

# AREA OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN WORK PLAN

JUNE 2023 -

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Apalachicola Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC) Work Plan describes projects and actions that the City with support from the State and Federal Government, can take to address the intent of the Apalachicola Bay Protection Act (Section 350.055, Florida Statutes). The projects included in this plan, specifically address the intent of the legislation as it relates to:

- Upgrades and improvements needed to enhance wastewater and **sewer infrastructure**,
- Promotion of **water quality** to ensure a healthy environment and thriving economy for residents of the area and the state,
- Actions needed to support **affordable housing** near places of employment in the Apalachicola Bay Area, and
- **Economic development** activities that are compatible with the protection and conservation of the natural resources of the Apalachicola Bay.

The City of Apalachicola is a true state gem, situated along the banks of the Apalachicola River known for its historic working waterfront and world-famous oysters. Locals and industry experts have seen a decline in seafood production over the past decade and know that any given day, we are one natural or manmade disaster away from total collapse resulting in economic devastation for the entire community. Droughts, oil spills, tropical storms and most recently, Hurricane Michael have taken its toll on the bay and the seafood industry that it supports.

Recognizing these critical needs, in 2018 the Florida Legislature amended the Apalachicola Bay Area Protection Act to include an emphasis on improvements needed for water quality and affordable housing as a priority for this region. The Apalachicola ACSC Work Plan can be used as a framework by the City to:

- Guide local investment in projects of high priority to the community.
- Support the Apalachicola Stewardship Act passed in the 2022-23 legislative session and other legislative requests.
- Strategically approach requests for funding from Triumph Gulf Coast, Hurricane Michael Recovery and other grant opportunities.
- Outline a plan for addressing critical, long-standing infrastructure issues in the community that are important to the protection of natural resources and future economic development through expansion of local businesses in the community.

This plan was developed in partnership with all stakeholders and residents in the community as well as informed by a survey distributed to community members in 2020. The City of Apalachicola recognizes that to achieve success, all community stakeholders and organizations must play a role in the implementation of this plan.

# AREA OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN

## Overview and History of the Apalachicola ACSC Designation

Apalachicola was designated as a Florida State Area of Critical State Concern in 1985, pursuant to Section 380.0555, Florida Statutes. Initially, the Apalachicola Bay Area designation included the City of Apalachicola, the City of Carrabelle, and unincorporated Franklin County (excluding Alligator Point). In 1993, all but the City of Apalachicola were removed from the designation. The Apalachicola River is the largest river in Florida. The Apalachicola River provides 35% of the freshwater input to the northeastern Gulf of Mexico. The River is the second largest river entering the Gulf of Mexico, with the Mississippi being the largest. The Apalachicola together with the adjoining Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers comprise a drainage system encompassing more than 19,000 square miles of southern Georgia, eastern Alabama and northern Florida and emptying into the Gulf of Mexico through Apalachicola Bay. The Apalachicola Chattahoochee Flint basin is considered a biodiversity hotspot and harbors one of the highest concentrations of threatened and endangered species in the United States. Apalachicola Bay is one of the more productive estuaries in North America, supplying approximately 90% of the oysters in Florida and 10% nationally, and is an important nursery ground for numerous commercially - and recreationally - important fish and invertebrate species.

The legislative intent of this designation was to protect the natural and economic resources of the Apalachicola Bay Area through comprehensive land planning, promoting economic growth, improving water quality, and promoting resource protection. In the last several years, additions have been made to the act to address the need for providing affordable housing in close proximity to places of employment (referred to as workforce housing) and protecting and improving water quality through federal, state, and local funding of water quality improvement projects including the construction and operation of wastewater management facilities that meet state requirements. As a part of this designation, any land development regulation or element of a local comprehensive plan in the City may be enacted only after it has been approved by the state land planning agency. The City was also required to enact land development regulations to protect the Apalachicola Bay Area from stormwater pollution and implement a management program. Progress on the objectives of the designation work plan is provided to the state on a semiannual basis who are then tasked with making recommendations to the Administration Commission.

Currently, there are five Areas of Critical State Concern in Florida, including the City of Apalachicola, the City of Key West and the Florida Keys, the Green Swamp Area, and the

Big Cypress Area. As a result of the nature of the designation, these areas can share similar challenges and characteristics despite the diversity. For example, in both the City of Apalachicola and the Florida Keys and Key West, unique natural resources provide the backbone of the economy, making economic growth and long-term sustainability heavily impacted by local natural resources. In 2016, Representative Holly Raschein (R-Key Largo) passed the Florida Keys Stewardship Act to provide a long-term framework for investing state resources in the Florida Keys & Key West. The legislation allocated up to \$20 million for projects that address designation workplace objectives (wastewater, stormwater, and recently canal restoration) and \$5 million annually for land acquisition of critical properties. While the funds are not recurring and are allocated in varying amounts annually, the statute provides a framework for long-term investment and shows additional legislative recognition of the need to continue to invest in these areas.

In addition to its designation as an Area of Critical State Concern in recognition of its significant natural resources and the industries that they support, the City of Apalachicola was named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Dozen Distinctive Destinations of 2008. This recognition highlights the historic significance of the City. First settled in 1821 and incorporated by 1831, Apalachicola became the 3rd largest port on the Gulf of Mexico by 1837. Additional notable designations related to the area include: United Nations International Biosphere Reserve, State of Florida Aquatic Preserve, National Estuarine Research Reserve, Priority Water Body, Outstanding Florida Waters, and Shellfish Harvesting Area.

This plan will focus on four key project issue areas that support the objectives outlined in the state designation, including:

- Water Quality to ensure a healthy environment and a thriving economy for residents of the area and the state,
- Upgrades and improvements needed to enhance wastewater and sewer infrastructure,
- Economic Development activities that are compatible with the protection and conservation of the natural resources of the Apalachicola Bay, and
- Actions needed to support workforce housing near places of employment in the Apalachicola Bay Area.

In addition to the fact that these are clearly defined community needs, the City of Apalachicola's designation as an Area of Critical State Concern means that there is statutory support for those needs and the statewide significance of protecting the City of Apalachicola.

## Guiding Principles for the City of Apalachicola

The City's designation is guided by the legislative intent of the Area of Critical State Concern designation and is broken into nine distinct objectives. Those objectives include:

- Protecting the water quality of the Apalachicola Bay Area to ensure a healthy environment and thriving economy,
- To financially assist the City in upgrading and expanding their sewage systems,
- To protect the Apalachicola Bay Area's natural and economic resources by implementing and enforcing comprehensive plans and land development regulations,
- To assist with technical and advisory assistance in formulating additional land development regulations and comprehensive plan modifications,
- To monitor activities within the Apalachicola Bay Area in order to protect and preserve its natural resources,
- To provide a broad base of economic growth which is compatible with the protection and preservation of the areas resources,
- To educate the residents in order to protect and preserve the areas natural resources,
- To provide affordable housing in close proximity to places of employment, and
- To protect and improve the water quality of the Apalachicola Bay area through federal, state, and local funding of water quality improvement projects.



# PROGRESS ON KEY CHALLENGES

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*The City of Apalachicola demonstrated its commitment to making improvements to its wastewater and potable water infrastructure systems by resolving outstanding challenges with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and securing nearly \$34 million in funding to address long-standing concerns.*

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## Overview of Progress

Since the adoption of the 2020 ACSC Work Plan, the City of Apalachicola has been hard at work to demonstrate their commitment to the intent of this legislation through securing nearly \$34 million in funding to support the guiding principles of the ACSC Program, the resolution of long-standing consent orders from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and most recently, advocating for the passing of The Apalachicola Stewardship Act.

## The Apalachicola Stewardship Act

The Apalachicola Stewardship Act ([Appendix A](#)) was passed by the State Legislature during the 2023 legislative session to create a framework for long-term state investments in the City of Apalachicola as an Area of Critical State Concern. The passing of this legislation marks a major milestone for the City as this took many years to get this new language enacted. This legislation authorizes the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to expend up to \$5 million each fiscal year for the purpose of entering into financial assistance agreements with the City of Apalachicola to implement projects that improve surface water and ground water quality with the Apalachicola Bay ACSC, including the construction of stormwater management facilities, and central sewage collection facilities, installation of onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems, direct and indirect potable use, and other water quality and water supply projects for a period of five years.

This Act allows the City to pursue funding under the Act and not be required to file appropriation project requests to receive a direct appropriation in the budget and gives the Florida DEP the authority to work directly with the City. The Stewardship Act also shows state recognition of the need for additional support of the unique areas that share these designations. Modeled after the Florida Keys Environmental Stewardship Act, the Apalachicola Stewardship Act shows a recognition by the state of the unique challenges

facing communities with this designation and the need for state investment to achieve those goals outlined under the city's designation.

The projects contained in this Areas of Critical State Concern Work Plan are meant to guide the City's request for funding through this act over the next five years. By showing how each project addresses the intent of the ACSC designation, the City can demonstrate a connection to the state's goals for the community.

## **Consent Orders Lifted on Potable Water Concerns**

In March of 2023, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection recognized the City of Apalachicola's efforts to meet the Safe Water Drinking Act by lifting a long-standing consent orders from 2012. Through years of dedicated work and investment, the City of Apalachicola has overcome its long struggle to reduce the levels of Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) found in the municipal water supply and bring them into alignment with state and federal guidelines.

Like many small communities whose water supply comes from groundwater and requires treatment, limited population, aging infrastructure and changing technology and standards have continued to complicate those efforts. Initially, the City installed an aerator mixer to release TTHMs into an underground storage tank, following corrective steps outlined by the Florida Rural Water Association and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. In early 2020, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection approved a pilot project to solve the TTHM problem with the implementation of a new treatment plan using Hydrogen Peroxide and greatly expanded system flushing. This project, along with efforts to clean wells, refurbish water tanks and regularly flush hydrants, helped the City to make steady progress towards meeting the TTHM standards which came into compliance in September of 2022. The City will continue to conduct monthly monitoring of potable water systems into the future and this plan includes a project to install potable water testing sites throughout the City to ensure that the problems do not resurface.

## **Over \$34 Million in Grant Funding Secured**

When Hurricane Michael slammed into the Panhandle of Florida as a Category 5 storm, it left devastation in its wake. However, it also opened the door for unprecedented funding opportunities throughout the region. This included FEMA funding as well as a special allocation of Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding that provides flexible resources to address infrastructure challenges. Recognizing this potential, the projects included in the 2020 Apalachicola ACSC Work Plan were aligned with proposed programs in the Hurricane Michael CDBG-DR Action Plan, where appropriate. In addition, the original plan tied projects back to other federal funding opportunities that were specific to Hurricane Michael for historic preservation,

affordable housing and economic development as well as state funding programs to support resiliency.

Since the adoption of the 2020 ACSC Work Plan, **the City of Apalachicola has secured nearly \$34 million** in funding to implement many projects. Notable projects are highlighted below and the entire list of projects can be found in [Appendix B](#):

- A **Resilient Florida** grant in the amount of **\$13.4 million** to move critical wastewater infrastructure out of the flood zone to higher ground.
- A commitment to use **\$5.5 million** in **Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act** to further support the relocation of critical wastewater infrastructure and make advanced wastewater treatment upgrades to the system.
- A **CDBG-DR Hometown Revitalization** grant for **\$4.4 million** to improve access to the City's downtown district and Riverfront Park to Battery Park by demolishing and repairing important community assets and an additional **\$910,000** through this program to support economic revitalization in the historic Hill Community.
- A **\$3.9 million CDBG-DR Infrastructure** grant to complete stormwater repairs that will alleviate floodwater drainage issues.
- Nearly **\$450,000** through two **Rural Infrastructure Fund** grants to assist with resolving potable water consent order concerns and an analysis of drainage basins that border the Apalachicola River and Bay to address stormwater challenges.
- Nearly **\$1.7 million** in **historic preservation funding** to make repairs to the former City Hall and Harrison-Haney Warehouse as well as construct a museum to honor the African American heritage of the community.

## **Loan for Wastewater Infrastructure from Florida Department of Environmental Protection**

In 1995, the City of Apalachicola entered into a \$9.35 million loan agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to make improvements to the City's aging wastewater treatment plant and collection system. An initial debt repayment schedule was formulated that would allow funding from an interest-bearing account to cover much of the debt. In 2013-2014, the City instituted a Sewer Use Fee to raise revenues to help pay down the debt obligations associated with the loan. In 2015-2016, as debt service payments on the loan began to rise, the City faced a deteriorating financial situation, struggling to make partial payments on the loan. In 2017, a Rural Water Association Report indicated that residential water and wastewater revenue was "not adequate to meet the projected expenditures and significant debt service requirements for the system" and recommended a three-year rate increase plan to address the shortfall.

In response to this recommendation, in January 2018, the City increased water and sewer rates along with non-senior and commercial accounts were increased in alignment with the Rural Water Association's report. In 2019, with support from the Florida Department

of Environmental Protection, they began work and completed a system-wide Asset Management Plan. This report examines the water and sewer systems, suggests needed repairs, and prioritizes and examines costs as well as revenue projections. This plan will allow the City to prioritize and budget for ongoing improvements needed to the wastewater system. In doing so, the City can address the wastewater systems current/future needs while continuing discussions with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection about how best to move forward with satisfying the initial 1995 loan.

In late 2020, the City met with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to discuss the loan. Thanks to a great partnership with the agency, the City was able to renegotiate the terms of the loan to include a 0% interest rate and forgiveness on all penalties and fees. The City of Apalachicola has been steadily making payments on this loan since the renegotiation of the terms.

In addition to wastewater, the City of Apalachicola is also addressing stormwater and its role in overall water quality concerns locally. This includes securing grant dollars from projects as well as the completion of several projects designed to reduce nutrients in stormwater and address community flooding that overwhelms stormwater systems. The City has also undertaken a number of resiliency projects to help address concerns related to stormwater, including utilizing surveys and mapping data to develop policies and objectives for managing the City's stormwater system.



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

## Overview

This plan was developed to help the community strategically approach major funding sources that may be available over the next five years. Additional resources are also described in each project description included in the plan. Through the opportunities described below, the City of Apalachicola will bring this plan to life.

## Apalachicola Stewardship Act

The Apalachicola Stewardship Act, as described in the previous section, authorizes the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to expend up to \$5 million each year for a period of five years to address important water quality improvements through infrastructure projects. The infrastructure projects included in this plan are meant to guide the spending of these dollars for the years to come.

It is recognized that several of these projects are phased to include a study to pinpoint specific issues, engineering and design to alleviate these issues and finally construction to address the challenge. Understanding that the studies and design work will inform the construction of each project, this list is meant to be flexible and may change over the course of time to better refine the needs of the community.

## Triumph Gulf Coast

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., is a non-profit corporation organized to oversee the expenditure of 75% of all funds recovered by the Florida Attorney General because of the economic impacts of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Created in 2013, the program was appropriated funds by Governor Rick Scott in 2017. Eligible projects must meet the priorities of economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement and can be provided for the following in disproportionately affected counties.

The City of Apalachicola has submitted several projects for consideration in the past but has not yet received an award for funding. To better understand the requirements of funding and help Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. to understand the economic development needs of the City, the City has met several times with Triumph staff and leadership to explore potential project opportunities. The new projects highlighted in this plan are the

result of these conversations and potential opportunities to explore in the future that may allow the City to tap into this important regional resource.

## State of Florida Live Local Act

On March 29, 2023 the Live Local Act was signed into law, which represents the State of Florida's largest investment for housing efforts in Florida history. SB 102 appropriates \$771 million for housing projects through the Florida Housing and Finance Corporation (FHFC), nearly doubling the 2022-2023 investment. This includes:

- \$259 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program for low-interest loans to developers with \$150 million of these funds recurring for certain specified uses, such as projects near military installations.
- \$252 million for the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Program for incentives for local governments to create partnerships to preserve and produce housing.
- \$100 million for the second year of the Hometown Heroes Program to provide downpayment and closing cost assistance to hometown heroes purchasing their first home.
- \$100 million for FHFC to implement a loan program to alleviate inflation-related cost increases for FHFC-approved housing projects.

In addition, the Act:

- Creates a new tax donation program to allow corporations to direct certain tax payments to help fund housing programs and increases tax credits available through the Community Contribution Tax Credit Program from \$14.5 million to \$25 million.
- Provides up to \$5,000 refund for sales tax on building materials for housing units funded through FHFC and broadens FHFC's ability to invest in housing for children in foster care or who are aging out.
- Codifies the Hometown Heroes downpayment assistance program in law and increases the borrowing limit per loan to \$35,000.
- Expands eligibility for the Job Growth Grant Fund to authorize public infrastructure projects that support housing.

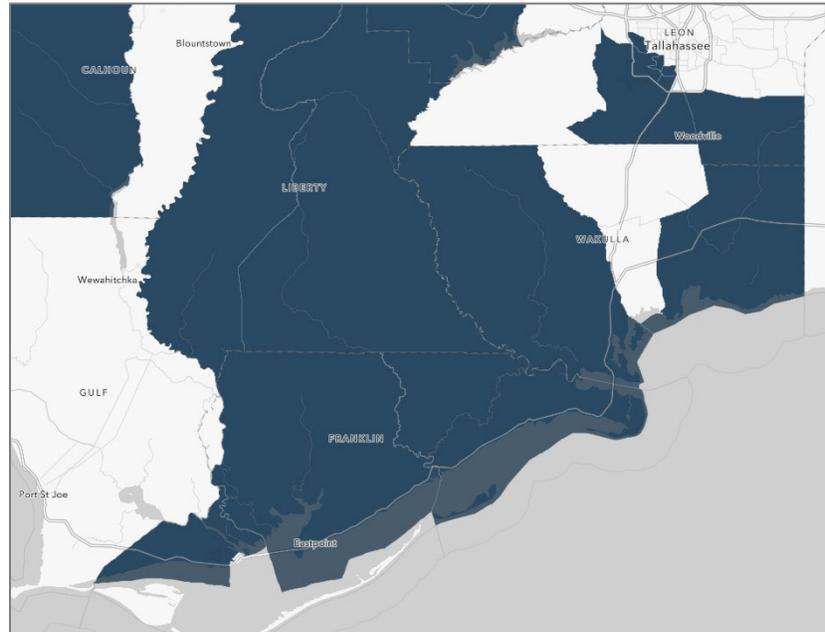
This law recognizes that the provision of workforce housing is essential to the growth of local economies across the state. As a guiding principle of the ACSC Program, this law will allow for important new regulatory and funding opportunities that could help the City address long-standing issues with providing housing for its public servants, teachers and other essential workers in the City and Franklin County as a whole.

## Monumental Federal Funding Opportunities

In 2021 and 2022, the federal government took unprecedented action to address infrastructure needs in communities around the nation. On November 15, 2021, the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)** also known as the **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)** was signed into law. This legislation is the largest long-term investment in infrastructure in the nation's history, providing \$550 billion over 2022 – 2026 in new federal investment in infrastructure including roads, bridges, mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband. Many of these opportunities will be implemented as competitive grant applications over a five-year period. In addition, on August 16, 2022, the **Inflation Reduction Act** was signed into law with the intent to build a new clean energy economy through billions of dollars in grant, loan, and tax incentive programs as well as other investments for clean energy and climate change initiatives.

In addition to these two important pieces of legislation, Executive Order 14008, or the Justice40 Initiative, makes it a goal of the Federal Government to spend 40% of the overall benefits of federal investments in disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. This will result in the transformation of federal funding programs to prioritize these areas for funding related to climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure. **It should be noted that Franklin County in its entirety is considered disadvantaged and therefore a priority for these monumental federal funding opportunities.**

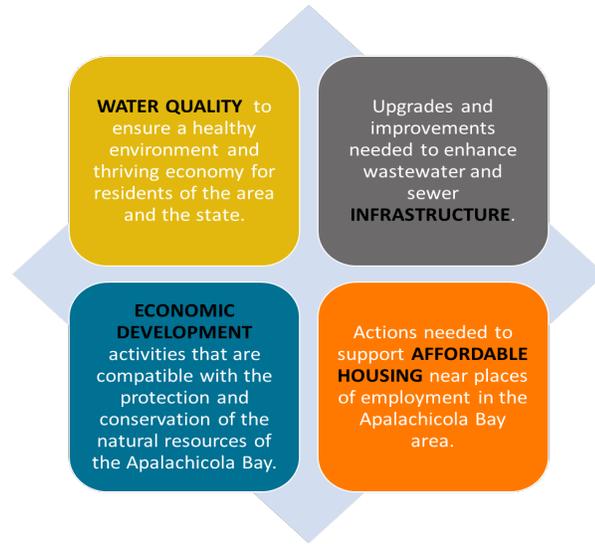
### Justice40 Tracts in the Panhandle Region



# SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS AND PROJECTS

## Overview

This plan contains projects and actions aimed at addressing infrastructure, economic development, housing, and water quality as the guiding principles for development under the City of Apalachicola’s Area of Critical State Concern designation. As is the case for many places of environmental significance, many of these projects are inextricably connected and will address multiple issues important to the City of Apalachicola.



**Table 1** is a summary of all projects contained in this plan and is intended to demonstrate the multiple benefits that can be provided by the project as a way to help the City identify appropriate funding sources and accurately describe the benefits of the project. Due to the significant challenges with infrastructure, it’s important to note that improvements under this category would positively benefit water quality, workforce housing and economic development. In addition, some projects are recognized as phased by denoting an A, B, and C after the project number. Each project is detailed further in the sections that follow with an overall summary, project cost, potential project sponsors, suggested action steps and potential funding sources. The funding sources identified in the plan are further detailed in the Implementation Plan which begins on page 62.

## Priority Projects

In addition, projects that are highlighted in **BLUE** were identified by the Apalachicola City Commission in a Public Workshop on May 11, 2023, as a priority and staff have been directed to prepare detailed scopes of work to ensure that the project is ready to be funded through the Apalachicola Stewardship Act or other grant sources. In addition, a detailed cost estimate has been prepared for all infrastructure projects in blue. The information on each of these projects can be found in the corresponding section of the plan which includes the detailed cost estimates and quotes received to ensure project readiness.

**Table 1. Summary of Infrastructure Projects**

Project	Infrastructure			
	Infrastructure	Water Quality	Housing	Economic Development
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>				
WW.1A. Wastewater Treatment and Collection Systems Inflow and Infiltration Study	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.1B. Wastewater Treatment Repair Design	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.1C. Major Wastewater Pipe Replacement Project	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.2. Construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant Headworks and Relocation	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.3. Lift Station Rehabilitation	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.4. Vacuum Station – Electronic Upgrades	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.5. Water Plant - Electronic Upgrades	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.6. Repair/Construction of Sprayfield	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.7. Upgrades to the City’s Irrigation System	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.8. Flo-Vac Monitor Installations	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.9A. Franklin Unincorporated – Septic to Sewer Conversion Project Feasibility Study	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.9B. Franklin Unincorporated – Septic to Sewer Conversion Project Design	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.9C. Franklin Unincorporated – Septic to Sewer Conversion Project Construction	✓	✓	✓	✓
WW.10. Operational Staffing Needs	✓	✓		
PW.1. Fire Hydrant Replacement	✓	✓	✓	✓
PW.2. Potable Water Valve Replacements	✓	✓	✓	✓
PW.3. Potable Water Testing Site Installation	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Table 2. Summary of Water Quality Projects**

Project	Infrastructure			
	Infrastructure	Water Quality	Housing	Economic Development
<b>WATER QUALITY</b>				
PE.1. Steward of the River Guidance for Residents – Outreach Campaign	✓	✓	✓	
SW.1A. Stormwater Inflow and Infiltration Study	✓	✓		
SW.1B. Stormwater Design	✓	✓		
SW.1C. Stormwater Construction	✓	✓		

**Table 3. Summary of Workforce Housing Projects**

Project	Workforce Housing Projects			
	Infrastructure	Water Quality	Housing	Economic Development
<b>WORKFORCE HOUSING</b>				
H.1. Comprehensive Workforce Housing Study			✓	✓
H.2. Workforce Housing Revolving Loan Program			✓	✓
H.3. Community Rating System Implementation to Increase Affordability			✓	

**Table 4. Summary of Economic Development Projects**

Project	Economic Development Projects			
	Infrastructure	Water Quality	Housing	Economic Development
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>				
ED1. Enhancing Working and Recreational Waterfront Uses to Preserve the Commercial and Recreational Fishing Industries	✓			✓
ED.2. Support the Restoration of the Wild Caught Oyster Industry		✓		✓
ED.3. Facilitate Additional Oyster Farming in Franklin County.		✓		✓
ED.4. Leverage Community Assets to Attract More Visitors				✓
ED.5. Expand Downtown Parking Improvements	✓			✓
ED.6. Business Incubator/Training/Coworking Space				✓
ED.7. Airport: Support County Efforts to Attract Industry	✓			✓
ED.8. Airport: Master Utility Infrastructure Map	✓			✓
ED.9. Airport: Define Water Service	✓			✓
ED.10. Airport: Determine Excess Capacity of Wastewater Infrastructure	✓			✓
ED.11. Create an Economic Development Taskforce			✓	✓
ED.12. Port of Apalachicola Waterfront Infrastructure Facilities	✓			✓
ED.13. Apalachicola Solar Project	✓			✓

# INFRASTRUCTURE

Apalachicola is uniquely situated, essentially landlocked by water and wetlands as well as limited to very low land uses as required by the state. These factors, in addition to the impacts of changing economies and natural disasters, have created a perfect storm where Apalachicola is needing to improve many of their essential infrastructure systems, with limited income, while still protecting their natural assets.

U.S. Highway 98 is the only route through Apalachicola and goes right through the heart of downtown. The highway runs east to west along the panhandle coast and connects Apalachicola to Eastpoint across the Apalachicola Bay. Given these unique constraints, development the City has struggled to maintain adequate funding to support non-polluting infrastructure. The City needs wastewater and stormwater infrastructure improvements as well as drinking water improvements.

Due to the proximity of this infrastructure to the Apalachicola Bay and River, many of these projects have resulted in consent orders by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and are now considered critical to preserve water quality.

While work has been done to resolve many of these challenges, additional work will be needed to ensure that the City remains in compliance.

## Apalachicola Bay Protection Act

*It is hereby declared that the intent of the Legislature is:*

- (a) To protect the water quality of the Apalachicola Bay Area to ensure a healthy environment and a thriving economy for the residents of the area and the state.*
- (b) To financially assist Franklin County and its municipalities in upgrading and expanding their sewerage systems.*
- (i) To protect and improve the water quality of the Apalachicola Bay through federal, state, and local funding of water quality improvement projects, including the construction and operation of wastewater management facilities that meet state requirements.*

*– Section 380.0555, Florida Statutes*

## Wastewater Projects

Improving the wastewater systems in and around Apalachicola continues to be a priority for the City as is evident by the seven projects that were prioritized by the Commission. It is recognized that these projects are vitally important to address all four of the guiding principles for development under the Apalachicola Bay Protection Act. These projects will:

- Address aging infrastructure challenges and provide new infrastructure in areas not currently serviced.
- Make upgrades and expand wastewater infrastructure projects, demonstrating the City's commitment to resolving outstanding consent orders and further protect the Bay from nutrients.
- Expand the sewer system to areas surrounding the City which will service existing workforce housing and make it possible to develop additional workforce housing.
- Address wastewater issues that cause challenges for downtown businesses and expand capacity at the Apalachicola Airport to allow for further economic growth.

While the City of Apalachicola has made significant progress in securing funding for major wastewater improvements, additional funding will be needed to complete the goals of the City under the ACSC Guiding Principles for Development.

### WW.1A. Wastewater Treatment and Collection Systems Inflow & Infiltration Study (\$200,000)

#### Project Type

Infrastructure; Water Quality

#### Project Overview

This project includes a study that uses smoke and cameras to determine the condition of pipes and identify problems throughout the wastewater system. The study is Phase 1 of the overall improvements to the wastewater system with results ultimately informing the design and construction of system improvements. The estimated total cost for this project is \$500,000, however **the City received \$300,000 through a 2023 legislative appropriations bringing the remaining funding needed to \$200,000.**

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Duke Energy Advancing Sites Infrastructure Fund

## **WW.1B. Wastewater Treatment and Collections Improvement Design (\$1,000,000)**

### **Project Type**

Infrastructure; Water Quality

### **Project Overview**

Building off the study conducted in Phase 1, this project will design all improvements needed for wastewater collections throughout the City as Phase 2 of the improvement effort.

### **Potential Funding Sources**

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Duke Energy Advancing Sites Infrastructure Fund

## **WW.1C. Major Wastewater Pipe Replacement and Repair (\$10,000,000)**

### **Project Type**

Infrastructure; Water Quality

### **Project Overview**

After the completion of design work in Phase 2, this project will replace or repair leaking pipes identified through the I&I study with direction from engineering and design plans. This will likely result in the need to dig under roads and other structures and include the replacement of this infrastructure after work is completed, resulting in additional funding needs. Scoping along with cost estimation for this project will not be fully achievable until Phase 2 design work is completed, however City Public Works Staff and city-contracted engineers estimate this project to be approximately \$10 million.

### **Potential Funding Sources**

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Duke Energy Advancing Sites Infrastructure Fund

## WW.2. Construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant Headworks and Relocation (\$15,000,000)

### Project Type:

Infrastructure; Water Quality

### Project Overview

This project will fund the relocation of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Headworks to a location on the same property that is outside of the flood zone. The project is currently underway with \$18.9 million in funding through two separate Florida DEP grants but with increased costs due to inflation and ongoing supply challenges, it is recognized that this project will likely need more funding.

The City owns and operates an existing 1.0 MGD wastewater treatment plant. Many components within the facility have reached the end of their useful service life. As a result, the City would like to construct new treatment components adjacent to the existing facility to provide a reliable 1.0 MGD of treatment capacity. Certain components of the existing facility may remain as needed but the project will generally consist of the construction of new components adjacent to the existing facility. All improvements will be constructed above the established flood zone elevation of 12.0 according to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Rule 62-600.400(2). The following outlines the understanding of the improvements necessary to provide 1.0 MGD of treatment facilities.

#### Preliminary Treatment

Preliminary treatment will consist of influent flow metering, influent sampling equipment, mechanical screening and compaction, grit removal and classification. It is anticipated that these processes will be contained within a new stand-alone concrete structure. It is assumed that odor control for the new preliminary treatment structure will not be required.

#### Secondary Treatment

Secondary treatment is anticipated to consist of a sequencing batch reactor (SBR) process with associated aeration blowers, aeration diffusers, mixing equipment, waste activated sludge pumps, decant components, and post SBR flow equalization. It is anticipated that a secondary effluent pump station will be provided downstream of the SBR process to convey secondary effluent to tertiary treatment.

#### Tertiary Treatment

The existing effluent transfer pumps will be replaced with new pumps which can accommodate the maximum flows from the chlorine contact chamber. It is assumed that the existing filtration equipment, chemical storage and feed system, chlorine contact tank, effluent transfer pump station, reclaimed water ground storage tank, and reclaimed water distribution pump station will remain in service.

### Solids Handling

Proposed solids handling facilities include a multi-tank aerobic digester, sludge transfer pump station and biosolids dewater equipment (e.g., belt filter press system), and truck loading area. New sludge transfer pumps will also be provided for the existing digesters. A new in-plant drain lift station is anticipated to accommodate digester supernatant and belt filter press filtrate.

### Electrical

Other proposed improvements include a new electrical switchgear and MCC lineup housed in a new electrical building and a new backup electrical generator.

### Other Improvements

A new electrical building and operations building will be provided. Structural, architectural, and MEP design for the two new buildings will be provided.

Yard piping associated with the above improvements will be provided. The existing effluent management (reject and reclaimed) valves currently are not in automatic operation; therefore, electric actuators will be added onto the existing valves or new valves with electric actuators will be installed.

### **Potential Funding Sources**

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

## **WW.3. Lift Station Rehabilitation (\$768,360.26)**

### **Project Overview**

Lift stations are used to reduce the capital cost of sewer system construction. A wastewater lift station is a pumping station that moves wastewater from a lower elevation to a higher elevation. The benefit of using a lift station in a sewage collection system is that it saves a substantial amount of money in excavation costs, which involves digging for sewer pipes. The City is currently working on rehabilitating lift stations for critical lift stations including the IGA lift station and stations at Sylvester Williams and Ellis Van Fleet. Additional funding is expected to be needed to complete this project.

The subject lift stations have been in use for many years and as a result the precast wet wells as well as the internal components of the wells have experienced deterioration

due to repeated chemical exposure. In order to prevent further deterioration and potential catastrophic failure of the wet wells, the City is proposing to install a liner system within the wet well to protect the concrete components from further corrosion. Additionally, the wet well internals (pumps, piping and rails) along with the electrical components (control panels and wiring) will be replaced. Finally, remote monitoring systems will be installed at these two sites as well as two additional City lift stations to allow for 24/7 monitoring and control of the stations, enabling more reliable service.

Costs in this estimate include a generator for each station (\$110,000 x 2), approximately \$450,000 in rehabilitation at both stations, remote monitoring (\$31,360.26) and a 10% contingency to recognize unanticipated costs (\$67,000).

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

### Additional Steps

This project should be added to the Franklin County Local Mitigation Strategy as the lift stations will be outfitted with generators to ensure continued service when power is not available.

## WW.4. Vacuum Station Electronic Upgrades (\$50,000)

### Project Overview

There is a need to make complete electronic upgrades to the vacuum station at 108 Avenue F as it is nearly 25 years old. The equipment is at the end of its useful life and replacement parts are extremely difficult to locate. The proposed upgrades will include a RAFA 900 controller system (remote monitoring). By upgrading the electronics at this station, operators can monitor and control the station more efficiently, which can include collecting real-time data that will quickly identify issues and then take action to fix them. In some cases, electronic upgrades can allow for the diagnosis and fixing of problems remotely from a distance.

A recent quote for the RAFA system came in at \$32,459.00. It is expected that there will be approximately \$10,000.00 in additional electronic expenses and an additional approximately \$7,500.00 in contingency.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant

## WW.5. Water Plant Electronic Upgrades (\$37,708)

### Project Overview

The City's potable water system is under a Consent Order with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for potable water quality violations. Many of the plant components are outdated or at the end of their useful life. Once such component is the SCADA system which is outdated and lacks the availability of replacement parts to keep the system running. In order to prevent future violations, the City is proposing to replace the SCADA system with a new RAFA system that will allow for 24/7 remote monitoring and control of the water system. The RAFA controllers will be installed at the High Service Tank and Well #7.

A recent quote for the RAFA system came in at \$14,280.00. It is expected that there will be approximately \$20,000.00 in additional electronic expenses and \$3,428.00 in contingency.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Florida Job Growth Grant

## WW.6. Repair/Construction of Sprayfield (\$204,158)

### Project Overview

This project will replace and/or repair spray heads, solar panels and a single use pump for the spray field that is part of the Apalachicola wastewater system. The goal of this project is to streamline maintenance work, ensure water quality and the protection of the environment, ensuring proper water distribution encourages healthy ground saturation by preventing over-watering in spray fields. This project will also limit water runoff to surrounding waterbodies which enhance and preserve the local environment.

City staff have found that spray heads do not rotate, which is causing ponding in the fields as water cannot adequately spread as needed. In addition, the solar panels that are currently used to power the spray field are damaged and not working properly. The radio and fiber connections that allow the system to communicate with the main computer at the Wastewater Treatment Plant are not functioning properly and the City is currently having a technician investigate the issues. The main issue is the parts are no longer available due to the age and number of times the systems have been upgraded since installation, without upgrades to equipment. As a result of this challenge, an operator must manually go into the fields daily to correct these issues, which is a challenge for staff that is already working at max capacity. This project will allow for the system to work automatically, eliminating this burden on staff.

In addition, by continuing to use solar panels, the City is committed to decrease energy usage and reduce their carbon footprint. As the City's sprayfield is located near the local airport, it would also ensure airport cleanliness and productivity by protecting the surrounding airfield.

The quote received for this project includes replacement of solar panels (\$87,800.00), replacement of irrigation heads (300 heads at \$553/ea. = \$165,900.00), various repairs to radio system (\$50,000) and \$30,378.00 in contingency. **The City received \$130,000 through a 2023 legislative appropriation for this project bringing the total remaining funds needed to \$204,158.00.**

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Florida Job Growth Grant



## WW.7 Irrigation System Upgrades (\$600,000)

### Project Overview

Project will make upgrades to the City's irrigation system to allow for gray water to be sprayed in areas outside of the sprayfield as a Public Access Reuse Project to get rid of of affluent. An alternative or complement to the sprayfield.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant

## WW.8. Flo-Vac Monitor Installations (\$594,088.81)

### Project Overview

Flo-vac monitors are installed to monitor the sewer/vacuum pit volumes and identify issues by the volume of the water coming in which can pinpoint issues of infiltration by alerting when volumes are higher than normal so that an issue is identified before it damages the system.

The City of Apalachicola has suffered from inflow and infiltration in their sanitary sewer system as evidenced by abnormally high flows at the WWTF during rain events. The flows recorded at the WWTF have exceeded the current facilities permitted capacity. In order to pinpoint the sources of the infiltration the City is proposing the implementation of a gateway to allow for the monitoring and collections of data at any point within the vacuum system service area.

The proposed Flo-Vac system allows for a 24/7 status report of the vacuum valves and collection pits, including:

1. detection of abnormal conditions in the vacuum valves/pumps;
2. record of valves/pump open/close cycles;
3. alarm for valves stuck open;
4. alarm for wastewater high-level in the tanks; and
5. reading of vacuum/pressure level at valves, allowing operators to respond quickly to any callouts and have a proactive approach to system maintenance.

The system also offers an automatic air inlet system, which automatically reads the pressure differential between the end of vacuum mains and the vacuum tank and injects air at key locations of the vacuum network to clear the lines. The Flo-Vac's Smart Monitoring System uses a communication protocol, which allows for much greater range of its wireless signal, virtually eliminating the need for repeaters. The system will also use a cloud-based software, which allows for visualization and control of the

system anywhere with an internet connection on desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

Included in the budget for this project is \$440,080.74 in materials, labor and installation, an additional \$100,000 in restoration work and \$54,008.07 in contingency.

### Potential Funding Sources

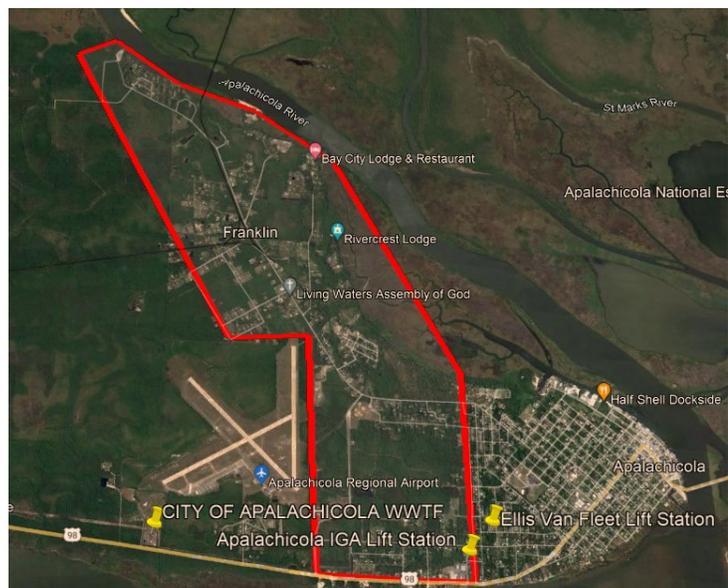
- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

## WW.9A. Unincorporated Area Septic to Sewer Conversion Project Feasibility Study (\$50,000)

### Project Overview

This project will identify potential residents who are currently on septic to hook up to the City's wastewater system. There are only six septic tanks remaining in the City and leadership would now like to focus on areas that are adjacent to the City as well and could be served by this infrastructure. It is anticipated that this will result in approximately 700 - 800 new connections.

The project consists of a new centralized sewer system located in Sections 2, 3, 10, and 11, Township 8 South, Range 8 West, and Sections 21, 22, 26, 27, 34 and 35, Township 8 South, Range 8 West. The project area shown above consists of approximately 2,700 acres of land partially developed with residential homes sewered by septic tanks. The proposed sewer system improvements consist of pressurize force mains along Bluff and Pal River Road sized to receive sewage from existing and future developments located within the Project area. The proposed improvements will be designed to ultimate allow replacement of the old and failing septic tanks with new pressurized units that will convey sewer to the centralized force main along Bluff and



Pal River Roads and discharged to the proposed Master lift station and ultimate pumped to the city's wastewater treatment plant for treatment.

The Project begins at the northwest end of the Project area and travels southeast along Bluff Road and south along Pal River Road approximately 23,800 feet (4.5 miles) but does not include arterial streets. The project also extends eastward along Bluff Road 4,000 feet until it intersects 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The project also includes a Master Duplex Lift Station located at the NW corner of the intersection of Pal River Rd and US Hwy 98. The Master Duplex Lift Station will collect and convey all wastewater generated from the Project area to the city's wastewater treatment plant. The centralized sewer system will consist of a pressurized force main ranging in size between 4 and 8 inches in diameter constructed along Bluff and Pal River Roads that will allow for existing and future developments on each side of the road to connect via force and/or low-pressure mains ranging in size between 2 to 4 inches in diameter. For this report, a total of 83,000 feet of 2-inch diameter and 18,000 feet of 3-inch diameter low pressure sewer pipe has been estimated. Just upstream of the Master Lift Station a short section of 15-inch gravity sewer approximately 100 feet has been estimated to allow for the north Pal River Road 8-inch force main to discharge and continue by gravity to the Master Duplex Lift Station that will ultimately convey it via the existing 16-inch force main to the city's wastewater treatment plant for treatment.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant

## WW.9B. Unincorporated Area Septic to Sewer Conversion Project Design (\$500,000)

### Project Overview

See full project description above. The design portion of this project is considered Phase 2 and will be based on the outcomes of the feasibility study.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant

## WW.9C. Unincorporated Area Septic to Sewer Conversion Project (\$6,625,200)

### Project Overview

See full project description above. The construction of this project is considered Phase 3 and will be based on the outcomes of the design.

An estimate of probable cost was prepared by an engineer to determine the initial budget for the project, but it is recognized that the feasibility study and design of the project may affect the total cost. The engineer-prepared estimate is included below.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	QUAN.	PRICE	AMOUNT
1	Mobilization	LS	1	\$150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00
2	Traffic Control MOT	LS	1	\$35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
3	Erosion Control, Silt Fence in Place	LF	35,000	\$5.00	\$ 175,000.00
4	Master Duplex Lift Station (654 gpm)	LS	1	\$800,000.00	\$ 800,000.00
5	8-inch C900 PVC LS Force Main	LF	6,500	\$85.00	\$ 552,500.00
6	8-inch MJ DI Gate Valves with Valve Box	LS	1	\$10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
7	4-inch C900 PVC Centralized FM Sewer	LF	4,000	\$40.00	\$ 160,000.00
8	4-inch MJ DI Gate Valves with Valve Box	LS	1	\$12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00
9	6-inch C900 PVC Centralized FM Sewer	LF	4,600	\$75.00	\$ 345,000.00
10	6-inch MJ DI Gate Valves with Valve Box	LS	1	\$15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
11	8-inch C900 PVC Centralized FM Sewer	LF	3,500	\$85.00	\$ 297,500.00
12	8-inch MJ DI Gate Valves with Valve Box	LS	1	\$15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
13	Air Release Valve Assemblies	LS	1	\$30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
14	2-inch Low-Pressure Sewer	LF	83,000	\$22.00	\$ 1,826,000.00
15	3-inch Low-Pressure Sewer	LF	18,000	\$25.00	\$ 450,000.00
16	Sewer service Lines	EA	1,100	\$500.00	\$ 550,000.00
17	15-inch SDR 26 PVC Gravity Sewer	LF	100	\$150.00	\$ 15,000.00
18	5-foot Diameter Sewer Manhole	EA	3	\$7,500.00	\$ 22,500.00
19	Force Main Testing	LS	1	\$60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>					\$ 5,521,000.00
	<b>Contingency @ 20%</b>				\$ 1,104,200.00
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST FOR PROJECT</b>					<b>\$6,625,200.00</b>

## Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant

## WW.10. Operational Staffing Needs (\$175,000)

### Project Overview

The City is in need of an operator trainee. Trainees perform a variety of semi-skilled and skilled technical and maintenance work in the operation, maintenance, and repair of wastewater treatment facilities. Job role includes:

- Learns to monitor the performance of all equipment, gauges and charts in the treatment plant and pump stations; records statistical data concerning plant operations; maintains, operates, repairs and replaces equipment as necessary; charts lab test results for trend analysis and maintains accurate records of analysis and test results; evaluates data and writes reports as required.
- Learns to operate, maintain, and repair malfunctions at the wastewater treatment plant; repair gauges, pumps, filters and other controls as required.
- Learns to collect samples and identifies concentrations of chemical, physical, or biological characteristics of wastewater required in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements; gathers and tests wastewater samples for plant efficiency reports as required.
- Learns to perform quality control tests on lab equipment and lab analysis; evaluates procedures and results for accuracy and determines appropriate methods.
- Learns to contain and dispose of hazardous wastes generated by the lab, wastewater sludge, loads or removes by hand or with equipment as required.
- Learns to maintain pump stations; cleans wet wells and pumps and valves, maintains grounds and general janitorial duties.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Local Revenue
- Florida Rural Water Association

## Potable Water Projects

### PW.1. Fire Hydrant Replacement (\$2,475,000)

#### Project Overview

To address safety concerns, there is a need to replace 215 fire hydrants throughout the City. This project will involve the demolition of the current hydrants along with the installation of new hydrants. The opinion of cost prepared by the engineering team includes the following items, which are captured in the cost estimate for this project:

- Mobilization,
- Bonds and insurance,
- Traffic maintenance,
- Fire hydrant demolition,
- Restoration allowance to include replacement of sod and repairs to sidewalks and asphalt, as needed,
- Assembly of fire hydrants, and
- 18" extensions.

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant – Small Cities/Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- EDA Public Works Grant Programs
- Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund

### PW.2. Potable Water Valve Replacements (\$368,500)

#### Project Overview

This project will change out existing valves and install new valves in places where they are not located currently. The project will require a line stop and will enable the City to isolate line breaks when an issue occurs without affecting service citywide. This project will also involve restoration of infrastructure as well once the valve is replaced. The opinion of cost prepared by the engineering team includes the following items, which are captured in the cost estimate for this project:

- Mobilization,
- Bonds and insurance,
- Traffic maintenance,

- Restoration allowance to include replacement of sod and repairs to sidewalks and asphalt, as needed, and
- 6" gate valve replacement (includes removal and replacement of valves and installation of inserta valves).

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant – Small Cities/Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- EDA Public Works Grant Programs
- Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund

## PW.3. Potable Water Testing Site Installation (\$26,068.02)

### Project Overview

This project will install water quality testing sites in response to past consent orders to monitor these sites and ensure that problems do not resurface. The City currently does not have this type of equipment and will install 15 sampling stations in order to better monitor water quality.

Included in this budget is \$23,698.20 to purchase and install the water testing sites and \$2,369.82 in contingency.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant – Small Cities/Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- EDA Public Works Grant Programs
- Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund

## Public Education Projects

### PE.1. Stewardship of the River Guidance for Residents – Outreach Campaign (\$350,000)

#### Project Overview

The project will consist of a public education campaign to help residents who are new to the area learn best practices for being good stewards of the environment as it relates to how their actions can affect the function of stormwater and wastewater infrastructure. The project outcomes may include online, print, radio and social media disseminated information aimed at helping residents understand how they can take care of the infrastructure owned collectively by the City.

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant
- EPA Environmental Education Grants



# WATER QUALITY

Water quality is an important consideration for coastal communities across the State of Florida, however in the City of Apalachicola, nearshore water quality will forever be tied to the iconic oysters for which this City is famous. The wild oysters reefs are not only an important part of the local economy, but play a role in cleaning and filtering the Bay.

The Apalachicola Estuary is where the salt water of the Gulf meets the freshwater of the ocean. The salinity balance that must be achieved to create a healthy environment is influenced by a complex suite of factors including rain, river flow, tides, winds and basin configuration. A change in any one of these factors can significantly upset the salinity balance and have a negative effect on the animal and plant life of the estuary.

In December of 2020, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission voted to shutdown harvesting of oysters in Apalachicola Bay through the end of 2025. Since the closure of the Bay, a significant amount of funding has been poured into efforts that will restore the Bay in hopes of bringing back a sustainable wild caught oyster industry.

Development near a fragile ecosystem requires constant monitoring and attention to ensure that other factors, such as stormwater runoff and wastewater outputs do not further affect this intricate balance.

The City of Apalachicola has made great strides in implementing best practices to protect the Apalachicola Bay through its comprehensive plan and land development regulations. However, there is still work to be done. The City understands that it must make improvements to its infrastructure to ensure that nearby development does not harm the rivers, streams and ultimately, the Apalachicola Bay. This section of the plan outlines additional projects that the City, with assistance from the State, can implement to improve water quality.

## Apalachicola Bay Protection Act

*It is hereby declared that the intent of the Legislature is:*

- (a) To protect the water quality of the Apalachicola Bay Area to ensure a healthy environment and a thriving economy for the residents of the area and the state.*
- (i) To protect and improve the water quality of the Apalachicola Bay through federal, state, and local funding of water quality improvement projects, including the construction and operation of wastewater management facilities that meet state requirements.*

*– Section 380.0555, Florida Statutes*

## Stormwater Projects

### SW.1A. Stormwater Inflow and Infiltration Study (\$500,000)

#### Project Overview

This project will complete a study to pinpoint where stormwater issues are located throughout the City. The data gathered will be used along with information provided in the City's Drainage Studies (Phase 1 - completed, Phase 2 - Rural Infrastructure Fund awarded) to guide design and construction for repairs to the stormwater system.

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

### SW.1B. Stormwater Design (\$1,000,000)

#### Project Overview

This project will build off the I&I study completed in Phase 1 to design stormwater improvements citywide. In addition to this study, the City will use past projects such as the Drainage Basin Analysis (Phase 1 and 2) to inform the design of this project. The City of Apalachicola completed work to prioritize outfall sites and establish analytes to be monitored. Prioritizing the outfall basins for water quality monitoring sites involved reviewing several stormwater reports, maps, work plans and consulting with stormwater management engineers.

Using previous study and plans' results and comparing it to the land use density/intensity patterns in the City, as well as reviewing updated GIS outfall locations and identifying projects still to be completed in the City, and finally incorporating recommendations from State stormwater engineers, a prioritized list of monitoring sites was created. It is important to note that although several stormwater projects have been completed in the City, according to the grant deliverable documentation, there has never been a baseline monitoring event nor a follow-up monitoring effort to document success of such projects. This project has incorporated an ongoing monitoring process. Of the prioritized list, some do not require any action, others have recommended treatment such as a Baffle Box, wetland plantings, uplands discharge, or other as noted. This project recommends the implementation of those recommendations.

## Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

## SW.1C. Stormwater Construction (\$10,000,000)

### Project Overview

After completion of stormwater design, this project will fund construction work to make all necessary improvements to the stormwater system. It will incorporate information learned from all past projects including Drainage Basin study, Stormwater Runoff & Flood Control Project and parking/drainage water quality improvement project.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Apalachicola Stewardship Act
- Legislative Appropriations
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Florida Job Growth Grant
- Resilient Florida Grant
- Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery/Mitigation
- FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program





# HOUSING

The need for workforce housing is directly tied to economic development and support for small businesses in the City of Apalachicola. Without places for individuals to live, it can be difficult to retain the local workforce needed to support the City’s thriving downtown.

There is a need for privately-owned and rental housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families in the City which includes housing to support teachers, nurses, medical support staff, and police officers. The available housing stock is not easily accessible to these essential members of the local workforce, creating a challenge in retaining talent to fill these important positions.

Initiatives to support housing are often defined by the area median income (AMI) or a percentage thereof as it relates to various programs with 30 percent of AMI defined as extremely low all the way up to 120 percent defined as workforce income. According to data provided by the University of Florida Shimberg Center’s Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse, the median income for a family of four in Franklin County is **\$61,800**. Therefore, the breakdown in percent of AMI by persons in household is:

### Florida Housing Income Limits in Franklin County

AMI Category	1-Person Household	2-Person Household	3-Person Household	4-Person Household
Extremely Low Income - <30%	\$12,990	\$14,850	\$16,710	\$18,540
Very Low Income - <50%	\$21,650	\$24,750	\$27,850	\$30,900
Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified - <60%	\$25,980	\$29,700	\$33,420	\$37,080
Low-Moderate Income - <80%	\$34,640	\$39,600	\$44,560	\$49,440
Workforce Income - <120%	\$51,960	\$59,400	\$66,840	\$74,160
Workforce Income - <140%	\$60,620	\$69,300	\$77,980	\$86,520

To put this into perspective, it’s important to consider the wages that are earned by different individuals in the workforce. For example:

- According to the Franklin County Public Schools 22-23 Teacher Salary Scale, the base rate for a new teacher with a bachelor’s degree is \$40,000. Using the income

**Apalachicola Bay Protection Act**

*It is hereby declared that the intent of the Legislature is:*

*(h) To provide affordable housing in close proximity to places of employment in the Apalachicola Bay Area.*

*– Section 380.0555, Florida Statutes*

limits above, this means that a starting teacher who is the sole provider in a three-person household would make less than 80% of the AMI.

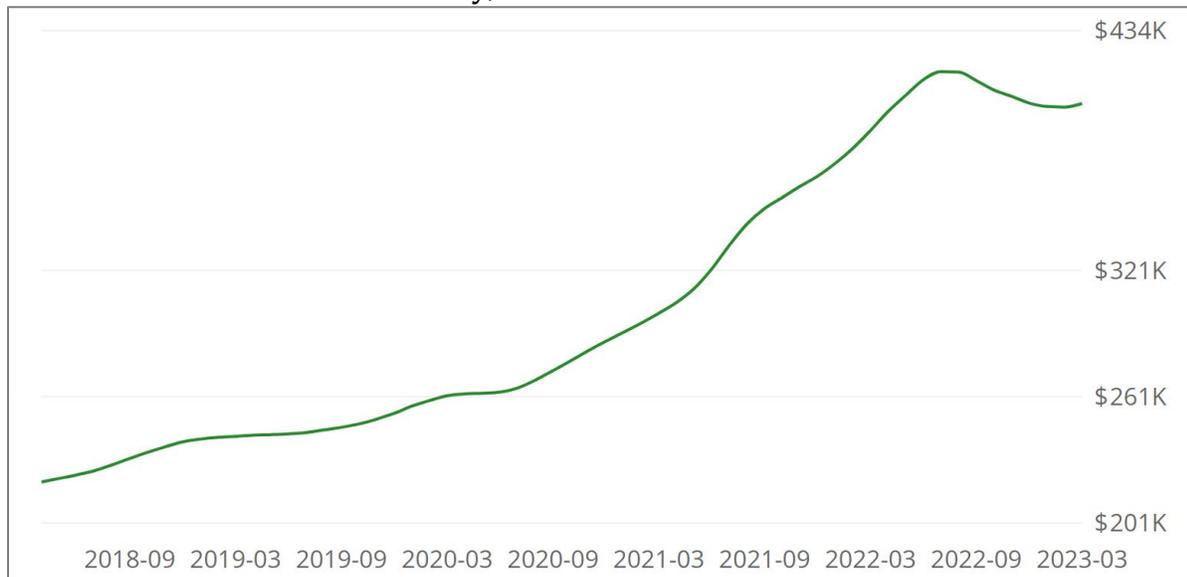
- According to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement the Certified Entry-Level Officer Minimum Salary in Franklin County is \$33,000. Using the income limits above, this means that a starting officer who is the sole provider in a three-person household would make less than 60% of the AMI.

However, it should be recognized that if a starting teacher and starting law enforcement officer and starting teacher were both supporting a 4-person household, their income will still fall under 120% of the Area Median Income.

According to the United Way of Florida it is estimated that 17 percent of households in Franklin County live in poverty, which is five percent higher than the state average (12%). However, while families may earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, many may still earn less than the basic cost of living for the County. This is defined as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households. According to 2021 data, it is estimated that there are 4,559 ALICE households in Franklin County, representing 27% of the households in the County. While this may be lower than the state average of 33%, it is a statistic that is crippling for the local economy of this community.

While income is an important part of understanding housing affordability, it is only the first part of the equation. As the price of housing continues to escalate, it can put homeownership out of reach for many families. According to [Zillow](#), a typical home value in Franklin County was \$220,503 in 2018 and is now, five years later \$400,131 which is an over 80% increase in five-years.

**Home Values in Franklin County, FL from 2018 - 2023**



However, it is noted that coastal property values in Franklin County are much higher, which may skew the average for the County. To look at relevant data for average

homes in Franklin County that are not waterfront, here are some recent statistics of homes sold in Apalachicola.

- A two-bedroom/two-bathroom (1,236 sq. ft.) single family home built in 1950 in Apalachicola sold in May of 2023 for \$349,000.
- A two-bedroom/two-bathroom (1,012 sq. ft.) single family home built in 1920 in Apalachicola sold in April of 2023 for \$335,000.
- A three-bedroom/two-bathroom (1,168 sq. ft.) single family home built in 2007 in Apalachicola sold in January of 2023 for \$260,000.
- A three-bedroom/two-bath (1,440 sq. ft.) mobile home built in 1998 in Apalachicola sold in April of 2023 for \$195,000.
- A three-bedroom/two-bath (924 sq. ft.) mobile home built in 2012 in Apalachicola sold in February of 2023 for \$70,000.

In July of 2022, the Florida Housing Coalition presented a [study](#) to the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners that evaluated solutions for affordable housing in the County. In this report, the FHC calculated the amount of subsidy needed at that time, by AMI percentage to afford a three-bedroom home valued at \$350,000 without being cost-burdened (meaning that an individual is not paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs). Below is a snapshot of the results presented.

AMI Category	Max Income 4-Person Household	Max Monthly Housing Cost for a 3-BR Unit	Max Affordable Mortgage	Subsidy Needed
50% AMI	\$30,900	\$850	\$33,627	\$316,373
80% AMI	\$49,450	\$1,236	\$148,863	\$201,137
120% AMI	\$74,160	\$2,039	\$279,128	\$70,871
140% AMI	\$86,520	\$2,156	\$273,572	\$77,428

The results above show that homeownership (\$350,000/home) is essentially impossible for families that are 80% or less of the AMI. In addition, it demonstrates that individuals that are typically classified as workforce (120 - 140 percent AMI) would require a significant subsidy or a cost-burdened mortgage to afford a \$350,000 home. While lower valued homes (when available for sale) would bring these figures down, the availability of housing stock can be a challenge as well.

In addition, this FHC report, citing DEO data from May 2022, shows that of the 3,206 people who are employed in Franklin County, 1,804 live and work in the county while 1,402 workers live outside of Franklin County. This demonstrates that 43.7 percent of workers are commuting from other counties.

This need for more housing to attract workforce was further validated in a recent Duke Energy Site Readiness Report, which evaluated the actions needed to support economic development at the Apalachicola Airport Industrial Park (owned and operated by Franklin County, but in close proximity to city limits). The top recommendation for the

County in this report was not related to infrastructure improvements but rather prioritizing workforce development and workforce housing before making substantial investments in property development. The recommendation from this Duke Energy report demonstrates that importance of workforce housing to support the attraction of new businesses to an area.

The FHC report also examined the age of the housing stock in Franklin County, noting that 60% of the housing stock was built prior to 1990 and therefore before the enacting of the Florida Building Codes. This means that much of the housing stock may be vulnerable to wind events and depending on location, vulnerable to flood and/or storm surge as well. This can contribute to higher insurance premiums for homeowners, adding more to the overall cost of homeownership and putting it further from the reach of the workforce.

### Age of Franklin County Housing Stock

Year Structure Built	Number of Homes	Percent of Overall Housing Stock
Built 2014 or later	210	2.4%
Built 2010 - 2013	50	0.6%
Built 2000 - 2009	1,963	22.4%
Built 1990 - 1999	1,266	14.4%
Built 1980 - 1989	1,995	22.8%
Built 1970 - 1979	1,287	14.7%
Built 1960 - 1969	483	5.5%
Built 1950 - 1959	474	5.4%
Built 1940 - 1949	416	4.7%
Built 1939 or earlier	620	7.1%

The key takeaways identified by the FHC included:

- Affordable rental housing continues to be out of reach.
- The cost of taxes and insurance as a percentage of the mortgage amount pushes lower income borrowers out of eligibility.
- Current purchase assistance amounts identified in the Franklin County Local Housing Assistance Plan (which guides the spending of State Housing Initiative Partnership dollars) are not adequate at \$10,000 - \$15,000.
- Employers are challenged to attract workers to live in Franklin County due to shortage of available housing (There are 1,402 workers commuting to Franklin County).

Finally, the City of Apalachicola's (and Franklin County's) economy is largely built on the tourism industry, which according to a 2019 Tourism Economic Impact Study by VISIT FLORIDA is a \$272.3 million industry. While there are hotels and condominiums within Franklin County, the conversion of single-family homes from long-term rentals

to house residents to short-term rentals for visiting tourists, is a profitable venture for many second homeowners or seasonal residents. When a home that was once rented to a local who is participating in the workforce is taken off the long-term market and converted to short-term rentals for vacationers, it removes rental workforce housing from the market and can contribute to a rise in long-term rental housing prices, due to a decreasing supply. In a county where the vast majority of the land is in public ownership and protected, the ability to develop new housing opportunities is limited and therefore any reduction in the long-term rental housing market can be a challenge for the community.

This section of the plan outlines actions and strategies that the City of Apalachicola can take to incentivize affordable housing as well as ensure a more resilient housing stock in the future.

## Housing Projects

### H.1. Comprehensive Workforce Housing Strategy (\$75,000)

#### Project Overview

This proposed project expands upon and restructures the housing projects included in the 2020 ACSC Work Plan by understanding that a comprehensive approach is needed to address the challenges of providing workforce housing. Recognizing that some workforce rental housing and homeownership opportunities may likely exist outside of city-limits, this strategy could be developed in partnership with Franklin County as well. The plan might include the following tasks:

- Develop an officially recognized Workforce Housing Task Force comprised of local stakeholders that have resources to support or would benefit from additional workforce housing. This may include:
  1. Apalachicola City Commission Representation
  2. Franklin County Commission Representation
  3. Franklin County SHIP Administrator
  4. Franklin County Community Development & Land Trust
  5. Apalachicola Housing Authority
  6. Local Affordable Workforce Housing Developers
  7. Local Market Rate Workforce Housing Developers
  8. Local Business Representatives
  9. Local Tourism Industry Representatives
  10. Apalachicola Airport Leadership
- Examine the income levels within Franklin County and determine the appropriate AMI percentage that should be targeted to address the needs of workforce housing.

- Once this target population is determined, inventory all federal and state funding programs that could be available to support opportunities to increase workforce housing and determine whether they are currently being used to their full extent in Apalachicola and the surrounding areas of unincorporated Franklin County.
- Considering an anticipated increase in SHIP funding for 2023 and potentially future years, evaluate the programs offered through the Franklin County Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) and maximize the ability to use these funds to support the development of workforce housing.
- Inventory city and county-owned vacant land in and around the City of Apalachicola and consider a partnership with the Land Trust to develop these lands for workforce housing with affordability periods to ensure that the property is not later converted to market-rate housing. Explore the legal provisions needed for this partnership to exist using best practices from other communities around the state.
- Examine the infrastructure needs to develop city and county-owned vacant land and consider these needs as potential projects for the Florida Job Growth Grant or other state funding sources.
- Examine the feasibility of incentivizing the preservation of workforce housing through tax abatement programs for homeowners that do not convert their property to short-term rental.
- Examine the Land Development Regulations for Apalachicola and consider changes such as decreasing the minimum lot size for development (not below the levels allowed in the historic plat) and decreasing the minimum structure size to allow for smaller homes that are in line with the historic shotgun character that is iconic in the community. Other considerations could include flexible lot configurations and density bonuses for housing that is restricted to workforce income levels and below.

### Potential Funding Sources

- DEO Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants
- USDA Rural Housing Service Technical Assistance Grant Program
- Florida Job Growth Grant (for infrastructure needs)

## H2. Workforce Housing Revolving Loan Program (\$1 - \$2 million)

### Project Overview

Revolving Loan Fund programs are development tools that communities can use to support many priorities including the provision of workforce housing. Revolving Loan Funds are designed to be evergreen as they are maintained by the repayment of principal and grow through interest payments. Workforce housing revolving loan funds can provide low-interest loans for new construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation of affordable housing.

Establishing a revolving loan fund provides access to a flexible source of capital that can be used in combination with more conventional sources. Often the RLF is a bridge between the amount the borrower can obtain on the private market and the amount needed to complete the project.

RLFs often issue loans at market or otherwise competitive and attractive rates. Many RLF studies have shown that access to capital and flexibility in collateral and terms is more important to borrowers over lower than market interest rates. RLF programs should be built on sound interest rate practices and not perceived as free or easy sources of financing. RLFs must be able to generate enough of an interest rate return to replenish the fund for future loan allocations. With competitive rates and flexible terms, a RLF provides access to new financing sources for the borrower, while lowering overall risk for participating institutional lenders.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Initial funding, or capitalization, of a revolving loan fund usually comes from a combination of public sources, such as the local, state, and federal governments, and private ones like financial institutions and philanthropic organizations. Funding acquired for capitalization is usually the equivalent of a grant – it does not need to be paid back.
- Most revolving loan funds have at least one local public source for capitalization combined with other sources. If capitalization is exclusively local, the RLF may have greater flexibility in lending.
- State and local governments often use one or a combination of the following to capitalize an RLF: tax set-asides, general obligation bonds, direct appropriations from the state legislature, annual dues from participating counties or municipalities, and funds directed from the state lottery.

### H.3. Community Rating System Implementation to Increase Affordability

#### Project Overview

As a part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Community Rating System is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum program requirements. The CRS is similar to—but separate from—the private insurance industry’s programs that grade communities on the effectiveness of their fire suppression and building code enforcement efforts.

As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions meeting the three goals of the Community Rating System:

- Reduce flood damage to insurable property;
- Strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the National Flood Insurance Program, and
- Encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.

CRS discounts on flood insurance premiums range from 5% up to 45%, based on CRS credit points that are awarded to communities. The discounts provide an incentive for communities to implement new flood protection activities that can help save lives and property when a flood occurs.

While the City of Apalachicola does not currently participate in the Community Rating System, it has completed many of the steps needed to implement this program through a past project. To get credit, community officials will need to submit documentation that verifies these efforts and identify a CRS Program Administrator. Participation in the CRS is voluntary. If Apalachicola is in full compliance with the rules and regulations of the NFIP, the community may apply. There is no application fee, and all CRS publications are free.

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Local Revenue – Currently, the main impediment to the implementation of this program is the identification of a Program Administrator.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economy of the City of Apalachicola has been and will forever be tied to the River, Bay and natural resources that make this community unique. At the turn of the last century, the City's booming cotton shipping port was dependent upon the transportation network provided by the Apalachicola Bay. Established in 1831, it was once the third largest port on the Gulf of Mexico.

The City of Apalachicola is known for its iconic oyster industry. Historically, the Apalachicola Bay produced about 90 percent of Florida's harvested oysters and 10 percent of the product for the entire nation. However, in 2020 the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission voted to close the Bay to wild caught oyster harvesting for a period of five years. The intent of this closure is to focus on restoration efforts fueled by state and federal projects that aim to improve water quality and encourage the return of the prolific oyster population.

In more recent times, the City of Apalachicola's economy has been centered around the tourism industry. The City's wide, tree lined streets are still graced by picturesque homes from the nineteenth and twentieth century. While historic downtowns are not rare, it is the gorgeous backdrop of the Apalachicola River and Apalachicola Bay that make this community unique and a sought-after destination from across the globe. The protection and enhancement of this truly one-of-a-kind waterfront downtown is vital to the long-term economic vitality of the City.

In addition to the support and expansion of small businesses through the downtown district, there is the potential for economic development growth through the attraction of new industries to the Apalachicola Regional Airport and Industrial Park, owned and operated by Franklin County. Recognizing the need to think regionally for rural economic development, four counties – Gadsden, Gulf, Franklin and Liberty – banded together to form the Gulf to Gadsden Freight Logistics Zone which is shown on the map below.

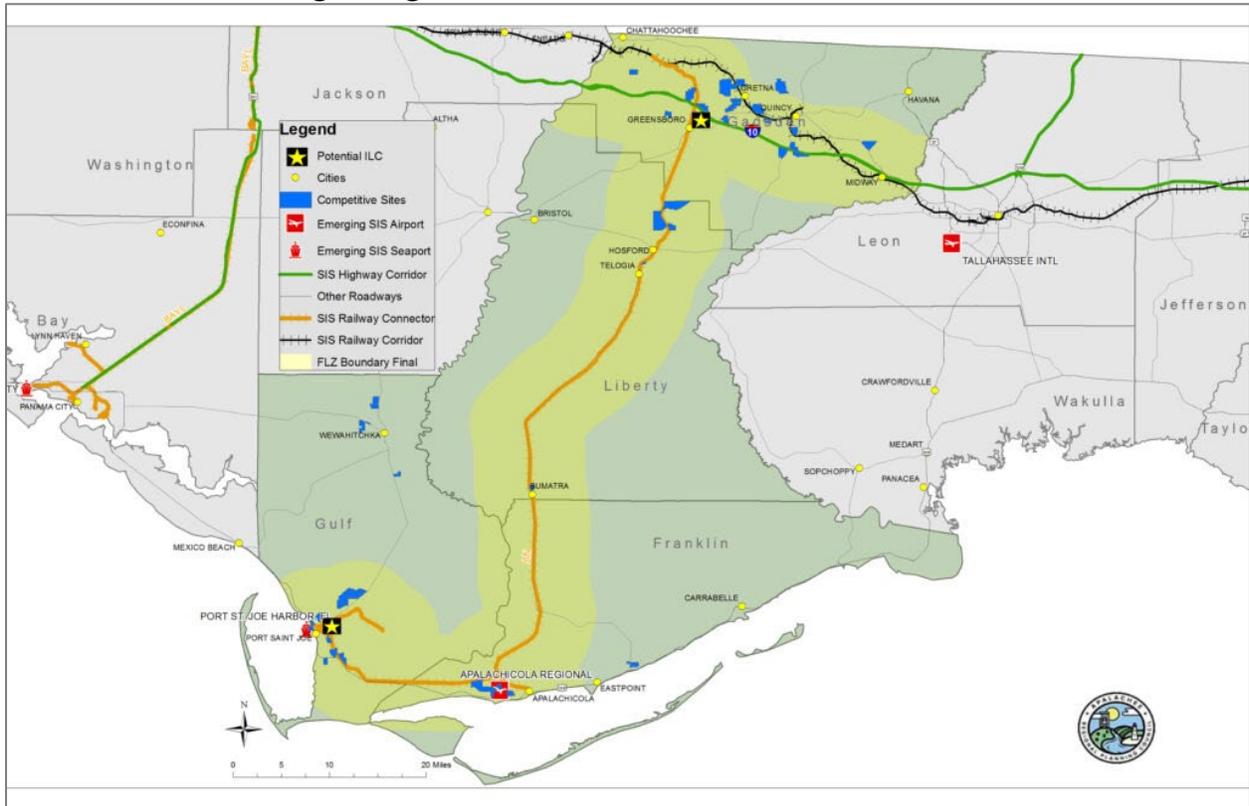
## Apalachicola Bay Protection Act

*It is hereby declared that the intent of the Legislature is:*

- (a) Protect the water quality of the Apalachicola Bay Area to ensure a healthy environment and thriving economy for the residents of the area and the state.*
- (f) To promote a broad base of economic growth which is compatible with the protection and conservation of the natural resources of the Apalachicola Bay Area.*

*– Section 380.0555, Florida Statutes*

## Gulf to Gadsden Freight Logistics Zone



This Freight Logistics Zone has been detailed in a [strategic plan](#) that was designed to meet the requirements listed in Section 311.1103(2), Florida Statutes. Alone, each community has an asset or two that are important to economic development. However, when combined and connected these assets can shine for the attraction of new opportunity. The Gulf to Gadsden Freight Logistics Zone connects the Apalachicola Regional Airport with other valuable assets such as the Port of Port St. Joe, important railway corridors through Liberty all the way north to the interstate (I-10) in Gadsden County.

In 2023, Duke Energy completed a site readiness evaluation of the Apalachicola Airport Industrial Park, owned, and operated by Franklin County. While the airport is not within city limits it is serviced by City infrastructure and is in close enough proximity that any new industries that are attracted to the airport will directly benefit the City of Apalachicola. The table below summarizes the key strengths and challenges of the airport.

**Strengths and Challenges Identified for Apalachicola Airport Industrial Park**

Topic Area	Strengths	Challenges
Site Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publicly owned property</li> <li>▪ 2.5 MW electric capacity available to the property.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developable acreage of the airport property unknown but expected to be significantly impacted by on-site wetlands.</li> <li>▪ 100 miles from interstate.</li> <li>▪ Details regarding water and wastewater system infrastructure unclear.</li> <li>▪ Natural gas service is not available.</li> </ul>
Target Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Given airport/runway access, light aviation and aerospace uses could be aligned with the site’s value proposition.</li> <li>▪ In addition, light food or agricultural-focused operations also score comparatively well in the model. The data shows some presence related to the workforce in the region, even though it’s a very rural area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Site and utility constraints will play a major role in the ultimate target industries for this site. Gas and water/wastewater constraints would be a significant challenge to attract anything other than the lightest of users.</li> <li>▪ Airspace restrictions will also have an impact on the types of aviation/aerospace companies being able to operate at this site.</li> <li>▪ The workforce is not especially aligned for aerospace requirements.</li> </ul>
Workforce through Competitive Lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The site is moderately cost effective, especially when compared to other larger Florida markets.</li> <li>▪ There’s a bit higher concentration of food and agricultural related workers, which could lend the site to those types of targeted industry uses.</li> <li>▪ The demographics of the area are more aligned with lower and moderate skill requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is simply a very rural area and the sheer availability of workforce is going to be a challenge for most types of locationally active projects.</li> <li>▪ The absolute presence and concentration of target industrial workers (e.g. skilled production workers, maintenance, logistics, engineering, and engineering techs) is very low.</li> </ul>

In addition, the report made key recommendations related to master planning and marketing, due diligence and utility adequacy. First on the list of recommendations is the need to prioritize internal community issues including workforce development and workforce housing before making substantial investments in property development. While it was acknowledged that the investment level to address these challenges would be high, the report also suggested that focusing on this effort had the potential to yield one of the highest returns on investment.

Other key recommendations that are relevant to the City of Apalachicola include:

- Create a Master Utility Infrastructure Map that depicts both existing and proposed infrastructure at the site.
- Work with water provider to further assess the level of service available to the site, as well as associated cost and schedule to provide service to industrial prospects.
- Work with wastewater provider to further assess the level of service available to the site, including excess capacity of the 12-inch line that would serve industrial prospects.

As recognized in the Duke Energy report, workforce continues to be a challenge in the City of Apalachicola. This issue is directly tied to workforce housing challenges that have been described in detail in the housing section of this plan. Addressing the workforce development needs in Apalachicola and Franklin County will be paramount in continuing economic development and growth of the local economy.



## Economic Development Projects

### ED.1 Enhance Working and Recreational Waterfront Uses to Preserve the Commercial and Recreational Fishing Industries

#### Project Description

Support revitalization of the waterfront for the commercial and recreational boating and fishing industries by preparing city owned land at Battery Park (recreational) and the Scipio Creek Boat Basin (commercial) to attract private sector investment. Develop a workforce training facility and program of work to train individuals in Blue Economy Jobs.

#### Battery Park

Expand recreational boating and waterfront activities by master planning the site to accommodate commercial activities such as recreational boating, scuba diving, fishing charters, and wildlife watching tours. Partner with the proposed Downtown Business Incubator to support entrepreneurs seeking to provide these coastal tourism products and services.

#### Scipio Creek Boat Basin

The following actions could be considered for the Scipio Creek Boat Basin:

- Position Scipio Creek Boat Yard to accommodate commercial fishing, seafood processing, maritime transport services, clean boat manufacturing/assembly, and parts warehousing/distribution. Consider planning sites to attract marine researchers that use technology like Underwater ROVs and Drones. These industries meet the criteria of targeted industry sectors for Florida funding sources (including Triumph) and likely meet the required wage threshold of \$41,584 annually.
- Establish the status of the former Apalachicola National Estuary Research Reserve headquarters building at Scipio Creek to determine its feasibility as a marine industry training center including both indoor and outdoor training spaces. Partner with an Apprentice Florida navigator to build out relevant training programs to meet the needs of private sector employers.
- Evaluate property northwest of the Scipio Creek Basin bordering the river as future expansion for the haul out facility to the south of the basin.
- Consider priming either master-planned site with one or more speculative buildings to mitigate cost for prospective investors and job creators.
- Determine land lease and spec building lease rates and terms.

Resources to further expand project idea:

- **Florida sea grant's marine and coastal extension and education program** - a statewide marine and coastal outreach and education program focused on conserving coastal resources and enhancing economic opportunities for the people of Florida.
- **Marine Research Hub** - Headquartered in South Florida, the mission of the Marine Research Hub is to raise the visibility, reputation, and prestige of South Florida's oceanographic research institutions and facilitate the transfer of technology into marketable goods and services, resulting in talent attraction and retention and job creation to build our Blue Economy.
- **US EDA Industries of the Future: The Blue Economy** - The Economic Recovery Support Function of the EDA, in partnership with local, state, and federal partners is outlining Florida's Industries of the Future to include the state of the industry, assets, challenges, and best practices for diversification, resiliency, and creation of high wage, high skill employment opportunities.
- **Opportunity Florida and Florida's Great Northwest** - Economic impact analysis of job creation in each sub-sector. Marketing of the newly formed Marine Industry Development Area and status of the site readiness and workforce development efforts.

Additional Resources to explore for project implementation, with guidance:

- **Rural Infrastructure Fund for Recreational Waterfront Infrastructure Needs** - Florida's Rural Infrastructure Fund, administered by the Community Development division of the Department of Commerce has received \$20 million statewide for the FY2023-24. The grant cycle is expected to open soon after July 1, 2023. Feasibility study grants for up to \$300,000 can be obtained to master plan sites for development including Phase I ESA elements and location/extension of water, power, roads, and other infrastructure needs. These funds are typically used to engage civil engineering services to understand advance the developability of a site and determine costs related to infrastructure improvements.
- **Duke Energy Foundation Economic Development Grant Program** - Duke Energy is committed to strengthening the economic vitality of our communities. In partnership with the Duke Energy Foundation, the economic development team provides the opportunity for local and regional economic development organizations to apply for grants up to \$25,000 to fund strategic planning, marketing and research initiatives resulting in new jobs and investment in the communities we serve. The funding cycle typically occurs in the spring of each year.

- A limited number of proposals will be selected and sent the formal grant application. Funding is contingent upon available funds and programs may be funded partially.
- Applicants must be a 501c3 organization, government entity or 501c6 that represents communities served by Duke Energy. If selected, the economic development organization must:
  - Have already completed and reported on the previous year's grant funding (if applicable).
  - Be willing to coordinate efforts and partner with Duke Energy where both organizations are involved in the program or event being funded.
  - Be willing to work with Duke Energy to promote the grant.
  - Each organization can only submit one grant application per year.
- **Apprentice Florida** - Utilize CareerSource Florida Apprenticeship Navigators to help plan your program and access the Florida Department of Education Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant ranging in awards from \$40,000 to \$500,000 to fund the creation of a successful Apprenticeship program.
- **Duke Energy Florida Investment Fund** – This new program is designed to assist communities in attracting new industrial development projects or expanding/retaining existing companies by supporting general site preparation, workforce development training, incentive matching, or other project needs. This program is for projects with an identified end user.
- **Triumph Gulf Coast (TGC) for Scipio Creek Boat Basin** – this funding source can help local governments purchase land, fund infrastructure improvements, and make tenant improvements to existing publicly owned structures. This program is for projects with an identified end user and is contingent upon job creation at 115% of the county average wage in Florida’s targeted industry sectors. The average wage for Franklin County is \$36,160, which makes the target average wage (115% of the county average wage) \$41,584. It is important to note that there will need to be a job creator (new or expanding business that is adding new employees) to qualify these projects for Triumph Gulf Coast.

### Potential Funding Sources

- See above.

## ED.2 Support the Restoration of the Wild Caught Oyster Industry

### Project Description

Continue to support partners who are engaged in efforts to restore the Apalachicola Bay and support a sustainable wild-caught oyster industry, upon the reopening of the Apalachicola Bay.

## Potential Funding/Partnership Sources

- Through partnerships, the City of Apalachicola is leveraging many sources of funding to support the restoration of the wild caught oyster industry through long-term restoration of the Apalachicola Bay. This includes \$1.75 million in funding secured in the 2023 legislative session that will use drones to help reseed the Bay and an additional \$10 million to support overall restoration efforts.

## ED.3 Facilitate Additional Oyster Farming in Franklin County

### Project Description

Continue to preserve the oyster culture of the community through the expansion of aquaculture. This can include exploring options to subsidize upfront costs for entering the oyster aquaculture industry.

### Potential Funding/Partnership Sources

- The Wakulla Environmental Institute (WEI), a branch campus of Tallahassee Community College located in neighboring Wakulla County, offers training programs in oyster aquaculture. Students enrolled in these courses get hands-on experience growing oysters on the leases owned and operated by WEI as well as training in opening their own business in this industry. WEI will be an important partner for the community as they continue to expand oyster aquaculture.

## ED.4 Leverage Community Assets to Attract More Visitors

### Project Description

Community assets such as the Convention Center at the Ft. Coombs Armory could be enhanced to expand the capacity of this building and support additional functions and promote as a space for hosting events that could draw more visitors to the area.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Local Tourist Development Council
- Legislative Appropriations

## ED.5 Expand Downtown Parking Options

### Project Description

This project will evaluate creative options to allow for additional parking in the downtown area for patrons of local businesses and restaurants. Options may include publicly owned parking lots or parking garages in areas adjacent to the downtown business corridor.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Local Tourist Development Council
- Legislative Appropriations
- Florida Department of Transportation

## ED.6. Business Incubator/Training/Coworking Space

### Project Description

Explore city-owned structures near downtown as a place to foster the creation of new businesses under the influence of local investors and entrepreneurs. Engage remote workers seeking community engagement in a collaborative space with basic office resources. With remote work opportunities in higher demand, individuals can work for a company and live outside of the community or even state. This shift in remote work is making coastal/rural living more attainable for many individuals who did not have the ability to live in these areas in the past. However, the isolation of remote work can be challenging. A coworking space allows entrepreneurs to lease desks, small offices or even conference rooms for use to recreate the collaborative environment that is found in office settings. This can create a hub for new ideas supported by small business technical assistance and venture capital funding connections. This small-scale business incubator could help to facilitate the growth and development of new businesses that could further expand into the downtown commercial area of the City.

In addition, small business technical assistance programs could cater to the needs of entrepreneurs as well as downtown business owners who may need support in training staff on point-of-sale equipment, customer service or other professional development opportunities. The City could survey current business owners in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to determine what types of training is needed to develop their workforce and work with partners such as CareerSource Gulf Coast, the Small Business Development Center and others to provide this training at the facility. By catering to the needs of downtown businesses, the community may increase traffic at the facility and help to promote it as a resource.

Of specific interest to **Triumph Gulf Coast** is the potential of establishing a business incubator and co-working space in/near downtown. Triumph can fund:

- tenant improvements to an identified building that will create an inviting office like environment with necessary furniture, broadband capabilities, technology equipment, and power needs for portable devices.
- small business technical assistance programming including curriculum, textbooks.

### Developing Community Interest

- It is recommended to market the program throughout the county and draw remote workers from St. George Island. Social media geofencing techniques can be used to target messaging and attract interested users seeking other like-minded entrepreneurs.
- Targeted marketing in colder climates may attract high wealth individuals who want to invest in a coastal business incubation model or serve as mentors and instructors.
- Given Apalachicola's proximity to Tyndall Air Force Base, the program can attract Department of Defense contractors with remote work models.

- Appeal to local residents who endeavor to create businesses to serve the working waterfronts sector.

Domi Station, located in Tallahassee, Florida may be a potential model for this concept. Domi Station is a non-profit business incubator and coworking space. The facility offers programs, resources, and events that help entrepreneurs start and scale sustainable companies. The facility also serves as a co-working space and may be a potential partner for the City to create a satellite program in Apalachicola. The following pricing and support model is used by Domi Station to support business incubation:

- **Gear-Up Program for Start-Ups** to help get businesses off the ground. Typically, businesses spend an average of six months in these programs. Upon approval of a business's application, they can receive the following support for a rate of \$200/month.
  - Tailored curriculum that provides the information that entrepreneurs need to be successful,
  - Pitch preparation to develop a perfect way to inspire others to fund, join or hire a new business,
  - A community of support in the start-up journey with like-minded entrepreneurs, and
  - Experienced mentors that know the ropes and can guide an individual through the process.
- **Ascend Program for Established Business Owners** who are ready to take their operation to the next level. Typically, businesses spend an average of six months in this program as well. Upon approval of an application, a business can receive the following support for a rate of \$200/month.
  - Growth accountability to stay on progress with regular check-ins on goals,
  - A curated collection of exclusive resources to help a business grow,
  - Shared professional workspace to focus on goals, along with
  - Experienced mentors, and
  - A community of support.

## Potential Funding Sources

- Triumph Gulf Coast

## ED.7. Airport: Support County Efforts to Attract Industry

### Project Description

Apalachicola Regional Airport in Franklin County is the only public airport in the three disproportionately affected counties of Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla eligible to receive federal aviation dollars. It is the largest airport between Panama City and Tallahassee. The airport contains three runways, each 5,000 feet long, and can handle all sizes of

private planes and jets services for these three counties. As identified in the Duke Energy Site Readiness Report, the Apalachicola Airport and Industrial Park owned and operated by Franklin County offer the best option for diversifying the economy in and around Apalachicola through the attraction of new businesses and industries. The City could work in partnership with Franklin County to attract new industries to this area.

Support for this effort may include:

- Partnering with the County to determine developable acreage: Support County efforts to work with an engineer to understand true developable acreage of the property, considering on-side impediments, building setbacks, airport's cone of influence, etc.
- Partner with the County to continue refining master conceptual plan: Support County efforts to continue refining the Master Conceptual Plan as the property develops and due diligence is completed, depicting various building sizes and facility layouts (if additional developable acreage is identified).
- Document pricing structure/lease details: Support County efforts to document pricing details, tax structure, and lease terms to have readily available for airports.
- Complete due diligence: Support County efforts to complete due diligence studies (Phase I ESA, Wetlands Delineation, Endangered Species Report, Archeological Report, and Geotechnical Assessment) at the property prioritizing wetlands delineation to help determine the developable acreage of the property.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Duke Energy Grant Programs
- Monitor former Rural Toolkit funding from EFI to determine if the programs will continue to exist in some capacity under the new Florida Commerce Department (formerly Department of Economic Opportunity).

## ED.8. Airport: Master Utility Infrastructure Map

### Project Description

This project will recreate a new Master Utility Map that depicts both existing and proposed infrastructure at the Apalachicola Airport and Industrial Park. As the provider of public utilities at the site, the City's participation in this effort will be critical and may open partnership opportunities for the City and County to secure funding that supports economic development. It is important for the community to know what utilities are available at the site as this information is critical for potential businesses that may be interested in locating at the park. It is equally important for potential

businesses to understand planned infrastructure expansion and improvements to the site.

The work completed in this plan could be a starting point for information sharing with the County as the City and County work together to develop this asset.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Duke Energy Grants

## ED.9. Airport: Define Water Service

### Project Description

The Duke Energy Site Readiness Report noted that there is a six-inch line that serves the property along Chapman Road to the south of the park. However, the capacity of the water service was noted as unknown. It was recommended that the County work with the water provider (City of Apalachicola) to further assess the level of service available at the site, as well as associated cost and schedule to provide service to industrial prospects. While it was noted that there appears to be sufficient water capacity at the site, understanding the excess capacity and allocation availability will be essential to responding to the needs of prospects through the site selection process for new businesses and industries. This information is likely known by the City of Apalachicola and could be communicated to Franklin County to support their economic development efforts.

### Potential Funding Sources

- N/A

## ED.10. Airport: Determine Excess Capacity of Wastewater Infrastructure

### Project Description

The Duke Energy Site Readiness Report noted that there is a 12-inch force main located along Pal Rivers Road to the east of the airport. However, excess capacity was unknown. It was recommended that the County work with the wastewater provider (City of Apalachicola) to further assess the level of service available to the site, including excess capacity of the 12-inch line that would serve industrial prospects. The report noted that the permitted capacity of the Apalachicola Wastewater Treatment Plant is 1 mgd with excess capacity at 0.7 mgd factoring average utilization. The plans to make upgrades to the City's wastewater treatment facilities that are noted in this plan could be communicated to Franklin County to help the County understand both current excess capacity as well as future, based on any anticipated projects in the pipeline.

### Potential Funding Sources

- N/A

## ED.11. Create an Economic Development Task Force

### Project Description

The City of Apalachicola may consider creating an Economic Development Task Force with the mission to provide leadership and support in the community to enhance economic opportunity, attract and sustain businesses, and promote business-friendly practices. The City could partner with Franklin County as well as Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and Franklin County Tourist Development Council to identify the greatest needs and resources for success.

The proposed Economic Development Task Force could be made up of a combination of economic development professionals, business owners, local stakeholders, and municipal staff – all with a goal to support businesses and guide Apalachicola to a thriving economy.

The Task Force could provide resources to new and existing businesses, in-person and online business training, and grant writing workshops. The Task Force could also focus on specific projects of interest, including the development of a local winery and an aircraft maintenance and repair training program at the airport.

The Task Force should also be represented in broader discussions impacting economic development, providing expertise and insight into issues on broadband connectivity, housing, and leadership development.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant
- Monitor former Rural Toolkit funding from EFI to determine if the programs will continue to exist in some capacity under the new Florida Commerce Department (formerly Department of Economic Opportunity).

## ED.12. Port of Apalachicola Waterfront Infrastructure Facilities

### Project Description

Apalachicola has served as a port since the late 1700s and was the third largest port of the United States Gulf Coast before the Civil War. The Port has three distinct physical advantages with its direct access to the Gulf of Mexico, its location along the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway, and its immediate up-river access by a federally authorized waterway to ports in Alabama and Georgia. No other port in Florida has such strategic access for development potential for use by coastal commercial, recreational, or sports watercrafts.

This project proposes a complete restoration, upgrade, and expansion of two of its major Port of Apalachicola facilities which support water-based employment and economic development.

The two primary focuses include:

- 1) The designation of the Port as a public utility with its operations as a distinct department, its user-based revenue structure and budget, its specific operational codes and ordinances, and its mission specific management.
- 2) The further enhancement of its commercial fishing facility at Scipio Creek (also known as Millpond). Improvements here are intended to complete the Rosser International Master Plan to fully serve the independent fishermen within the Northeastern Gulf of Mexico as a public on-load/off-load/provisioning, and repair facility.

The items associated with these priorities include the expansion or upgrade of the loading/offloading dock, ice plant, boat yard repair facility, boat yard utilities, and construction management. This project has been professionally researched, and all plans and permits are completed.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Department of Transportation
- Rural Infrastructure Funds
- Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants

## ED.13. Apalachicola Solar Project

### Project Description

This project consists of installing a solar farm system at the wastewater site with 1,440 ground mounted commercial solar panels covering about 2.5 acres; and a second solar farm with 260 commercial solar panels at the Recreation and Community Complex with the goal of reducing utility costs to save the city and taxpayer dollars. Projected costs are \$800,00 for the wastewater portion and \$200,000 for the Recreation and Community Complex.

These systems are projected to save the city and taxpayers \$1,985,000 over the next 30 years (\$71,000 per year initially; declining slightly over time), by reducing major utility bills more than 50% each year. The financial projections are based on estimates from nationally known solar installers who have built similar systems for many other municipalities, such as in Valdosta, Georgia, and Jacksonville, Florida.

The sustainable long-term operational savings will benefit the environment, reduce utility bills, free up funds for critical infrastructure maintenance for the wastewater plant, and support multiple community service programs based at the 14th street location. The solar wastewater portion will provide 811,000 kWh of electricity per year, reducing those monthly bills by more than 50 percent. The Recreation and Community Complex portion will provide 137,000 kWh per year.

The project will also include a workforce development component, to train young people in the rapidly expanding solar power field.

### Potential Funding Sources

- Inflation Reduction Act
- USDA Rural Development Energy Programs

## ED.14. Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Economic Development

### Project Description

This project would explore the use of Ad Valorem Tax Exemption by the City of Apalachicola for economic development. Authorized by Florida Statute 196.1995, Economic Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemption is an important tool for communities to provide an incentive for qualified businesses who are locating or expanding operations in their community. The incentive provides an exemption of up to 10 years from the property taxes (both real property taxes and tangible personal property taxes) payable with respect to business improvements such as a new building, building expansion or new equipment purchased in connection with relocation or expansion. The exemption is only available in communities where a voter referendum has passed that authorizes the county or city government to offer the exemption.

There are requirements set forth in state statute that must be met by businesses that apply for this exemption. For a new business facility or the expansion of an existing business in either the manufacturing sector or in a target industry, the business will qualify if it establishes 10 or more new full-time jobs paying an average wage that is above the average wage in the area. The Florida Commerce Department maintains a list of target industries.

For a new business facility or expansion which is not in the manufacturing sector or in a target industry, the business may still qualify if it establishes 25 or more new full-time jobs, and the new or expanding facility receives less than one-half of its total sales revenue from sales in the State of Florida for each year the exemption is claimed. Furthermore, with respect to an expanding business, the expansion must be on a site located within the same county or municipality as the existing business and must be collocated with a facility owned by the existing business or under common control with the existing business. Also, it must result in a net increase in employment at that facility of not less than 10 percent or an increase in productive output or sales of not less than 10 percent.

More information can be found in [Section 196.1995, Florida Statutes](#).

### Potential Funding Sources

- N/A

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In addition to the resources identified in the Implementation Overview, there are many grant opportunities that should be considered by the City of Apalachicola. A summary of each opportunity is included below, categorized by topic area. Projects have been aligned with these resources in the plan.

## Overall

### Local Revenue

Local revenue is of course the first source considered by a community when pursuing a project. However, in a community like the City of Apalachicola, it can be difficult to generate the funding needed to cover major projects, like the ones included in this plan. It is often best to pair grant funding with local revenue as match to make dollars stretch further.

### Private funding

Consider private funding sources, specifically those that will benefit from a continuation of services in the event of a disaster. Local businesses, banks, and nonprofit foundations are resources for potential funding.

### Legislative Appropriations/Apalachicola Stewardship Act

Many projects identified in this plan could be appropriate to consider for Legislative Appropriations through the Apalachicola Stewardship Act as they directly line up with the guiding principles for development outlined in Florida Statute for the Apalachicola Area of Critical State Concern. The City of Apalachicola should consider selecting a number of these projects to accompany their continued legislative advocacy to implement the Apalachicola Stewardship Act in subsequent years.

## Infrastructure

### Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program

The [Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program](#) is a competitive grant program that awards funds to eligible cities, counties, towns and villages. There are approximately 249 eligible communities in Florida. To be eligible for the Small Cities CDBG Program, a city must have a population under 50,000, and a county's population must be under 200,000. The Program awards subgrants in four categories: Economic Development, Neighborhood Revitalization, Housing Rehabilitation, and Commercial Revitalization. Infrastructure projects are often funded through Economic Development, Commercial Revitalization and Neighborhood Revitalization.

## **USDA Rural Development Energy Programs**

[USDA Rural Development Energy programs](#), authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014, offer funding to complete energy audits, provide renewable energy development assistance, make energy efficiency improvements and install renewable energy systems. We have programs that help convert older heating sources to cleaner technologies, produce advanced biofuels, install solar panels, build biorefineries, and much more. USDA Rural Development is at the forefront of renewable energy financing, with options including grants, guaranteed loans and payments.

## **Florida Rural Water Association**

[Florida Rural Water Association's](#) primary purpose is to assist water and wastewater systems with every phase of the water and wastewater operations. The Funding Group meets on a quarterly basis, at which time each project submitted during the quarter will be reviewed and the appropriate funding authority will contact the applicant.

## **Small Community Wastewater Construction Grants Program**

The [Small Community Wastewater Construction Grants \(SCWCG\) Program](#) grant program assists small communities and wastewater authorities in planning, designing and constructing wastewater management facilities under Chapter 62-505, F.A.C. An eligible small community must be a municipality, county or authority with a total population of 10,000 or less and have a per capita income (PCI) less than the state of Florida average PCI. Projects shall compete separately for planning, design, and construction grants.

The highest priority is given to projects that address a public health risk and projects that are included in a Basin Management Action Plan. The grant percentage is determined by the sponsor's affordability index and is 70, 80 or 90 percent of the loan amount up to 25 percent of the funds available during the fiscal year. All projects must receive a Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan to receive these grant funds.

## **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities**

[Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities](#) (BRIC) will support states, local communities, tribes and territories, as they undertake hazard mitigation projects reducing the risks they face from disasters and natural hazards. BRIC is a new FEMA pre-disaster hazard mitigation program that replaces the existing Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program and is a result of amendments made to Section 203 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) by Section 1234 of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (DRRA).

The BRIC program guiding principles are supporting communities through capability- and capacity-building; encouraging and enabling innovation; promoting partnerships; enabling large projects; maintaining flexibility; and providing consistency.

The program aims to categorically shift the federal focus away from reactive disaster spending and toward research-supported, proactive investment in community

resilience. FEMA anticipates BRIC funding projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to partnerships, such as shared funding mechanisms, and/or project design. For example, an innovative project may bring multiple funding sources or in-kind resources from a range of private and public sector stakeholders or offer multiple benefits to a community in addition to the benefit of risk reduction.

Through BRIC, FEMA will continue to invest in a variety of mitigation activities with an added focus on infrastructure projects, and [community lifelines](#).

### **EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program**

The [EDA Public Works Program](#) empowers distressed communities in economic decline to revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment. In many cases, public works projects are used to upgrade or expand an area's economic infrastructure to support the next generation of industry or commerce. Whenever possible, this program seeks to redevelop existing facilities and industrial/commercial locations. EDA encourages such redevelopment projects because they promote sustainable economic development by taking advantage of readily available infrastructure and markets.

The Public Works and Economic Development Program supports locally developed projects that long-term economic self-sufficiency and global competitiveness. Examples of past infrastructure investments include water and sewer facilities, industrial access roads, rail spurs, port improvements, skill-training facilities, technology-related infrastructure, as well as the demolition, renovation, and construction of publicly owned facilities.

### **Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund**

The [Clean Water State Revolving Fund \(CWSRF\)](#) program provides low-interest loans for planning, designing and constructing water pollution control facilities under Chapter 62-503, F.A.C. The department receives requests for funding throughout the year for wastewater, stormwater, and certain energy and other types of projects. The information gathered in the request is used to establish project priorities for listing projects in order of priority for funding at the beginning of each fiscal year and each quarter, thereafter, as funds are available.

Funds are made available for Planning Loans, Design Loans and Construction Loans. Small, disadvantaged communities may also be eligible for grants, which, once qualified, can significantly reduce the amount owed on a CWSRF loan. The loan terms include a 20-year amortization and low-interest rates. Financing rates vary based on the median household income, the poverty index, and the unemployment index, but average less than 50 percent of the market rate.

### **Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund**

The [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund \(SRF\) Program](#) provides low-interest loans to Eligible Entities for planning, designing, and constructing public water facilities. Federal and State appropriations have funded the SRF. It is a "revolving" fund because

loan repayments are used to make additional loans. By federal law, the SRF is to be operated in perpetuity. The Department solicits project information each year from January 1 to February 15. The information is used to establish the project priority list for the following annual cycle. Funds are made available for Pre-construction Loans to rate-based public water systems, Construction Loans of \$75,000 minimum or more, and Pre-construction Grants and Construction Grants to financially disadvantaged communities. The Loan Terms include a 20-year (30-year for financially disadvantaged communities) amortization and low-interest rates. Small community assistance is available for communities having populations less than 10,000. Each year 15% of the funds is reserved exclusively for their use. In addition, small communities may qualify for loans from the unreserved 85% of the funds.

### USDA Rural Development

Loans and grants and grants are available for construction of public water and wastewater facilities, as well as for other municipal projects, from the [US Department of Agriculture's Rural Development](#). A community must have a population of less than 10,000 to qualify. The applicant must be an incorporated body or be organized as a private, nonprofit corporation. Grants for as much as 75% of project costs may be awarded for projects which pertain to public health, public health, public safety, or environmental improvement depending on the income level and need within the community. Rural Development prioritizes projects based on the assessment of need for the project and the financial capabilities of the applicant. The proportions of loan and grant vary depending on the agency's overall assessment of a project.

### Rural Infrastructure Fund

The purpose of the [Rural Infrastructure Fund Grant](#) is to facilitate the planning, preparing and financing of infrastructure projects in rural communities which will encourage job creation, capital investment and the strengthening and diversification of rural economies. The program is intended to facilitate access of rural communities to infrastructure funding programs such as those offered by the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development and the United States Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration. There are three types of projects allowed under this program including:

- **Total Project Participation Grants** which are intended to facilitate access and maximize the use of state, federal, local and private resources and may be awarded for up to 50% of the total infrastructure project costs related to specific job-creating or job-retention opportunities. Eligible use of funds include:
  - Improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or commercial sites;
  - Upgrades to development of public tourism infrastructure;
  - Improvements to access and availability of broadband internet services
  - Improvements to inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action.
- **Project Planning and Preparation Grants** facilitate the timely response and induce the location or expansion of specific job creating opportunities. Grants may be awarded for infrastructure feasibility studies, design and engineering

activities, or other infrastructure planning and preparation activities. Grants awarded under this category may be used in conjunction with Total Project Participation grants provided the total amount of both grants does not exceed 30 percent of the total project cost. Maximum amounts of grants:

- \$50,000 for employment project with a business committed to create at least 100 jobs;
  - \$150,000 for employment project with a business committed to create at least 300 jobs; and
  - \$300,000 for a project in a rural area of opportunity.
- **Preclearance Review Grants** enable rural communities to access the resources available under the Expedited Permitting - Preclearance Review Process ([Section 403.973\(18\), Florida Statutes](#)), grants may be awarded for surveys, feasibility studies, and other activities related to the identification and preclearance review of land which is suitable for preclearance review. Maximum amounts and match requirements:
    - Projects located outside a Rural Area of Opportunity - \$75,000 with 50 percent local funds match.
    - Projects located within a Rural Area of Opportunity - \$300,000 with 33 percent local funds match.
    - Projects located within a catalyst site (as defined in [Section 288.0656, Florida Statutes](#)): maximum amounts same as above with local funds match requirement waived.

### **Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program Grants**

The [Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program](#) is a new program offered by the US Environmental Protection Agency that supports eligible entities with projects in underserved and disadvantaged communities with populations of less than 10,000 with drinking water system resilience. This is a new program that resulted from recent federal legislation and much is still unknown about the program. Eligible activities for funding include planning, design, construction, implementation, operation, or maintenance of a program or project that increases drinking water system resilience to natural hazards through:

- The conservation of water or the enhancement of water use efficiency;
- The modification or relocation of existing drinking water system infrastructure made, or that is at risk of being, significantly impaired by natural hazards, including risks to drinking water from flooding;
- The design or construction of desalination facilities to serve existing communities;
- The enhancement of water supply through the use of watershed management and source water protection;
- The enhancement of energy efficiency or the use and generation of renewable energy in the conveyance or treatment of drinking water; or
- The development and implementation of measures to increase the resilience of the eligible entity to natural hazards.

## Water Quality Improvement Grant Program

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's [Water Quality Improvement Grant Program](#) (formerly the Wastewater Grant Program) provides funding to address wastewater (including septic to sewer), stormwater and agricultural sources of nutrients in waterbodies that are not attaining nutrient or nutrient-related standards, have an established total maximum daily load or are located within a basin management action plan area, a reasonable assurance plan area, an accepted alternative restoration plan area, or a rural area of opportunity under s. 288.0656.

Financial assistance is available to Florida's governmental entities for projects that have an established total maximum daily load or are located within a basin management action plan area, a reasonable assurance plan area, an accepted alternative restoration plan area, or a rural area of opportunity under s. 288.0656, which will individually or collectively reduce excess nutrient pollution:

- To retrofit onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems (OSTDS) to upgrade such systems to enhanced nutrient-reducing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems.
- To upgrade, expand or construct facilities to provide advanced wastewater treatment, as defined in section 403.086(4), F.S.
- To connect OSTDS to central sewer facilities.
- To address stormwater and agricultural sources of nutrients in waterbodies that are not attaining nutrient or nutrient-related standards.
- To repair, upgrade, expand or construct domestic wastewater treatment facilities that result in improvements to surface water or groundwater quality, including domestic wastewater reuse and collection systems.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Have the maximum estimated reduction in nutrient load per project.
- Demonstrate project readiness.
- Are cost-effective.
- Have a cost-share identified by the applicant, except for rural areas of opportunity.
- Have previous state commitment and involvement in the project, considering previously funded phases, the total amount of previous state funding, and previous partial appropriations for the proposed project.
- Are in a location where reductions are needed most to attain the water quality standard of a waterbody not attaining nutrient or nutrient-related standards.

## EPA Environmental Education Grants

Under the [Environmental Education Grants Program](#), EPA seeks grant applications from eligible applicants to support environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship and help provide people with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. This grant program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques.

## Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery and Mitigation Funding

In the event of a major disaster declaration, Congress can appropriate funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program specifically for recovery and mitigation efforts. The City of Apalachicola has leveraged this funding to complete several major infrastructure projects that are a priority for the City following Hurricane Michael.

While new funding is not currently available to support the City's projects, the City should be aware that in the event of a future disaster, this resource may become available again. Florida Commerce provides oversight over this program and will likely make decisions on what programs should be activated to address any unmet needs from future disasters. The City of Apalachicola should advocate for the implementation of the General Infrastructure Program to support its infrastructure needs.

In addition, funding may be allocated later to address mitigation needs following a storm. This resource is more flexible than traditional CDBG-DR funding as the project does not have to be tied back to the specific disaster event for which the funding was appropriated, there is typically lower LMI requirements and the timeframe for project completion is typically longer as well.

## Water Quality

### Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

The [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#) is authorized by Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. It is a partnership that is designed to assist states, local governments, private non-profit organizations and Indian Tribes in implementing long-term hazard mitigation measures following a major disaster declaration.

Although the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is federally funded, the program is administered by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. The process of selecting eligible mitigation projects to be submitted for funding consideration has been delegated to each county's Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group (LMSWG) in accordance with 27P-22 of the Florida Administrative Code.

### Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program

The Florida's Division of Emergency Management created the [Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program](#) to act as a specialized, state-funded mitigation program aimed at minimizing damages caused by hurricanes. The program began as an active response to the devastation brought by Hurricane Andrew, specifically to the insurance market in the State of Florida. With an annual budget of \$7 million, provided by the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Trust Fund, the program is funding activities that promote property resiliency through retrofits made to residential, commercial, and mobile home properties, the promotion of public education and public information, and through hurricane research activities.

### Northwest Florida Water Management Grant

The [Northwest Florida Water Management District](#) provides or assists in developing funding opportunities for projects that help protect, maintain, or improve water resources. When available, project funding may be awarded to local governments, utilities, agricultural producers, and other entities. In general, projects of interest must benefit one or more of the District's core mission areas, including:

- Water supply: alternative water supply development, water resource development, or water conservation.
- Water quality: stormwater, wastewater, or other projects that improve water quality and/or provide a reduction in nutrient loading to a waterbody.
- Natural systems: acquisition and restoration of measurable resource benefits to streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, or aquifers.
- Flood protection: structural and non-structural flood protection or abatement projects.

## Economic Development

### Triumph Gulf Coast

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., is a nonprofit corporation organized to oversee the expenditure of 75 percent of all funds recovered by the Florida attorney general for economic damages to the state that resulted from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., is required to administer the distribution of the funds to be used for the recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the eight Northwest Florida counties disproportionately affected by the oil spill.

Projects may include:

- Ad valorem tax rate reduction within disproportionately affected counties.
- Local match requirements of s. 288.0655 for projects in the disproportionately affected counties.
- Public infrastructure projects for construction, expansion, or maintenance which are shown to enhance economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties.
- Grants to local governments in the disproportionately affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts Assistance Program.
- Grants to support programs that prepare students for future occupations and careers at K-20 institutions that have campuses in the disproportionately affected counties. Eligible programs include those that increase students' technology skills and knowledge; encourage industry certifications; provide rigorous, alternative pathways for students to meet high school graduation requirements; strengthen career readiness initiatives; fund high-demand programs of emphasis at the bachelor's and master's level designated by the Board of Governors; and, similar to or the same as talent retention programs created by the Chancellor of the State University System and the Commission of Education, encourage students with interest or aptitude for science, technology, engineering,

mathematics, and medical disciplines to pursue postsecondary education at a state university or a Florida College System institution within the disproportionately affected counties;

- Grants to support programs that provide participants in the disproportionately affected counties with transferable, sustainable workforce skills that are not confined to a single employer; and
- Grants to the tourism entity created under s. 288.1226 for the purpose of advertising and promoting tourism and Fresh From Florida, and grants to promote workforce and infrastructure, on behalf of all of the disproportionately affected counties.

### **Duke Energy Grant Programs**

The **Florida Investment Fund** is designed to assist communities in attracting new industrial development projects or expanding/retaining existing projects as they compete with other locales, by supporting general site preparation, workforce development training, incentive matching or other project needs. The project is for projects with an identified end user. Key components of the program include:

- Florida Investment Funds will be used to leverage funds or in-kind resources from local or other sources.
- Support for projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis to meet the overall objectives of recruiting new industrial customers and helping to retain or expand existing operations.
- Applications are accepted throughout the year, as required by potential projects. Total recommended funding is based on several project factors.
- The project must be in a targeted industry as defined by the state of Florida's most current economic development policy.

In addition, Duke Energy's **Advancing Sites Infrastructure Fund** creates economic opportunities and supports the creation and/or enhancement of new industrial sites throughout Duke's service area in Florida. The program encourages new development by offering grant funding to assist with site infrastructure costs on speculative sites and building development projects. Key features of the program include:

- Accelerates new product development by leveraging investment and business development efforts.
- Helps mitigate developer risk by leveraging the Duke Energy Site Readiness Program.
- Funding is eligible for both site and building development costs.
- Funds typically support costs associated with demolition, environmental remediation, site preparation, building renovation and infrastructure improvements.

### **Florida Job Growth Grant Fund**

The [Florida Job Growth Grant Fund](#) is an economic development program designed to promote public infrastructure and workforce training across the state. Proposals are reviewed by Florida Commerce and chosen by the Governor to meet the demand for workforce or infrastructure needs in the community they are awarded to.

## CDBG-DR: Hometown Revitalization Program

Florida Commerce provided a program in the past to communities affected by Hurricane Michael that allowed for commercial revitalization. This funding can be used for:

- Public facility improvements, including streetscapes, lighting, sidewalks and other physical improvements to commercial areas.
- Acquisition, demolition, site preparation or rehabilitation of commercial structures carried out by a unit of local government.
- Assistance to small businesses for rehabilitation and physical improvements to their places of business.
- Façade improvements to private or public structures in commercial areas.

Eligible projects must demonstrate tie-back to Hurricane Michael damage and must not duplicate benefits received from other grant sources including the FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program. Competitive projects will also demonstrate how they:

- Primarily serve LMI populations,
- Aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or
- Address an urgent need in the community.

As CDBG-DR funding must primarily address the needs of the LMI community, DEO gave priority to applications that meet this criterion. While this program is not currently active for communities, should the City be affected by a disaster in the future, it may be important to advocate for the reactivation of this program to support commercial revitalization needs.



# APPENDIX A: THE APALACHICOLA STEWARDSHIP ACT

An act relating to the Apalachicola Bay Area of Critical State Concern; amending s. 380.0555, F.S.; authorizing the Department of Environmental Protection to expend certain funds for the purpose of entering into financial assistance agreements with the City of Apalachicola for specified surface water and groundwater quality improvement projects within the Apalachicola Bay Area of Critical State Concern; providing for expiration of the expenditure; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (11) is added to section 380.0555, Florida Statutes to read:

380.0555 Apalachicola Bay Area; protection and designation as an area of critical state concern. -

(11) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS. - Beginning in the 2023-2024 fiscal year and continuing through the 2027-2028 fiscal year, the Department of Environmental Protection may expend up to \$5 million each fiscal year for the purpose of entering into financial assistance agreements with the City of Apalachicola to implement projects that improve surface water and groundwater quality with the Apalachicola Bay Area of Critical State Concern, including the construction of stormwater management facilities and central sewage collection facilities, installation of onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems, direct and indirect potable reuse, and other water quality and water supply projects. This subsection expires on June 30, 2028.

Section 2. The act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

# **APPENDIX B: EXISTING GRANT INVENTORY AS OF JUNE 2023**

## Apalachicola Grant Inventory

AWARDED - GRANTS					
State Agency	Grant Program	Scope of Work	Execution Date	Amount	Notes
FDEO	Rural Infrastructure Fund	<p>City applied for \$150,000 for engineering services that are going to be needed as we navigate the Potable Water Consent Order and will set us up to apply for more funding down the line. City was FUNDED for \$147k.</p> <p>Funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of Existing Conditions</li> <li>• Enhanced Sampling Plan, Hydraulic Modeling, and Treatability Studies</li> <li>• Alternatives Analysis</li> <li>• Facilities Plan Report</li> </ul>	11/2/2022	\$ 147,000.00	
FDEO	Rural Infrastructure Fund	This grant proposal would fund an analysis of the drainage basins that border Apalachicola River and Bay. The proposal also includes funding to begin camera-work of the stormwater lines in the phase I, as recommended in that report. (We have to survey the damage before we can move forward on repairs.) The grant asks for \$110,000 for the analysis and mapping (per engineer estimate), \$5,000 for public education (grantors like to see we are promoting our message/work), \$24,000 in admin, and \$161,000 in camera-work for the phase I drainage basin area.	Waiting for agreement from DEO	\$ 300,000.00	
FDEO	CDBG-DR General Infrastructure	Stormwater repair project designed to alleviate floodwater drainage	1/28/2022	\$ 3,862,869.00	
FDEO	CDBG-DR Hometown Revitalization	The project proposes to repair damage caused by Hurricane Michael and provide economic revitalization for businesses located in the city's underserved and overlooked Hill Community which predominately consists of low-to-moderate African Americans residents; this includes any CDBG-DR eligible activity that demonstrably restores and improves some aspect of the local economy. As documented, Hurricane Michael caused catastrophic damage to Apalachicola and the city is currently focused on long-term community recovery activities and economic revitalization planning as a result of Hurricane Michael's impacts.	5/12/2022	\$ 910,753.00	
FDEO	CDBG-DR Hometown Revitalization	Improve access from the city's downtown district and Riverfront Park area to Battery Park by demolishing, repairing and rehabilitation important community assets.	4/13/2022	\$ 4,414,686.00	
FDEO	CDBG-DR HMGP Match	Police Department Generator	7/25/2022	\$ 26,064.75	
FDEO	CDBG-DR HMGP Match	Market Street Vacuum Station	7/7/2022	\$ 41,921.00	
FDEO	CPTA	Analyze the City of Apalachicola's current local comprehensive plan and present required and recommended update to the City Commission considering resiliency. These ideas will be vetted through community engagement and based on feedback received from the community and City Commission, final amendments to the local comprehensive plan will be prepared for public hearing and subsequent transmission to DEO. The City will also undertake Phase 2 of the Areas of Critical State Concern Work Plan by updating the infrastructure project list and conducting project scoping and economic analysis for priority projects in preparation for the funding available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act as well as other state and federal grant opportunities.	11/10/2022	\$ 75,000.00	
FDEP	Resilient Florida	Update of Vulnerability Assessment	9/23/2022	\$ 72,500.00	
FDEP	Resilient Florida	Move critical wastewater infrastructure out of Flood Zone AE to relocate to higher ground; The project will replace existing Headworks and SBR reactors with new tanks and equipment.	10/18/2022	\$ 13,381,516.00	
FDEP	Legislative Project/GAA	re-line approximately 500 feet of stormwater pipe with cured-in-place lining, and add backflow protection for approximately 12 outlets. The following locations in Apalachicola will be addressed: • Fred Meyer Street near 18th Street just east of the intersection. The road is sinking at a damaged pipe joint. • 5th Street between Avenue C and Avenue E. The road has several areas where the pipe joints are caving in. • Avenue B between 11th and 12th Street.	11/22/2021	\$ 100,000.00	25% complete; End date: 12/31/2023

FDEP	CV SLFRF	Construction of Wastewater Plant Headworks and SBR Relocation, Replacement, and Upgrades for Advanced Wastewater Treatment.	10/31/2022	\$ 5,551,875.00	
FDOS	Small Matching Grant	Black History Trail	12/27/2022	\$ 50,000.00	
FDOS	Historic Preservation - Michael	City Hall Hurricane Michael Repair	11/10/2021	\$ 399,916.00	
FDOS	Historic Preservation - Michael	Harrison-Raney Warehouse Repair and Resilience	11/10/2021	\$ 281,884.00	
FDOS	Historical Resources - African American Cultural and Historical Grants	Awarded \$1million with a \$250k match from the City for a new construction museum next to Holy Family. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Due to rising construction costs, the project scope has been changed from a 2-level, 2,500SQF footprint building to a 1-level 2,000SQF building with elevated ceilings.</li> </ul> Priorities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>oHigh Security</li> <li>oStorage Room</li> <li>oOffice Space</li> <li>oBreezeway to Holy Family</li> <li>oGreeting Station/Small Gift Shop Area</li> <li>oADA Accessible Bathrooms</li> <li>oControlled Lighting for Exhibits</li> <li>oBuilding with Room for Add-On at later date</li> </ul>	Agreement signed.	\$ 1,000,000.00	
FDOT		Traffic Signal Maintenance	Recurring	\$ 38,902.00	Julie to send link to this grant agreement
FDOT	Roadside Beautification Assistance Program	Landscaping Grant for Highway 98	5/18/2017	\$ 200,000.00	
FDOT	SCOP	City Commission passed Resolution 2022-01 on 2/23/22 for the City of Apalachicola to apply for funding for Leslie Street. Application was submitted electronically on 3/4/22. The City requested funding to remedy the underground issues, resurfacing the entire street length, and for new road signs based off engineer's estimate and recommendations.	Waiting for agreement from FDOT	\$ 610,169.30	
FDEM	HMGP	MATCHED WITH DEO (Police Department Generator) Provide backup power to three (3) critical facilities, located at two (2) addresses in Apalachicola, Florida 32320. The HMGP project shall provide protection to the City Hall building, the Fire Department and Police Department building by purchasing and installing a 200kW generator and a 60kW generator, or generators of an adequate size determined by the vendor and/or electrical engineer during the bidding process	10/22/2021	\$ 231,033.34	Target completion date: June 2024 because of supply chain issues and delays. FEMA Grant ends: Sept. 2024
FDEM	HMGP	MATCHED WITH DEO (Market Street Vaccum Station) Provide protection to the wastewater utility Infrastructure located at 172 Market Street, Apalachicola, Florida, 32320. Coordinates (29.729473, -84.987241). The scope is for Phase I only, which includes but is not limited to surveying, engineering, design, plans preparation, permitting and bidding for the proposed project, for Phase II approval. No construction activities for this project have been approved. Design: \$120K; Construction: \$ 1,424,753	2/8/2022	\$ 120,000.00	Target completion date: Sept 2023. FEMA Grant ends: Sept. 2024
FDEM	ARPA - SLFRF	Distribution	8/16/2021	\$ 1,179,010.00	
FDEM	HMGP	Back-up Generator for Vaccum Station (108 Avenue F): Grant application was submitted for \$170,000 for a new backup generator. (Current in use is too small for need.) Had to apply for a portable generator instead of stationary, as they will not fund for a stationary one in a flood zone. Multiple RFIs (requests for information) were received and answered.	Waiting on agreement from FDEM.	\$ 170,000.00	
FEMA	Public Assistance	Bodiford/Scipio/Lafayette: Bodiford - remove & replace table w/benches; pier access stairs; pier decking section 1, 2 & 3 - 362 SF. Scipio - remove & replace 3 dock boards; dock access ramp section; 6 FT chain link fence; 1 wood bolted pile; 424 SF finger pier converging boards; 1 wheel chair lift; 2 wood piles. Lafayette - replace 105 pier grating; replace 420 wood joists; replace 840 wood decking; replace 84 hand rail posts; replace 336 hand rail laterals; replace 84 pier toe rails; replace gazebo roof and warped wood; remove & replace 80 SF clay bricks.	Pending EHP	\$ 679,736.32	
FEMA	Public Assistance	Battery Park: replace 260 SF standing seam roof, 26 FT long x 6 FT wide; replace 62 2 IN x 8 IN treated wood; replace wood joist floor 2, 182 LF long; replace 300 FT of Battery Park Pier; reset 198 pilings; add ADA ramp to bring up to code & standards	Pending EHP	\$ 30,000.00	

FEMA	Public Assistance	Alleyway Repairs/Courthouse sidewalk: Alleyway Repairs - replace crushed shell in 17 sections of the alleyways. Courthouse Sidewalk: replace 1.4198 CY of concrete sidewalk.	1/21/2020	\$ 23,784.62	
FEMA	Public Assistance	Old City Hall and HCA Contents Loss: Van Johnson Building - remove & replace 5 vent caps, 5 vent cap fans, 25 ceiling tiles, 248 floor tiles and reset 10 single pane double doors. HCA Contents - content list provided.	1/21/2020	\$ 9,674.03	
FEMA	Public Assistance	Hurricane Sally: Community Center - remove & replace 5,920 SF of standing seam metal roof; remove & replace 16 ceiling tiles; remove & replace 14 ceiling light covers. 9th Street & Avenue D - remove sediment from 360 LF long x 18 IN diameter, concrete pipe. 9th Street & Avenue D (second hole) - remove sediment / seal joints from 18" RCP 360 LF long x 18 IN diameter, culvert. 5th Street & Avenue C - remove sediment from 390 FT of 18" concrete pipe. 5th Street Avenue D - remove sediment from 390 FT of 18" terracotta pipe.	5/20/2021	\$ 38,424.06	
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 33,946,718.42</b>	

**APPLIED FOR - GRANTS**

State Agency	Grant Program	Scope of Work	Submitted Date	Amount	Notes
FDEP	Resilient Florida	City submitted a grant request to complete identified drainage projects in the city that have been documented, but have not been funded by other sources. If funded, the funds will repair known nuisance flooding drainage issues in more than 29 locations throughout the City.	9/1/2022	\$ 2,039,500.00	Likely not funded.
FDEP	Resilient Florida	City submitted a grant request to analyze existing vulnerable critical asset infrastructure in the City's commercial district and design a plan to mitigate street flooding through the retrofit of existing impervious parking and the design of pervious parking pockets on City-owned property, Avenue H specifically.	8/21/2022	\$ 300,000.00	This may have been funded.
FDOS	Historic Preservation - Special Category	The goal of this application is to secure funding to complete the Old City Hall Renovation and support the ongoing repairs funded through the NPS grant. The purpose is to stabilize the building, by proposing to install an interior rigid steel frame to provide the structural integrity of the building exterior masonry and support the historic second floor wood frame.	5/31/2022	\$ 395,000.00	Won't know until budget is passed.
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 2,734,500.00</b>	

# APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF EXPERT AND STAKHOLDER INPUT

## Stakeholder Input 2020

To better understand local challenges and opportunities to support economic development through the Areas of Critical State Concern designation, a series of meetings were conducted with key stakeholders. The general format for each meeting included:

1. An overview of the project, the Area of Critical State Concern Designation and the intent of the Apalachicola Stewardship Act.
2. Challenges and opportunities as related to:
  - a. Economic Development
  - b. Infrastructure
  - c. Housing
  - d. Water Quality
3. Specific projects under each topic area that can be included in the Apalachicola ACSC work plan to address challenges identified above.

The following feedback was gathered from these meetings.

### Economic Development

- Tourism is a large driver of the community, largely based on activities related to the natural resources in the community. However, a new type of tourist has been generated by the local breweries in town as people travel to the city to sample craft beers and enjoy Downtown Apalachicola.
- Festivals and community events draw many visitors to the city each year and have become frequent. This benefits the community and local businesses in the area.
- The Scipio Creek Boat Basin (Mill Pond), a commercial fishing marina, was damaged by Hurricane Michael and needs electrical work and further enhancements (potentially a pump out station?). FEMA funding is being sought to make repairs but there may be gaps.

- NOTE to City: This could be a great Economic Development Administration (EDA) Hurricane Michael project as it was originally largely funded by EDA.
- As the City continues to attract visitors, some landowners are seeking development and land use changes in the Eastpoint area that may change this area in the future. A recent seafood processing facility was re-zoned to allow 4 park model-style vacation rental properties. There is talk of a new Rocky's Gas Station coming to the area around Highway 65/98.
- The FSU Coastal Marine Lab Triumph Grant will result in a hatchery to support research as well as job training, student training and other research-related jobs. The hope is to grow a superior oyster that can survive in the Bay's current ecosystem.
- The wild oyster and oyster reefs provide many benefits beyond jobs including:
  - Water quality as oysters filter the water,
  - Storm mitigation as oyster reefs serve as natural nearshore breakwaters and provide protection against tidal erosion, and
  - Healthy oysters support other marine life and in return leads to a healthier ecosystem for all types of fisheries.
- Apalachicola has a lot of potential however the seafood business has changed over the years and not for the better.
- The oyster population has changed, vastly reducing the number of wild-caught oysters in the Bay.
- Oyster aquaculture is a business opportunity but not an environmental solution to the challenges faced by Apalachicola Bay. Many are struggling to keep businesses viable and oyster leases create challenges with other competing commercial and recreational fishing operations.
- The key to economic sustainability of the community is the rebuilding of the Bay. When working at full capacity, the Bay can employ 400 - 600 people with a salary of approximately \$60 million, resulting in \$25 million industry.
- In order to restore the Bay, it needs a Comprehensive Bay Management Plan. An effort to create this type of plan was initiated in 2014, however due to ongoing legal battles with the State of Georgia over freshwater flows to the Apalachicola Bay from the River, it was not created. Mismanagement of the Bay is the State of Georgia's legal argument in this challenge. The creation of a management plan was believed to support this argument to the detriment of the community.
- An informal Apalachicola Bay Management Group was formed in 2014 to support the creation of a Comprehensive Management Plan. This group met with

Gulf Coast Triumph to put together a large project for the restoration of the Bay. The group included:

- Tommy Ward, 13 Mile Oyster Company
  - Joseph Parrish, Franklin County Commissioner
  - Dan Tonsmeire, Apalachicola Riverkeeper
  - Jim Estes, Florida Wildlife Commission
  - Carl Knickerbocker, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
  - Andy Kane, University of Florida
  - Jenna Harper, ANERR
- 
- Recently a \$20 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) was awarded that focuses on Apalachicola Bay Oyster Reef Restoration. Contact Jim Estes at FWC for more information on the scope of this grant.
  - Originally, the application to Triumph included a component from UF to support the restoration of the Bay. This was expected to be a combined project totaling \$40 - \$50 million. However, the UF portion of the project did not move forward. This would have implemented the research conducted by FSU Coastal Marine Lab.
  - Look at Triumph application and talk to Jim Estes to understand what gaps remain when looking at the scope of the FSU Marine Lab work and the recent NFWF grant.
  - The Scipio Creek Boat Basin (Mill Pond) needs more docks, improvements and ice machines. There is a need to revisit the original proposal and look at the plans associated for this facility.
  - It can be difficult for native residents of Apalachicola who never leave the community to become economically self-sufficient. Most individuals must leave the community to gain education or a skillset and then return later to make a living. Because of the lack of jobs that can support a family, there is a high rate of multi-generational poverty. It can be difficult for those who do not live in poverty to understand the compounding struggles of those who live in poverty.
  - Those that work that live in affordable housing in his community are typically bartenders, waitresses or clean houses. It can be difficult for those with a service-based job to find affordable housing.
  - Improving our housing, healthcare and school system are needed in order to grow the economy of our area. Currently, our school system is ranked 62 on this list of 67 counties, showing that there is much room for improvement.

- In the last year, we lost 118 students to nearby school systems (Port St. Joe, Wakulla). A loss in student population means a loss in funding to make much needed improvements to our school system.
- Affordable housing also impacts the ability of our school system to retain teachers. The teachers we have in our community are great, but it can be difficult for a teacher who starts out at \$35,000/year salary to afford to live on their own because there is no housing that they can afford on that salary.
- Downtown Apalachicola is a great tourism asset and streets could be enhanced to cater to pedestrians instead of serving vehicle traffic. One project that may be attractive is replacing the asphalt along Market Street with cobblestone streets, retaining the older cobblestone street segments that already exist.
- Weems Hospital maintains the designation of a Critical Access Facility for the surrounding region. As such, they receive additional financial support through Medicaid (payout nearly 100% of claims instead of closer to 60%). This is 50-year-old facility that needs significant improvement. The County recognizes that it is a complicated and expensive problem and that they will need to partner with private hospital administration company to ensure long term viability of the hospital. There are potential options with nearby Sacred Heart Hospitals as well as Alliant Hospitals. Currently, under the Sacred Heart proposal jobs will be lost (115 currently employed, new proposal would be less than 50 jobs) and operations will be scaled down to a stand-alone emergency room. Many worry that if they take this proposal the job loss may be even worse in the future, if Sacred Heart finds that they cannot make the reduced capacity facility solvent. This would transfer the Critical Access designation out of the county and the county would lose any future abilities to have a hospital in their community.
- Aquaculture is not a viable income alternative for many of the oysterman who have historically made their living on the Bay. It requires a significant amount of upfront capital (\$50,000) and the ability to go without income for nearly a year. Most oysterman in the area do not have the means to start this or the business acumen to run their own business. Also, additional oyster leases would interfere with other seafood industries such as crabbing and shrimping.
- The FSU Coastal Marine Lab Triumph Grant coupled with the NFWF grant recently given to FWC will hopefully go a long way in helping to restore the Bay from a comprehensive perspective. It is likely that the Bay will need to be shut down for a year or more to fully recover with a long-term Apalachicola Bay Management Plan to guide the relationship between all uses of the bay, both commercial and recreational.
- There is still between \$5 - \$6 million in Triumph funding that is slated for Franklin County. The challenge with gaining access to these funds is that Triumph is looking for an employer that will pay above average to move into the

community and currently, Franklin County lacks the workforce to support these industries.

- If Eastern Shipbuilding moves some of their Coast Guard boat building operations to nearby Port St. Joe, this could be a great opportunity for Franklin County and the City of Apalachicola. This would provide good paying jobs (welders, etc.) within a 25-mile drive from the community. Infrastructure improvements associated with this project (a floating dry dock) was slated to be potentially funded with Triumph dollars. However, in December of 2018 the Gulf County BOCC withdrew their application, due to the impacts from Hurricane Michael.
- There is a regional opportunity for collaboration between Franklin – Gadsden – Gulf Counties through the Rails to Port project which connects the Apalachicola airport, the PSJ port and the Gadsden rail system. Currently this project needs a client – or someone to put freight on the line. A report was produced about this project.
- 

### **Infrastructure**

- Stormwater runoff is a challenge in the city as it traverses paved roads that are frequently traveled by vehicle and ending in the Bay and River. There is a need to continue to implement the projects outlined in the City of Apalachicola Stormwater Master Plan to slow down the path of water.
  - Permeable parking lots could also be considered.
  - Speak to Cindy Clark more about these issues.
- Another issue that contributes to flooding and stormwater challenges is filling of property to alleviate flooding on-site, moving flooding challenge to adjacent properties.
  - A fill ordinance has been drafted to codify how much fill can be put on a site and manage landscaping practices to encourage better drainage. This has not been adopted by the City.
- During high tide events, stormwater outfalls are backed up, resulting in standing water in the street, blocks away from the Bay or River.
- Wastewater systems in downtown need improvement. During heavy rainfall events, stormwater combines with wastewater and overwhelms lift station capacity. This has resulted in prominent businesses (Owl Café) having to close their doors on weekends to pump out water. In addition, the vacuum system needs to be maintained. It will be difficult for the existing wastewater infrastructure to handle additional businesses in the future due to capacity limitations.
  - Speak to Ron Nalley about these issues.

- There is a new potable water system being installed in the City.
- The current wastewater treatment plant is not far from the Bay. This treatment plant is old and could be vulnerable to future storms. If a breach occurs, this could result in raw sewage spilling into the nearby Bay.
- There are challenges with the electrical system associated with the stormwater system and a need to further implement the stormwater master plan, which would contribute to water quality throughout the area.
- The Sewer Plant is an Advanced Wastewater Treatment System that is older and likely nearing the end of its lifespan. The plant no longer disposes into wetlands and now operates an uplands spray field.
- The city has a water re-use system but its current operation is not known. There may be opportunities to expand their water re-use to nearby private establishments and residences to decrease load on the spray field.
- The City is at its max mileage rate for the Sewer System. The expansion of this facility might be popular, however with expansion comes annexation and current taxing rates and additional fees for infrastructure make this not viable for many citizens outside of the city.
- There are concerns about the maintenance of the water system that were recently raised by DEP. Following Hurricane Michael, the valves couldn't be turned off and some broke or were frozen. This brought into question the flushing of the valves on a scheduled basis and resulted in red flags for DEP. The concern is not likely as dire as many believe, leaving some to wonder if the city is working to fix problems that are no longer an issue. There is work to be done to restore DEP's confidence in the ability to maintain its current facilities.

## Housing

- Income-restricted housing remains a challenge in the community and there is a stigma associated with these developments and fear that if they are created, they may encourage individuals who are not economically self-sufficient to move to the area. The need for this type of housing is not in question, but often the location of the new development becomes a challenge.
- There is a need to provide workforce housing in the \$120K - \$160K range, other than just mobile homes, that can provide safe alternatives for employees that support the commercial fishing and tourism industries.
- Concentrated income-restricted housing is not popular, but a scattered site model with townhomes or duplexes may be more attractive to the community if income restrictions accommodated the workforce.

- A former grant was made available to homeowners to improve resiliency of homes but was underutilized.
- Affordable housing is limited in the City of Apalachicola.
- Lower-income housing is especially difficult to find. Many people purchase mobile homes and locate them on a friend or family member's property as a solution.
- The Apalachicola Housing Authority has 54 public housing units within the city limits. Most are single family, with some duplexes (along 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> St.). They are always at 100% occupancy.
- The Apalachicola Housing Authority units are owned by the City of Apalachicola, but the Housing Authority is managed entirely with funds from HUD and the rent collected from individuals. It is a separate entity from the city and city revenue does not support the operation.
- Households are required to pay 30% of their income in rent each month. If there is more than one individual living in the home or if a child turns 18, their income is also considered in this calculation. Most rent collected is between \$55 - \$700/month.
- The HUD fair market value rent for a three-bedroom home in Apalachicola is \$1,350 and there is a shortage of homes to rent throughout the entire area leaving people homeless or living with family.
- There is a waiting list of close to 100 families in need of 1-4-bedroom units. The HUD priority for public housing is elderly (62+) and disabled individuals who cannot work. Because of this priority, it is difficult for able-bodied or younger individuals to get into one of these homes. However, there are some families (single mothers with kids and others) who live in the units.
- Most of the individuals who live in the rental units have been individuals and families from this area. Only 2 or 3 units have been rented to individuals who came from outside of the area.
- The Apalachicola Housing Authority has a zero-tolerance policy regarding drug use and felons cannot live in properties. If tenants are arrested for drug use, they are evicted from the property. Likewise, felons are not permitted to rent the homes and if a tenant is convicted of a felon, they are evicted.
- There is a definite need for additional affordable housing in the area, based on the waiting list for elderly, disabled and low-income individuals who are workers in the community.

- Recently, the price for water and sewer in the City was increased to pay for long-time outstanding debt that was taken out to make improvements to our system. While it is understandable that this debt must be paid, this additional increase in monthly cost further compounds our housing affordability challenges.
- Affordable housing should be characterized as workforce housing in the community. Currently, without a job, individuals cannot afford the \$1,300 - \$1,400/month rental payments.
- The Franklin County SHIP program offers the following types of assistance to homeowners:
  - Down-payment and closing cost assistance for first-time homebuyers;
  - Emergency repairs for site-built and modular homes; and
  - Rehabilitation of site-built and modular homes.
- In addition, the Franklin County SHIP program serves only very low and low-income households.
- The SHIP emergency allocation was used for disaster repair grants (including roof repairs, etc.). Most of this funding has been spent. There are approximately 20 people on the waiting list for SHIP funding assistance overall.
- The HHRP program will focus on repairing site-built homes or repairing/replacing mobile homes.
  - This is the first time that Franklin County has offered SHIP funding for repair or replacement of mobile homes. Typically, these funds are reserved for site-built and modular housing only.
  - The County will allow up to 20 percent of the HHRP funding to be spent on moderate income (households that make up to 80 percent of the Area Median Income) in addition to very low and low-income households.
  - Priority was given to households with hurricane damage and those that had special needs, in addition to very low and low-income households.
  - The County completed a two-week application period and received approximately 47 applications. They expect that the funding received will serve less than half of the applications that were received within the application period. There is still a great need for additional assistance in the community following Hurricane Michael.
- The County typically helps six households purchase a new home each year with SHIP funding through down payment and closing cost assistance.

- This program is available to eligible first-time homebuyers (those who haven't owned a home in the last three years).
  - Assistance offered is between \$10,000 and \$15,000 depending on income.
  - Potential applicants must have a contract and be pre-approved for a loan.
  - There is typically no waiting list for this program.
- To-date, the County has not focused on affordable housing strategies that result in new construction of homes because of the waiting list of those who need assistance with repair or rehabilitation of existing homes. It is difficult to focus on new construction when the annual allocation does not allow them to address existing needs.
  - There is not enough housing stock in the City available at an affordable rate for most homeowners or renters.
  - The County does not offer services for the homeless population in the community. There are a lot of individuals who come through the area who, but for staying temporarily with someone locally, would be homeless. Homeless individuals are referred to Bay County or Leon County for assistance.

## Water Quality

- There are additional potential threats upstream that could impact the River in the future. This includes the conversion of silviculture property to agricultural lands as well as the exploration of gas and oil.
- ANERR offers a classroom series for residents in the area that teaches homeowners that are new to the area about living in this pristine environment. There is a need to keep the focus on why the Apalachicola area is so unique and special and encourage new residents to be stewards of this environment. Community investment in conservationism through Bay-friendly living.
- A UF project was originally proposed as a companion to the FSU Coastal Marine Lab would have made recommendations for re-shelling projects and remapped oyster reefs, among other things.
  - Look at application on Triumph website for details.
- The Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin group is currently exploring non-legal solutions for Bay restoration.
  - Contact Betty Webb for details.
- Water quality challenges is inextricably linked to the economic viability of the community.

- There is a need for the state and local governments to work together to figure out what they want to do with the Bay.

## Stakeholder Input 2023

In 2023, the City again engaged local community stakeholders in the update to this plan. Below is a summary of each of meeting held as part of this update.

### Stakeholder Meeting: January 23, 2023

On January 23, internal staff and grant management support teams met to inventory the current list of grants that are active as well as grants that are in the pipeline. This step is designed to help understand what projects have received funding since the completion of the first ACSC Work Plan. Below are the notes from this meeting:

- While funding has been secured for the Wastewater Plant, there is still a big need to focus on collection infrastructure including pits and lines going to vacuum stations and lift stations, sensors in pits, etc.
- In addition, there are upwards of 150 spray heads at the spray field that need to be replaced.
- The Inflow and Infiltration Study amount has been increased to \$660,000 for both stormwater and wastewater and is included as an LBR request for the City this session.
- The Drainage Basin Analysis resulted in many recommendations that could be added as projects to this plan. Recently Phase 2 of this effort was funded with additional recommendations to rebuild infrastructure where conveyance is currently impeded by trees/roots.
- There are still quite a bit of areas where stormwater runoff is not treated - these should be added to the list of projects.
- The Parking and Drainage Water Quality Improvement Project is partially completed. This should be expanded to include "under the bridge" permanent pavers. We should draw information from the 2022 Resilient Florida Implementation grant that was submitted but likely not funded.
- Need to update CRS project. The City has steps that it must take (site visit, etc.) to participate in the CRS program. With a CFM now on staff, this can move forward.
- Consider voluntary buyout and property acquisition for Tier 3 HMGP funding from Ian and Nicole.
- There are two studies completed focused on the airport that should be leveraged for project consideration.
- Economic Development Projects should be items that can be teed up for Triumph Gulf Coast funding. Julie/Beth to discuss Duke Energy site readiness goals and potential project ideas for funding through Triumph, Duke Programs and DEO Rural grants.

## Stakeholder Meeting: February 6, 2023

On February 6, internal staff and engineering support teams met brainstorm new infrastructure project ideas that are needed to meet the guiding principles of the Apalachicola Area of Critical State Concern statute. This meeting focused on projects under the following topic areas:

- Stormwater
- Wastewater
- Potable Water

Below are the notes from this meeting:

- Both the Stormwater and Wastewater improvements will be driven by the I&I studies, which has been submitted as a Legislative Budget Request by the City for 23-24. The requested amount will not cover both studies which are valued at \$500K each for a total of \$1 million.
- There is an LMS meeting on Wednesday, February 8. This list should be taken to the committee and projects should be added, as appropriate.
- The City's Sea level rise vulnerability study was completed in 2017. It will be updated soon to include storm surge.
- The update to the ACSC Work Plan should include a highlight of all the work completed to-date and underway through the \$30 million+ grant awards and how this ties back to the City's efforts to address consent orders and ultimately the Guiding Principles for Development under the ACSC Program.
- The airport is likely to be a main topic of conversation regarding economic development. However, since the airport is managed by Franklin County it is outside of the City's jurisdiction. The City owns property near the airport that could be of value however it was acquired through the Florida's Communities Trust (land acquisition) Program at DEP and there are restrictions on the site that significantly limit the use.
- Economic Development conversations may include ancillary businesses and operations to support Eastern Shipbuilding that has a presence in both Gulf and Bay Counties to the west.

## Stakeholder Meeting: April 11, 2023

On April 11, Julie Dennis, with OVID Solutions began the stakeholders meeting by providing an overview of the project, starting with the initial Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC) Work Plan that was approved in 2020. The goals of this initial plan included identifying projects in the community as it relates to the ACSC Guiding Principles for Development that could be appropriate for disaster recovery funding from Hurricane Michael, complement the City's efforts to secure funding through the Apalachicola Stewardship Act and support potential applications for Triumph Gulf Coast projects. The goals for the current meeting were presented including the review of current grants and projects and brainstorming future projects to be included in the update, with a focus on economic development and affordable housing.

Julie then introduced Jennifer Conoley, President and CEO of Florida's Great Northwest, a regional economic development organization that represents 13 counties,

including Franklin County with special focus on Gulf Coast Triumph Funds. Jennifer provided an overview of the organization, its mission and goals including their understanding of rural economic development. She then described their use of Gulf Coast Triumph funding for marketing on behalf of the region and their role in matching potential prospective employers with communities that would fit within the region. She shared a success story of a business that expanded in Bonifay (Holmes County) from Pennsylvania and explained that this could be the City of Apalachicola and Franklin County as well. She offered to be a resource for Apalachicola as they continue to work to recruit new industries.

Julie Dennis then presented the Executive Summary of the Duke Energy Site Readiness report which evaluated the City of Apalachicola Airport as an asset for economic development. Julie noted some of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report, including potential targeted industries as a strength as well as the need to bolster the workforce. She then called to attention several of the action items included in the report:

- The need to better understand the development restrictions/allowances and infrastructure capacity at the site based on the City's requirements and City's public infrastructure.
- The need to focus on workforce development and workforce housing as a current limitation in the City that could have a high return on investment for recruiting new industries to the City of Apalachicola.
- The need to perform preliminary due diligence studies to answer questions related to the environmental features on the property, better positioning for future opportunities.

It was discussed that it may be beneficial to include City representation from a Commissioner on the Airport Board to help with collaboration on information sharing for the marketing of the airport by the County, Duke Energy and Florida's Great Northwest. Jennifer Conoley mentioned that there is a site visit planned in June for a company that is interested in the Apalachicola Airport. Beth Cicchetti mentioned that the City of Apalachicola and Franklin County could pursue two separate Rural Infrastructure Fund applications to create a Utility Master Plan for the site as well as complete some of the due diligence studies needed, like a Phase 1 ESA. She suggested that the City work with the County to position for these two separate grant applications now as the cycle will likely open after the start of the new state fiscal year (July 1, 2023). Given the current limitations on workforce, including availability of skilled individuals and housing, and the challenges faced by the school system, the point was raised that there may be a need to foster the development of some of these ideas locally and encourage home-grown light manufacturing opportunities.

Julie then called attention to an idea raised by Gulf Coast Triumph staff to potentially create a business incubator/training/co-working space in a renovated downtown building that could help to create the ecosystem for some of these ideas to develop. The City previously had an incubator in partnership with FAMU and it was underutilized. It was discussed that if this project could encompass multiple goals including training for the employees of existing businesses, business incubation and co-working shared

space (post-pandemic) and could help with the restoration of a downtown building simultaneously.

An ad valorem property tax rebate to incentivize businesses to come in for business attraction as well as workforce housing development was discussed as well as a supplemental tax that would apply to individuals who are purchasing housing for vacation short-term rentals, recognizing that vacation rentals reduce the available workforce housing stock. The idea was raised to consider amending interlocal agreement with the County on the one cent tax to allow for half of it to contribute to workforce housing.

The Florida Housing Coalition and new legislation related to affordable housing was discussed as a resource for affordable housing. The City discussed the need to focus on workforce housing for teachers, deputies, clerks, etc. While there is new low-income focused affordable housing in the community, it is not solving the challenge of those who are moderate income that cannot find suitable rental space.

The Community Planning Technical Assistance grant was discussed as an opportunity to bring together individuals focused on workforce housing and look at options that would meet the workforce needs of Apalachicola. The challenge in Apalachicola is the capacity of staff to carry out the work needed. The Florida Housing Coalition was mentioned as a resource that could potentially function as a consultant to the City to implement some of these ideas.

Based on recommendation for encouraging workforce housing, the point was raised to look at increasing density (by reducing the minimum lot size) specifically for affordable housing as well as reducing the minimum size of a home to accommodate smaller housing through adjustments to the Land Development Regulations. Other ideas such as reducing parking requirements, expedited review processes and other actions that the City can take itself were discussed as potential projects to encourage workforce housing.

The idea of a workforce housing revolving loan program was discussed as an option. The City submitted a Gulf Coast Triumph application for this purpose which did not move forward. It was mentioned that there may be legislative changes to Gulf Coast Triumph as it relates to workforce housing under consideration and the Florida Job Growth Grant has now been expanded to consider workforce housing, demonstrating the strong tie across the state that is being made between the need for workforce housing to support a community's economic development efforts. The idea was raised to rehabilitate older affordable income-restricted housing that is being vacated due to these individuals moving to the new affordable housing development. New legislation was discussed that could provide incentives for this specific need. CDBG - Small Cities funds were mentioned as an idea as well.

Julie asked the group for specific feedback on the project ideas, asking for their input on these items to be shared through email or one-on-one conversations within the next month.

### **Stakeholder Meeting/Public Workshop: May 11, 2023**

After the meeting was opened by Commissioner, Anita Grove, Julie Dennis, with OVID Solutions began the stakeholders' meeting by providing an overview of the materials to be presented. The goals for the meeting include:

- Selecting 10 projects for prioritization and scoping in terms of infrastructure projects.
- Select 3 projects for prioritization and scoping in terms of economic development projects.

First, Dennis acknowledged the work by the City to pass the Apalachicola Stewardship Act and its approval by the House and Senate. She then described that the Stewardship Act gives the Department of Environmental Protection the authority to spend up to \$5 million each year for five years to address infrastructure challenges faced by the City. She then described how this plan will be used to facilitate meetings with the Department of Environmental Protection to show that projects have been vetted, scoped and ready to go as well as acknowledge the work that has been done up until this point to make significant progress on infrastructure challenges.

Dennis then presented the spreadsheet of infrastructure projects that was prepared with full participation of Apalachicola Public Works and the Dewberry Engineering Team. Staff and consultants highlighted in green the ones that would be ready for scoping. She then acknowledged that some of these projects are phased sequentially and while they may be a priority, the first phase of the effort was highlighted because this is the first step needed to pursue this effort.

Dennis then went through each of the top 10 projects selected by staff as prioritized for scoping. It was acknowledged that the relocation of the headworks of the wastewater treatment plant is the top priority of the city and there is currently a need for additional funding to support this project. Commissioners were able to ask their questions related to each project on the list. The I&I studies were also acknowledged as a top priority as they will enable other phases of the projects to move forward. With no concerns expressed by the City Commission, the 10 projects selected by staff were approved to move forward for scoping.

Next, Dennis reviewed the economic development and housing projects that have been developed as part of this planning effort. She acknowledged that originally the scope of work called for three economic impact analyses but that none of the projects identified were detailed enough to be able to be analyzed at this level. Therefore, through an amendment to the grant, DEO is allowing the City to instead flesh out three projects that would help them move forward with economic development in their community. The first project recommended is to look at recreational waterfront uses and examine property along Water Street and how it could be leveraged for boat repairs. This project resonated with Gulf Coast Triumph staff and is recommended to be further scoped as a potential Triumph project in the future. Commissioner Grove acknowledged that boat manufacturing may not be an appropriate use of waterfront property but that boat

repairs and maintenance through the expansion of the boatyard could be a great asset for the City.

The next project recommended for scoping is the need for coworking/incubator space in Downtown Apalachicola as well as workforce training needed by the local business community. This project also resonated with Triumph staff and was recommended to be further scoped as a potential Triumph project in the future.

The final project recommended for scoping is the development of a Comprehensive Workforce Housing Strategy. Understanding that workforce housing is one of the crucial barriers to economic growth in the community, this project was highlighted throughout the effort as a priority. Dennis presented this concept and the work being done currently with Apalachicola staff to apply for Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant to create this plan. Commissioner Grove emphasized that while there is a fair amount of affordable housing for low-income individuals in the community, this strategy would address the workforce housing needs – individuals who are needed to support the local economy but will not qualify for many of the affordable housing programs available (i.e. 60% AMI and below). Dennis acknowledged new resources available through the Live Local Act and that the Florida Housing Coalition will be in a great position to help leverage these new resources and put them into action within the City. Commissioner Elliot acknowledged that the Community Land Trust will be an important partner in this effort.

Dennis then walked through the changes that are proposed for the ACSC Work Plan. She presented a summary of the changes that will be made and then reminded all Commissioners that she would schedule one-on-one briefings related to the plan to capture any additional edits or changes that they would like to see in the final version of the plan.

With no other questions from Commissioners, staff or public comment, Dennis went through next steps on the project including when the plan will be brought back to the Commission to meet the goal of submission by June 30. The meeting was then adjourned by Commissioner Grove.

# APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ASSETS

## Local Apalachicola Businesses

The City of Apalachicola is rich in local assets, including a thriving historical district, a wide variety of local businesses, and unmatched natural resources. This report has collected the top existing local resources that the city can build upon to strengthen the local economy.

### Tourism & Hospitality

Apalachicola's vibrant history and maritime culture is easily experienced on its working waterfront. Buildings that once served as 19th century ship's chandleries, old net factories, and sponge warehouses now house a mix of boutiques and antiques, restaurants, galleries, tackle shops, and B&Bs. In recent years, Apalachicola has shifted from primarily a working waterfront and timber economy to increasingly tourism and recreation driven. This shift is well represented in the variety of local shops and restaurants, such as the Oyster City Brewing Company (17 Ave D, Apalachicola, FL 32320). Founded in 2014 and located downtown, the Oyster City Brewing Company has become a shining example of the community's entrepreneurism and adaptation to evolving economies.

Throughout the downtown district there are examples of historic buildings and informational signage meeting new uses. The Old Sponge Exchange (14 Ave D, Apalachicola, FL 32320) building is one such example. Opened in 1831, the building has been restored and is now home to a boutique.

Another industry that has thrived due to increased tourism are fishing and tourism boat charters, boat rentals, and boat storage. There are upwards of 35 different sport and recreational fishing charters available in the Apalachicola Bay region, including a wide variety of experiences for tourists and residents alike. Activities include but are not limited to saltwater and freshwater fishing, sightseeing tours, dolphin encounters, shelling, sunset cruises, kayaking, eco-tours, sailing trips, and snorkeling. Scipio Creek Marina (301 Market Street, Apalachicola, Florida 32320) is Apalachicola's only full-service marina and offers deep water access to the Gulf of Mexico, Apalachicola Bay and the Apalachicola River System.

## Communications

### **The Times**

129 Commerce St., Apalachicola, FL 32320

The Times is Apalachicola's local paper for over 150 years and owned by Gannett Media Corp. The newspaper serves the Apalachicola Bay area of Carrabelle, St. George Island, and Apalachicola, the weekly print newspaper is distributed on Thursdays and also includes digital options.

### **CoastLine Publications, Inc.**

Regional: P.O. Box 432, Carrabelle, FL 32322

CoastLine Publications, Inc is an independent regional, community-focused publication focused on Florida's Forgotten Coast, featuring visitor information, tide charts, real estate news, events calendar, and more. Distribution and coverage include Bay, Gulf, Wakulla, and Franklin Counties.

### **MUST SEE Magazine**

Regional: 5320 State Road 30A, Port St. Joe, Florida 32456

MUST SEE Magazine is a full-color, full-size, glossy publication containing things to see and do on Florida's Forgotten Coast. Content includes professional photography and spotlights on unique businesses, history, and recreational opportunities of St. George Island, Cape San Blas, Mexico Beach, Apalachicola, Port St. Joe, and Carrabelle.

## Markets / Processing

### **Leavins Seafood Processing Company**

101 Water Street, Apalachicola, FL 32320

From across the Gulf Coast, Leavins Seafood has been delivering the fresh oysters since 1972. Today, they are an industry leader with a patented Frosted Oyster, exclusively wholesale products, and exceptional customer service.

### **13 Mile Seafood Market**

227 Water St, Apalachicola, FL 32320

Four generations of the Ward family have harvested oysters, shrimp and fish from Apalachicola Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. The name refers to a tiny community 13 miles west of Apalachicola where Olan Buddy Ward and Martha Pearl Ward began the family business in 1957. Historically were little communities along the shore of Apalachicola Bay at 7, 9, 11 and 13 miles west of town. Martha Pearl's family - the Miller's - had a small oyster and fish house right on the bay, and many of the nearby families worked there. They specialize in Apalachicola Bay oysters and shrimp, and sell flounder, grouper, crabs, mullet, clams and other seafood. Their product is caught by their five shrimp boats and other local fishermen. Their five shrimp boats work the Gulf of Mexico from Texas to Key West, and they have oyster beds in Apalachicola Bay. 13

Mile Seafood Market has also diversified their business to include charter fishing boats, river and bay Ecotours, Airboat tours, historic tours in Apalachicola, apparel and gifts.

### **Water Street Seafood**

592 US-98, Apalachicola, FL 32320

Priding themselves as the Florida Panhandle's largest seafood distributor, Water Street Seafood delivers fresh seafood throughout North Florida six days a week and ships freight orders all over the United States and Canada. Their fleet of fishing boats produces the seafood from the Apalachicola Bay region and offers over 50 species of fish and a wide variety of shellfish. Water Street has fresh seafood as well as offers a full line of frozen seafood from all over the world. Their refrigerated trucks leave every morning to distribute throughout the northwest Florida region, plus shipping via air freight from two area airports to all parts of the world. Sections of the Southeast are serviced by truck on a weekly basis.

### **Piggly Wiggly**

130 Avenue E, Apalachicola, FL 32320

A locally owned, full-service grocery store located in downtown Apalachicola. A national company, there are more than 600 Piggly Wiggly stores serving communities in 17 states. All Piggly Wiggly stores are independently owned and operated and are located primarily throughout the Southeast and as far north as Wisconsin. Given the franchise flexibility, the local Piggly Wiggly has local and regional products available for purchase and provides an invaluable asset to both residents and tourists.

### **Lynn's Quality Oysters**

Regional: 402 Highway 98, Eastpoint, Florida 32328

Established in 1971 as Braxton & Carroll Seafood, Inc., Lynn bought the business from her parents in 1997 and renamed it Lynn's Quality Oysters, Inc. As one of the longest standing packinghouses in the state of Florida, Lynn's Quality Oysters has developed a strong reputation for first-class seafood and satisfied customers. Lynn's Quality Oysters is still a family owned and operated business and staff members are friends and family. Lynn's son, Brandon (the fourth generation) recently joined the team. Their oysters are delivered all along the Gulf Coast and across Florida. They will also ship oysters in state or out-of-state by overnight or next day shipping.

## **Historic District, Structures & Properties**

Before the development of railways in the Gulf states, Apalachicola was the third busiest port in the Gulf of Mexico (behind New Orleans and Mobile). The port brought wealth and a diverse population, building the foundation for the city. The original city plan, including wide streets and squares, was designed after Philadelphia and is still intact today. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the sponge trade was a major industry. After the turn of the 20th century, Apalachicola reinvented itself as the home to wealthy lumber barons. Seafood has always been a staple of life, and still today, the city boasts a working waterfront for a variety of seafood workers, including oyster harvesters and

shrimpers. For years, Apalachicola was the Oyster Capital of the world, and while recent environmental factors have heavily impacted the industry, many still call it “Oystertown”.

**Apalachicola Historic District** has over 900 homes and buildings listed in its extensive National Register District and it was selected as one of the nation’s Dozen Distinctive Destinations in 2008 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Due to the city’s diverse history, the structures are in a wide variety of styles. For example, **Trinity Episcopal Church** (79 6th St, Apalachicola, FL 32320) was built in the Greek revival architecture style and was incorporated by an Act of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida in 1837. The building was one of the earliest prefabricated buildings in America. The framework was shipped by schooner from New York and assembled in Apalachicola with wooden pegs. It is the oldest operating church in the state. Comparatively, the **David G. Raney House** is the only temple-form Greek Revival style house in Apalachicola.

Another house of significance in the community, the **Thomas Orman House**, was built in 1838. The wood for this two-story house was cut to measure in New York and shipped to Apalachicola by sailing vessel around the Florida Keys. It was then assembled on the bluff overlooking the Apalachicola River. **The Bryant House**, built in 1915 by Billy Bryant, an African American builder of fine homes and boats, was completely renovated and filled with antiques by the current owners in 1995. It now serves as a B & B. Other significantly contributing historic homes include The James Montgomery House, A. Flatuerer House, George H. Ruge House, and Richard G. Porter, Jr. House, all in the Colonial Revival architectural style.

An example of rehabilitation and sustainability, the **Gibson Inn** was built as a hotel in 1907. The downtown landmark, renovated in 1985, is the cornerstone of preservation efforts in Apalachicola. One of the few inns on the Federal Register of Historic Places that is still operating as a full-service hotel. Comparatively, the historic **Bowery Inn**, built in the early 1900s, sat 40 years vacant and then most recently was home to a general mercantile business with a room and living quarters upstairs, has returned to its roots with a remarkable renovation completed in 2015.

Multiple public squares were included in the original 1836 city plan. Washington Square enclosed 4 blocks and four smaller squares includes Madison, Franklin, Marshall (Chapman), and City (Gorrie). Today, Gorrie Square has a 1906 water tower, local public library, and a small state museum. Franklin Square remains a hub of the African American community and contains a small recreation center.

Another building of great significance for the African American community in Apalachicola, the **St. Paul’s AME Church** was originally constructed as a small wooden church on land purchased in 1866, and it stayed there for 74 years. The building of a second, larger wooden structure led to the church as it exists today. The

current sanctuary was constructed between 1913 and 1921. Built in the 20th century Gothic Revival style, the church continues to be a community gathering location.

The **Holy Family Center** is the City's unique example of mission-style architecture. The Holy Family Center was built in 1929 as a Catholic school for the African American population of Apalachicola. The mission style building has four classrooms and an auditorium. When the parishioners outgrew their former church the school auditorium was converted to a church. The building continued to be used as a school and church until 1964. In 2004 the City of Apalachicola obtained the building from the church and renovated it into a Senior Citizens Center that opened in 2012.

The **Fort Coombs Armory** is said to be the oldest building continuously used by a National Guard Company in the U.S. Construction began on the Armory in 1901 and was completed in 1905. Another historic landmark in the City is the **Riverside Cafe/People's Ice Company**, positioned across the street from the original depot location for the Apalachicola Northern Railway. The historic wood-frame structure served as a popular meeting spot from the early 1920s until it closed in the mid-1940s. For years, due to their location, the café enjoyed a steady stream of rail customers. The **Apalachicola Northern Railroad** was a short-line railroad which operated a 96-mile rail line between Port Saint Joe, Florida and Chattahoochee, Florida, with a short spur to Apalachicola. It was founded in 1903 but the rails have since been removed between Franklin and Apalachicola. When people stopped traveling by train the Riverside Café found itself no longer at the center of life in Apalachicola. After the café closed, the building was used for miscellaneous storage. Today, the building has been completely renovated and is an entertainment venue.

## Arts & Culture

With a diverse history and varied influences, it is no surprise that Apalachicola has long been a hub for creative talent. Dixie Theatre is just one example of the thriving arts and culture industry. Built in 1912, the Dixie Theatre became the entertainment center of Franklin County. Eventually operated as a motion picture theater, the Dixie closed in 1967. Recently renovated, the Dixie is again hosting live theatre. Residents and tourists can view a professional stage production, listen to some of the country's most talented musicians and songwriters, or gather for a lecture on Florida history. The Apalachicola Museum of Art is an exceptional venue to exhibit fine art within the Fry Conter House, a restored 1845 Greek Revival structure. Facing the riverfront, the Apalachicola Center for History, Culture and Art occupies one of three remaining 1840's cotton warehouses. The Center serves as the home to the Apalachicola School of Art and provides ongoing exhibits throughout the year.

Other museums include the John Gorrie Museum State Park and Apalachicola Maritime Museum. The John Gorrie Museum honors Dr. John Gorrie who moved to Apalachicola in the 1830s and served in a volunteer capacity as postmaster, city treasurer, town councilman, and bank director. By 1841, concern for his yellow fever patients motivated

Gorrie to invent a method for cooling their sick rooms. He became a pioneer in the field of air conditioning and refrigeration by inventing a mechanical device that produced ice. Dr. Gorrie received the first U.S. Patent for mechanical refrigeration in 1851. Today, a replica of his ice-making machine and other Gorrie artifacts are on display at the museum.

The Apalachicola Maritime Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization founded to celebrate and preserve the maritime history of Apalachicola in the form of a maritime museum, active sailing, boat building and restoration programs, educational programs and stewardship of ecosystems in the Apalachicola Chattahoochee Flint River System, the Apalachicola Bay and the Gulf Coastal regions which rely upon river outflow. The Apalachicola Maritime Museum has two locations. The first location has been open since late 2007 in the city of Apalachicola. The second is at the start of the Apalachicola River in the city of Chattahoochee and is set to open soon. The Quark, a ketch designed by L. Francis Herreshoff, is a centerpiece of the museum's exhibitions in Apalachicola.

Additionally, Apalachicola is home to multiple annual festivals, most notably the Florida Seafood Festival and the African American History Festival. The Florida Seafood Festival is a two-day event annually drawing tens of thousands of visitors to downtown Apalachicola on the first weekend of November. The Festival is held at the mouth of the Apalachicola river under the shady oaks of Apalachicola's Battery Park. It features a parade, a carnival, blue crab races, an oyster eating contest, an oyster shucking contest, a 3.1 mile road race, a country music concert, arts and craft booths, The Blessing of the Fleet, History of the Festival Exhibit, Tonging For Treasure, and plenty of fresh local seafood. The local seafood served is made by local non-profit groups. It is the oldest seafood festival in the state, starting in 1963.

The Annual African American History Festival is held in mid-February and celebrates African American history, life, music and culture. Hosted by Hillside Coalition of Laborers for Apalachicola (H'COLA), it is an outdoor, family-oriented event filled with artists and entertainers, children's activities, arts, history, food, education, health and wellness, and more. Located in Franklin Square, the festival recently celebrated its 16th year.

## Commercial Fishing & Aquaculture

Despite human and environmental factors drastically impacting the oyster and fishing industry, Apalachicola still functions as a working waterfront. As previously mentioned, there are multiple fishing fleets, processors, and distributors in the region. Scipio Creek Mooring Basin "The Mill Pond" (479 Market Street) is one example of a home port for local commercial fishing fleets. This is the site of a former sawmill where lumber was floated from upriver and milled. Shrimping, floundering, and crabbing are also prevalent for both commercial and tourism activities.

### Apalachicola Oyster Company

456 US Hwy 98, Apalachicola, Florida 32328

Apalachicola Oyster Company, the panhandle's first oyster hatchery, is one example of how the region is working on developing new ways to farm and harvest oysters. Their laboratory produces top quality oyster spat, which will help to jump-start natural production. The hatchery will not only produce a variety of oyster larvae to supply spat to local farmers, but will be used in oyster research, oyster restoration, as well as educational projects. Through the process of oyster cultivation, they are investigating the physiological and ecological processes associated with life in the estuary. Their focus is on the biology, ecology, and restoration of the oysters, which play a critical role in the overall health of the Apalachicola Bay.

### **Oyster Boss, LLC**

48 Island Dr, Eastpoint, FL 32328

Oyster Boss, LLC is a regional business out of Eastpoint providing sustainable, farm-raised oysters through aquaculture. Oysters are available both through retail and wholesale. In addition to implementing this new process, Oyster Boss is working with state agencies and universities to continue studies on oyster genetics and the surrounding environment.

## **Parks & Natural Resources**

Apalachicola's most valuable asset is arguably its surrounding environment. Located where the Apalachicola river meets the Apalachicola Bay, the city's boundaries also include the Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area and Wildlife Management Area. As previously discussed, much of Apalachicola's history and current economy are tied directly to the river and bay, however the city also has abundant natural and recreational parks available to residents and visitors. In addition to those listed below, the city has a dog park, multiple neighborhood parks with playgrounds and a splash pad.

### **Lafayette Park**

Lafayette Park, established in 1832 and named in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette, is one such asset in the community. Located in the center of Apalachicola's historic home district, is a waterfront showcase. It features a lush landscape, period lighting, a gazebo, children's play equipment, picnic tables and a long fishing pier which stretches several hundred feet out into Apalachicola Bay. Renovated in 1992, it is now the site of open-air concerts and weddings and has interpretive signage and picnic tables.

### **Battery Park**

Battery Park, located beneath the John Gorrie Bridge at the entrance to Apalachicola, is the site of the annual Florida Seafood Festival. Funds raised by the Festival has paid for the extensive boat docks in the adjoining City Marina area. This park features a community center, boat launch ramps (known locally as the ten-foot hold boat ramp), fishing piers and children's play equipment.

### **Riverfront Park**

Riverfront Park is another park located downtown along the Apalachicola River and is adjacent to several commercial shrimp boats that are docked along the river. This park provides the setting for many community events including the annual arrival of Santa Claus on a shrimp boat, summer concerts and annual Independence Day celebration.

### **Chapman Botanical Garden**

177 5th Street, Apalachicola, FL 32320

The Chapman Botanical Gardens Park overlooks the Apalachicola River and is a tribute to Dr. Alvin Chapman, a prominent 19th Century Botanist who discovered many rare plant species in the Apalachicola area. The park features period lighting, seating areas, a butterfly garden, half mile loop, a gazebo, and beautiful boardwalk.

### **Regional Environmental Assets**

Outside the city boundaries there are additional recreational and environmental assets. Box-R Wildlife Management Area (Regional: Franklin County) is located along the Apalachicola and Jackson rivers, 5.5 miles west of downtown Apalachicola. Once a private hunting retreat, Box-R continues to attract hunters and other recreationists.

Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR) was designated in 1979. Located in Franklin, Gulf and Calhoun counties, the boundary of ANERR includes the lower 52 miles of the Apalachicola River and floodplain, as well as most of Apalachicola Bay. It includes lands managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Florida Park Service, Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWMD) and the Florida Coastal Office. The Apalachicola National Research Reserve is also a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, an internationally designated protected area meant to demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature. ANERR's Nature Center (108 Island Drive, Eastpoint, Florida 32328) includes a replica oyster boat; 3 giant tanks with fish, shellfish, and reptiles; documentary film on the region; and a raised boardwalk to experience the reserve firsthand.

St. Vincent Island National Wildlife Refuge is a 12,300-acre undeveloped Gulf of Mexico barrier island accessible only by boat off the coast of Apalachicola. St. Vincent Island is 9 miles southwest of Apalachicola, there is no visitor center, no potable water, nor public phones on the island. St. Vincent Island offers miles of undeveloped beaches and unimproved trails for hiking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, nature study, and photography. Bank fishing is allowed year-round. Three public hunts are offered each year from November - January.

## **Airport & Aviation Industry**

### **Apalachicola Regional Airport**

8 Airport Rd, Apalachicola, FL 32320

Apalachicola Regional Airport is a county-owned, public-use airport. The airport supports general aviation activity in the area and provides service via a tenant fixed-base operator (FBO). The airport has three runways and the

### **Capital Avionics, INC.**

8 Airport Road, Apalachicola, Florida 32320

Capital Avionics, Inc. is one of those interesting stories that started in an urban area and relocated to a rural community. Capital Avionics ceased its maintenance, repair, and overhaul services and associated test equipment design and manufacturing activities in 2018. The company continues to support the CA-320 and CA-321 Digital Compass and develops next generation equipment at their new location in Apalachicola.

## **Organizations**

In Apalachicola, the people are one of the most valuable assets contributing to the success, and sustainability of the community. This list identifies some of the key players in the community and region, with many others who could be integral to future initiatives.

### **Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce**

The Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce supports the coastal communities of Apalachicola, Eastpoint, and St. George Island. The Chamber provides resources for tourists, including a visitor's guide, walking guide, art gallery guide, and area map. They also offer resources for those who are relocating to the area or those looking to start a business.

### **Franklin County Tourism Development Council**

The Council's mission is to promote Franklin County as a tourist destination through the county's natural, historical, and cultural resources with the goal of increasing the number of short-term rental bookings. Their website highlights places to stay in the region, events, and points of interest.

### **Apalachicola Area Historical Society**

The Apalachicola Area Historical Society is a nonprofit organization devoted to preserving and promoting the area's history and preservation efforts. The Historic Society manages the David G. Raney House Museum in historic downtown Apalachicola. The Historic Society hosts two "Ghostwalks" in Apalachicola's historic Chestnut Street Cemetery. Proceeds from the event are used for cemetery preservation purposes.

### **Capital Area Community Action**

The Capital Area Community Action Agency, Inc. (CACAA), is a private non-profit organization-501(c)(3) created in 1965 as the Leon County-Tallahassee Community Action Program to serve only Leon County residents. In 1980, it assumed sponsorship of antipoverty programs in Gadsden, Jefferson, Calhoun, Liberty, Franklin and a portion of Gulf Counties. The name was then changed to compliment the expanded service area. In 2010 service was extended to include all of Gulf County. Wakulla was the last county to be added to the Capital Area Community Action Area service area. Their Mission is to

provide a comprehensive system of services and resources to reduce the detrimental effects of poverty, empower low-income citizens with skills and motivation to become self-sufficient, and improve the overall quality of their lives, and our community. Their programs include crisis assistance, weatherization, Head Start for children, and offers a Getting Ahead seminar workshop program.

### **Apalachicola Riverkeeper**

Apalachicola Riverkeeper is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the protection of the Apalachicola River and Bay. Since its founding in 1998, the Apalachicola Riverkeeper mission has been to advocate for and secure the protection and stewardship of the Apalachicola River and Bay, its tributaries and watersheds. Their purpose remains to improve and maintain the Apalachicola's environmental health and productivity, and to preserve the natural, scenic, recreational, and commercial fishing character of these waterways. The Apalachicola Riverkeeper is a licensed member of the national Waterkeeper Alliance.

### **Apalachicola Artificial Reef Association**

PO Box 1043, Apalachicola FL 32329

The mission of the Apalachicola Artificial Reef Association (AARA) is to expand artificial reef structures promoting an ecologically stable marine environment in both state and federal waters off the coast of Apalachicola, Florida to increase conservation, recreation, research and educational opportunities. Apalachicola Artificial Reef Association is a 501c3 nonprofit. Their website includes a map with locations of all artificial reefs in the area.

### **Hillside Coalition of Laborers for Apalachicola - H'COLA**

H'COLA is a group of committed and dedicated business-minded people from the Apalachicola, Hillside Community committed to serving their community. They have served the Apalachicola, African American Community and Franklin County since 1999. The organization hosts the African American History Festival, which takes place each year on the 3rd weekend in February.

### **Franklin's Promise Coalition**

Franklin's Promise Coalition's mission is to improve the quality of life for residents, by serving as an advocate for the community and providing a forum for collaborating with service providers, churches, institutions, and volunteers to: improving access to quality services and eliminating disparities of service; streamlining and preventing duplication & fragmentation of services; identifying unmet needs and determining strategies to meet those needs; educating individuals on challenges, resources, and opportunities; and promoting positive youth development while emphasizing the reduction of substance abuse and other negative behaviors. They work on a wide range of initiatives with multiple local, regional, and state partners.

### **Weems Memorial Hospital**

137 12th Street, Apalachicola

Founded in 1959, the George E. Weems Memorial Hospital is a not-for-profit community healthcare facility providing quality healthcare to Franklin County from Alligator Point to Apalachicola. Weems is a 25-bed critical access hospital with emergency services, specialty care resources, and two medical offices located in Apalachicola and Carrabelle. Weems hospital is staffed 24/7 by residency trained, board certified physicians provided by Southland Emergency Medical Services of FL. The same ER physicians also serve as hospitalists for in-patient hospital care. As a not-for-profit system, Weems provides non-elective services to patients without regard to financial status or ability to pay.

### **Florida Department of Health in Franklin County**

139 12th St, Apalachicola, FL 32320

Within Franklin County, the Florida Department of Health has three facilities including an Environmental Health Office, a clinic in Apalachicola and a clinic in Carrabelle. The Clinical Health Services program protects the health and well-being of Franklin County residents. This is accomplished with community health initiatives and a variety of clinical health services including: family planning, pregnancy testing, screenings, and immunizations. The clinic also offers wellness programs and education services.

### **Sacred Heart Hospital on the Gulf**

Regional: 3801 U.S. 98, Port Saint Joe, FL 32456

Sacred Heart Hospital on the Gulf offers critical access healthcare services to residents of Port St. Joe and Surrounding communities. Sacred Heart Hospital on the Gulf is a 19-bed community hospital that opened its doors to patient care in March 2010. The hospital features a 24-hour emergency department, as well as inpatient care, surgical services, diagnostic imaging, laboratory testing, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation and a helipad for Sacred Heart regional air ambulance service to provide rapid transportation of trauma and critically ill patients. Sacred Heart Medical Group offers physician offices across a variety of specialties in Gulf and Franklin counties, including family medicine, cardiology, general surgery, orthopedics, sports medicine and infusion therapy.

## **Education**

Apalachicola is part of the Franklin County public school district. The primary Franklin County School is in Eastpoint and houses kindergarten through 12th grades. The school has a student population of 989 and a state rating of C. The Apalachicola Bay Charter (ABC) School is part of the Franklin County School District, houses pre-k through 8th grades, 340 students, and has a state rating of B. Apalachicola also has the First Baptist Christian School, a private school which includes pre-k through 12th grades.

## **Local Public Institutions**

### **Apalachicola Municipal Library**

74 6th Street, Apalachicola, Florida 32320

Located in downtown Apalachicola, in addition to a wide selection of books to check-out, the library has extensive history on the area, eight computers for public use, and Wi-Fi throughout the building. They also provide photocopying, scanning, and fax services. Additionally, they allow for temporary borrower cards for visitors.

### **Historic Holy Family Senior Center**

203 Dr Frederick S Humphries St, Apalachicola, Florida

Owned by the City and managed by the Elder Care Community Council of Franklin County, the Historic Holy Family Senior Center is located on the site of a former Catholic church and school now renovated into a multifaceted senior center and cultural hub. The Holy Family Center was and continues to be an integral part of the Hillside community dating back to 1920.

### **Apalachicola Community Center**

222 6th St, Apalachicola, FL 32320

Owned by the City and located in Battery Park, this structure is perfect for community gathering or other events and can host up to 200 guests. This venue also has a full kitchen and restroom facilities.

### **Franklin County Government**

Apalachicola is the county seat for Franklin County, containing a majority of the county government offices. The county is comprised of 545 square miles, 348,800 acres, and more than 11,000 residents. Established in 1832, the county is governed by the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners. Within Franklin County, there are two municipalities: Apalachicola and Carrabelle. Each municipality has its own government and provides city services such as police and zoning protection.

## **Regional Institutions**

### **FSU Coastal Marine Lab**

Regional: 3618 Coastal Highway 98, St. Teresa, FL 32358

The FSU Coastal Marine Lab's vision is to become a leader in conducting and supporting exceptional research that advances marine ecosystem science and conservation. The laboratory welcomes investigators and educational groups from all over the world and provides a wonderful site for working retreats. Research is conducted by faculty, postdoctoral associates, graduate students, and undergraduate investigators from the FSUCML, from the main campus, and from other universities throughout the world.

### **Apalachee Regional Planning Council**

Regional: 2507 Callaway Road, Suite 200, Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) is a multi-purpose agency of the state that was created in 1977. The ARPC is one of ten Regional Planning Councils in the State of Florida and provides technical assistance in the areas of economic development, emergency planning, transportation, and quality of life to meet the needs of member

local governments within the nine-county Region. The ARPC Region is comprised of Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla counties and their municipalities.