



## What's your vision for First Coast in 2060?



*'Forward Fernandina' Feb. 3* ~ The public is invited to a "Forward Fernandina" meeting at 6 p.m. Feb. 3 at the Fernandina Beach Middle School auditorium on Citrona Drive. Forward Fernandina is an initiative to address downtown revitalization, including Centre Street, the waterfront, South Eighth Street and surrounding neighborhoods. Public input is sought to help develop a strategic plan for those areas. Forward Fernandina is sponsored by the Amelia Island Fernandina Restoration Foundation and has been endorsed by the city commission.

*By Ryan Smith, News-Leader*

Nassau County residents will have the chance to provide their input on Northeast Florida's vision plan for 2060 at a town hall meeting Feb. 3 at Florida State College at Jacksonville's Betty P. Cook Nassau Center, 76346 William Burgess Blvd., Yulee.

The town hall meeting is part of the Northeast Florida Regional Council's First Coast Vision process, which aims to plan growth and infrastructure for the next 50 years in Nassau, Duval, Baker, Clay, Flagler, Putnam and St. Johns counties.

The process began in 2009 with Reality Check First Coast, an exercise that gave Northeast Florida residents an opportunity to graphically demonstrate their ideas about future growth.

"Reality Check First Coast was 300 people throughout the region, and we did a Lego and yarn exercise in each county," said Margo Moehring, director of policy at the Regional Council.

Legos represented things like population, housing and business growth. Yarn represented transportation infrastructure. Participants were asked to place the blocks and yarn on a map.

"We provided enough Legos and yarn for what we estimated was the amount of growth over the next 50 years, and we asked people to place those Legos and show us where they wanted it to go," Moehring said.

The Reality Check exercise gave the plan a jumping-off point, Moehring said.

"What's happened since Reality Check is that the Regional Community Institute has formed subject-matter expert committees. For the last year they've been working on the state of the region - where we are now - and the goals and objectives for the vision. The goals are where we'd want to be in 2060."

The town hall meetings, which will be held in all seven counties, are an opportunity for the public to find out about - and critique - the committees' recommendations.

"There's basically three things we hope to get out of the town hall meetings," Moehring said. "First we want to talk about what First Coast Vision is and how it fits in with each county. For example, we're aware of Vision 2032 in Nassau County. What we're doing is complementary to local efforts.

"Next, we're going to poll folks that come to the meetings on their preference for growth patterns," she said. "... And then we'll have members of our committees who worked on the goals and have the goals available for public review. Most of the meeting will just be kind of an informal ability to have discussions with folks who've been working on this."

Moehring said public input from the town hall meetings would play a role in First Coast Vision's final product.

"The next step is we'll work on a draft of the entire vision," she said. "We're going to take the public input and do a draft of the entire vision, something that tells the story - that takes into account the experts as well as the public input. By September of 2011, we hope to have a final vision."

For more information, call (904) 279-0885, ext. 161, or e-mail [mmoehring@nefrc.org](mailto:mmoehring@nefrc.org).

[rsmith@fbnewsleader.com](mailto:rsmith@fbnewsleader.com)