism (www.cnuflorida.org)

The Town Paper (www.tndtownpaper.com)
The Urban Land Institute (www.uli.org)
Treasure Coast Future Land Use Map (www.sustainabletc.org/links.htm)
Treasure Coast 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan and Development of Regional Impacts Maps (www.sustainabletc.org/links.htm)

Economic Diversity and Prosperity

Agency for Workforce Innovation (www.floridajobs.org)
Enterprise Florida (www.eflorida.com)
Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Labor Market Statistics (www.labormarketinfo.com/)
Labor Law Talk (www.labortalk.com)
Next Generation Consulting (www.nextgenerationconsulting.com)
Responsible Wealth (www.responsiblewealth.org)
Sustainable Communities Network (www.sustainable.org)
Ten Principles of Smart Growth: Choosing Our Community's Future: A Guide to Getting the Most Out of New Development, by Smart Growth America (www.smartgrowthamerica.com). The 10 principles include:

- Making development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective
- Creating a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Providing a variety of transportation options
- Strengthening existing communities and directing development towards them
- Preserving natural beauty, parks, farmland and environmentally critical areas
- Creating complete neighborhoods where daily needs are close at hand
- Creating a safe, inviting environment for walking
- Fostering distinctive communities with a strong sense of place
- Making efficient use of public investments in infrastructure, schools and services
- Putting jobs and good schools within reach of all who need them

The Living Wage Resource Center (www.livingwagecampaign.org)
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council's Strategic Regional Policy Plan (www.tcrpc.org)
Treasure Coast County Economic Development Districts and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (www.tcrpc.org/departments/econ_dvlp.html)
Workforce and Skill Shortages Report by the Research Coast Workforce Development Board (www.sustainabletc.org/links.htm)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Natural Systems

Create the following maps for the Treasure Coast:

- Map 1 – Natural systems and areas of natural resource interest in the Treasure Coast
- Map 2 – Public lands, current and proposed
- Map 3a – Hypothetical example of a Treasure Coast network of public and protected lands (based on the mapping approach presented by Dr. David Cox)
- Map 3b – Hypothetical example of a Treasure Coast network of public and protected lands (based on natural areas identified by the Natural Systems workgroup)

Education, Health, and Cultural Opportunities

Ten Essential Public Health Services:

- Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems
- Diagnose and investigate health problems
- Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues
- Mobilize community partnerships and actions to identify and solve health problems
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
- Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable
- Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services
- Research new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

Sustainable Built Environment: Principle 3, Vibrant city centers and redevelopment in urban areas contribute to sustainability

Recommendation A:

- Encourage densification and investment
- Prioritize infrastructure investments for redeveloping urban areas, including funding historic preservation projects that help safeguard community heritage, contribute to the quality of life, revitalize older communities, and promote local economic development and diversification
- Encourage transfer of development rights programs designed to redevelop, revitalize, and infill existing urban areas
- Establish community redevelopment agencies, downtown development authorities, architectural review boards, and/or historic preservation boards as a means of protecting historical resources
- Provide sites for civic uses such as schools, parks, and libraries within redevelopment areas
- Support efforts and programs for housing that is attainable and affordable
- Coordinate land use planning and the provision of public facilities to assist the private sector create infill and redevelopment opportunities
- Review and revise land development regulations designed to encourage infill and redevelopment and discourage sprawling forms and patterns of development
- Develop concurrency provisions for local governments in the region that support and encourage redevelopment and infill

Recommendation B:

- Prohibit relocation of public buildings outside of identified redevelopment areas
- Encourage the rehabilitation of existing public and civic buildings and the siting of new ones in prominent locations within redevelopment areas
- Redevelop obsolete retail and commercial centers within well-developed urban areas as an effort to discourage suburban sprawl
- Provide for a simplified and shortened review process for infill and redevelopment applications without compromising the public's health, safety, and welfare
- Establish a regional EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Program and a Revolving Loan Fund for clean-up of contaminated sites within designated redevelopment areas

Recommendation C:

- Consider tapping existing available funding sources such as impact fees, tax abatements, and other tax incentives to encourage infill and redevelopment in urban areas
- Undertake studies of the feasibility of implementing innovative funding strategies in the region, such as:
 - tiered impact fees that recognize cost differences in providing public services to development;
 - land value tax assessment systems that can encourage investment and economic opportunities within existing urban areas, reduce land speculation, and discourage low density, high cost development patterns; and,
 - a redevelopment surtax to be applied to all new development outside of identified redevelopment areas in the region

Economic Prosperity and Diversity

- Develop a checklist that can be used by local officials to use when considering development requests

ADDITIONAL CSTC RESOURCES

Other CSTC Reports

Toward a Safer Sustainable Region, December 2004

The Challenge of Growth, February 2005

Sustainable Treasure Coast Website

www.sustainabletc.org

The Committee's website is now maintained by the Institute for a Sustainable Treasure Coast at the FAU/IRCC campus in St. Lucie West. CSTC reports, committee meeting summaries, expert presentations, and other materials are available for public review and dissemination.



Sustainable Treasure Coast

