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Regional Planning Councils & Economic Development Organizations

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Regional planning councils are designated as Economic Development Districts by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Promoting regional economic development in conjunction with local economic development organizations is a priority for the regional planning councils as is providing technical assistance to local government, private businesses and neighborhood-based organizations with respect to the creation and expansion of employment opportunities. From January 2003 to August 2010, the U.S. Economic Development Administration invested \$66 million in 60 projects in the State of Florida to create/retain 13,700 jobs and leverage \$1 billion in private capital investment.

Below are ongoing activities and a non-exhaustive set of examples demonstrating collaboration between regional planning councils and economic development organizations as they work together and assist one another in the furtherance of economic development.

- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies:** Working with local economic development organizations, local chambers of commerce, and businesses throughout each of the 11 regions, regional planning councils are updating their five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies, as required by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, using the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six-Pillars as the organizing framework. Economic development organizations are represented on each regional planning council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee.
- **Participation on Regional Planning Councils:** Section 186.504(4), F.S., requires that the Governor appoint to each regional planning council a representative nominated by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. In many cases, the Department works with Enterprise Florida, Inc., to identify a representative from an economic development organization to serve in that capacity.
- **Participation in Economic Development Organizations:** Many regional planning councils serve on economic development organizations boards or councils. Examples are provided below:
 - The Apalachee Regional Planning Council serves on the Gadsden County Economic Development Council; Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce, which serves as Calhoun County's economic development organization; and, Jefferson County Economic Development Council.
 - The Northeast Florida Regional Council participates in JAXUSA Partnership's stakeholder meetings to review projects, develop economic development strategies, and address operational issues, as well as in JAXUSA's Annual Planning Retreat to develop its annual agenda and operational plan.
 - The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council is a member of and serves on the Board of Directors of the North Florida Economic Development Partnership, which is the regional

economic development organization responsible for coordinating the activities of the 14-county North Florida Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern. Ten of the counties are located in the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council's region.

- The South Florida Regional Planning Council serves on the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance Board of Directors and is one of the four co-chairs for the countywide update of the Vision Broward economic development plan, managed by the Alliance, and also serves on the Broward County Six-Pillars leadership team. The South Florida Regional Planning Council also meets at the Beacon Council's (Miami-Dade) home office three times a year, where they receive an update on the Beacon Council's activities. The South Florida Regional Planning Council also provides input into the ongoing strategic business planning process, "One Community, One Goal" being conducted by the Beacon Council.
- **Economic Data and Analysis:** Regional planning councils are equipped with state of the art econometric software (REMI – Regional Economic Modeling, Inc.) and provide objective economic impact analysis on policy and investment decisions, often in support of local economic development organizations, helping them compete nationally and globally for investment and skilled personnel, resulting in jobs that are a value added benefit to the community. Over the past 10 years, regional planning councils conducted over 420 REMI studies.
- **Grant Writing:** Regional Planning Councils prepare grant applications for federal/state economic development infrastructure funds (e.g., Community Development Block Grant Economic Development Category, U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Rural Development, Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund, and Florida Transportation Economic Fund), for economic development projects at the request of local economic development organizations and local governments.
 - The Apalachee Regional Planning Council is actively participating in the development of the Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern catalyst project in Calhoun County, providing assistance to the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce in the completion of grant applications to support that effort.
 - The Apalachee Regional Planning Council provided assistance to the Jackson County Economic Development Council with the state and federal grant application process, which ultimately resulted in the location of a Family Dollar Distribution Warehouse in Jackson County.
 - The Apalachee Regional Planning Council prepared a successful grant application for the Gulf County Economic Development Council to help meet the infrastructure needs for the establishment of the Sacred Heart Hospital and North Florida Childcare Center in Port St. Joe.
 - The Northeast Florida Regional Council and JAXUSA Partnership jointly applied for and received a U.S. Economic Development Administration subcluster study grant. The project, Innovate Northeast Florida, will be completed this month.
 - The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council collaborated with VGTI Florida, St. Lucie County and the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County to develop a grant application to the U.S. Economic Development Administration to fund the development of a 100,000 square foot biomedical research facility. Almost 200 new jobs will be created this year when the project comes online.
 - The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council provided assistance to the Columbia County Industrial Development Authority and the City of Lake City to secure a \$750,000

- Community Development Block Grant to provide needed infrastructure, enabling Target/Supervalu Logistics to locate a refrigerated distribution facility and creating over 180 new jobs.
- The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council is actively participating in the development of the Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern catalyst project in Suwannee County, providing assistance to the Suwannee County Economic Alliance in the completion of grant applications to support that effort.
 - The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council helped the Sarasota County Economic Development Corporation secure a \$1M grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, for the following project, "USF Connect Physical Expansion to Sarasota County." The Council is currently assisting the economic development organizations in Glades and Hendry Counties to apply for a Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge Grant.
 - The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council helped the City of Palm Bay apply for a U.S Economic Development Administration Public Works grant, which resulted in a 2011 award in the amount of \$2.8 million. Due to this grant award, Harris Corporation committed another \$100 million for their facility on its Palm Bay Florida Campus.
 - The West Florida Regional Planning Council wrote and received grants on behalf of the economic development organizations in Escambia and Okaloosa County. They are administering the grants for the Pensacola Technology Park (Escambia County) and Crestview Aerospace expansion (Okaloosa County).
 - The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council in cooperation with the Tampa Bay Partnership were successful in creating a regional Targeted Industry Cluster and Workforce Competency Study to help synergize the economic development organizations and their partners in the region, thereby furthering recruiting efforts and bridging gaps in the educational and occupational skills required to ensure that the workforce would be able to fulfill the jobs in these targeted industries. The Council also secured a \$5M grant from the U.S. Economic Development Agency for the Port of Tampa to rebuild a damaged pier.
- **Other Forms of Technical Assistance:** By providing technical assistance, regional planning councils provide a supporting role to its economic development organizations so they can take the lead on economic development projects and issues.
 - The Apalachee Regional Planning Council provided a draft economic analysis summary to the Jefferson County Economic Development Council to support its efforts, in conjunction with the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners, to save jobs at the Jefferson Correctional Institution.
 - The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council helped the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce provide a \$35,000 loan from its small business development loan fund to a client seeking to expand its business in Vero Beach.
 - The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, in partnership with the Martin County Business Development Board, formed a regional schools group (Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, Palm Beach, and Okeechobee Counties) to develop STE (Arts) M career technical education programs.

- The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, at the request of the Team Volusia Economic Development Commission, created GIS maps for use in the Commission's marketing materials.
- **Eco-Tourism and Heritage Tourism Promotion:** The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council formed The Original Florida Tourism Task Force to implement a strategy of the North Central Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to promote north central Florida as a destination for nature-based and heritage-based tourism. The Task Force is comprised of local tourist development council and chamber of commerce representatives working collaboratively on a regional basis to promote tourism in the north central Florida region through a website, press familiarization tours, trade show missions and brochure distribution.
- **Brownfields:** The Central Florida Regional Planning Council has actively partnered with the Central Florida Development Council (Polk County) in marketing the Heartland Brownfields Revitalization Partnership, a program of the Central Florida Development Council. Thus far, this partnership has resulted in a planned bio-fueled plant to generate electricity, and a mixed use tourism/commercial development project, among other planned reuses of brownfields sites.
- **Military Base Coordination:** The Central Florida Regional Planning Council has collaborated with Highlands County Economic Development Council and the Avon Park Air Force Range to acquire \$2 million in funding from the Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative and \$865,000 from the Enterprise Florida Defense Infrastructure Grant program to protect the Range's mission and public safety and ensure compatible growth in the community. Defense-related spending is a major economic driver in central Florida, bringing \$803.4 million to Polk and Highlands Counties.
- **Broadband:** The Central Florida Regional Planning Council is working closely with the Haines City Economic Development Council and the Central Florida Development Council in development of a Polk County broadband plan. Representatives from these organizations and others, concerned with the development of broadband infrastructure in Polk County, serve on a broadband technical advisory committee. The economic development organizations are an integral part of the broadband planning effort, providing expertise to the committee regarding target industries, business and sector needs, employment clusters, and industry growth analysis.
- **Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Regional Forums:** Through the in-kind donation of staff time and resources, and at no cost to the State, Florida's 11 regional planning councils collaborated with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to host 10 Five-Year Strategic Economic Development Plan Regional Forums throughout the state, reaching out to over 1,000 Floridians. The regional planning councils sought the input of their respective economic development organizations to ensure fair and appropriate representation of economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, workforce boards, education, and private sector business leaders.
- **Regional Visioning:** Regional planning councils are conveners of regional visions that link economic development, infrastructure, environment, land use, and transportation into long term investment plans. Regional planning councils are actively engaged with their local economic development agencies and the business community in the following regional visioning activities:
 - **2050 How Shall We Grow Regional Vision:** Developed by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and MyRegion.Org/Central Florida Partnership, the vision stands for conserving the region's most critical resources; promoting future growth and development in compact urban

centers; connecting centers with multi-modal, mixed-use corridors; and, taking pressure off the countryside by increasing the density and intensity of urban centers.

- **Heartland 2060:** Initiated by the Central Florida Regional Planning Council and with the leadership of private, public, civic, and environmental organizations, Heartland 2060 is creating a vision for the future of seven counties that enables growth, ensures a vibrant economic and social life, and supports healthy communities, while preserving natural areas, and protecting wildlife and agricultural value.
- **One Bay: Livable Communities:** One Bay is a diverse partnership of private and public leaders aligned to facilitate a regional visioning process to achieve a sustainable, high quality Tampa Bay region, in which the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council is a partner along with six other regional partners including the Tampa Bay Partnership and Tampa Bay Chapter of the Urban Land Institute.
- **Reality Check First Coast/First Coast Vision:** The Regional Community Institute, a private, non-profit organization affiliated with the Northeast Florida Regional Council, is building on the work of Reality Check First Coast Vision, which is a vision for growth in the Northeast Florida Region for the next 50 years.
- **Sustainable Communities Initiative/Southeast Florida Regional Partnership:** This joint effort of the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils and over 200 public, private, and nonprofit/civic organizations within a seven-county area will result in a Regional Vision and Blueprint for Economic Prosperity. Work is currently being conducted to establish a comprehensive regional plan and identify critical projects and infrastructure to improve sustainability.
- **Sustainable Emerald Coast:** The Committee for a Sustainable Emerald Coast was made up of representatives from the local governments, business community, school boards, environmental groups, military base officials, and property owners in the Escambia, Santa Rose, Okaloosa and Walton Counties. It developed recommendations to enable sustainable growth and development in the four-county region in the following four areas: Economic Diversity and Prosperity; Environmental Stewardship; Access to Education, Health Care and Culture; and Sustainable Growth and Development. Subsequent to completion of the final plan, these areas were incorporated into the West Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan and the Committee now exists as an Advisory Committee to the West Florida Regional Planning Council to monitor and ensure implementation of the recommendations.