




**MASTER PLAN
STEERING
COMMITTEE**
*Report to the
City Council
June 29, 2016*

Overview

- Information Gathering
- Visioning
- Drafting
- Report Delivery

Information Gathering

- Online Surveys—550 received as of May 31st with a 95% confidence interval +/- 4.5
- About 80 people interviewed
- A good sample of the populace as a whole
- Results were not skewed by neighborhood
- Final publishable results to be released later

Community Values

- Our environment and natural resources
- Our Civility and Southern hospitality
- Our commitment to care, help and volunteer
- Our commitment to the quality education of our youth
- The importance of diversity of people and neighborhoods
- The importance of family
- The importance of patriotism and community involvement
- The importance of preserving our small town feel
- Inclusiveness
- Ease of mobility
- Uniqueness
- The importance of the city's relationship with Navy

Strengths

- Waterfront and the marshes
- Excellent K-12 School system
- Proximity to I95 and road and rail access for potential new business
- Small town quality of life
- Safe city with limited crime
- Navy Base as an economic driver
- Cumberland Island as a unique national park
- Local hospital with easy access to top specialty medical care in JAX
- Educated and experienced populace
- Close to other places (Savannah, JAX, airport, JAX attractions)
- Fire, Police & EMT service
- Climate

Weaknesses

- Not perceived as business friendly
- Too few middle class jobs and too many minimum wage jobs
- Inadequate public transportation
- Limited post-secondary education
- Insufficient commercial base to support local or small businesses
- No entertainment for tourists, residents, kids and millennials
- High rents and the need for affordable single family detached housing
- Distance from Atlanta results in lack of attention from State government
- Tax base not diversified
- Blight
- Inconsistent code enforcement
- Confusing informational and directional signage

Opportunities

- Develop Waterfront and Gateway
- Mill site and airport now available for economic development
- Improve food and beverage services, parking and traffic flow to make events more appealing
- Enhance the historic aspects of downtown
- Annexation of various areas into the city to increase tax base
- Make better use of our history to leverage it as a tourist draw (not just buildings)
- Zoning changes to accommodate new ideas, ie. tourist cottages downtown
- Revitalize Mid-town development
- Consider the increase in aging population and seek out health care business, like a memory care unit and satellite services to supplement medical care
- Be prepared for potential of spaceport
- Take advantage of well educated retiree base
- Eco-tourism and Eco-industry
- Youth center/Adult activities
- RV parks with or without associated uses like bike and golf cart rentals
- Streamline government

Threats

- Possibility of losing exclusive rights to Cumberland Island ferry
- Potential of hurricane, flooding or natural disaster
- Failing infrastructure
- Drug and related crime issues encroaching from north and south
- Competing with Jacksonville & Brunswick for new business
- Dependency on residential tax base
- Lack of funding, cooperation and creativity within the social service and church community will lead to further erosion of help for those in need
- Changes in federal and state funding means fewer dollars for local projects
- Lack of funding will increase bike and pedestrian safety issues
- Failure to correct blight will discourage other businesses from coming to town

Questions


