

WATERFRONTS FLORIDA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



Vision Plan Preparation Designation Process: Step Three

The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program is a program of the Department of Economic Opportunity and is funded in part by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Coastal Management Program, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the State of Florida, NOAA, or any of its subagencies.

“A thing is right when it supports the stability, integrity, and beauty of the community of life.”

~Aldo Leopold

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The Vision Plan Overview

The vision plan is the official record for what the community wants the waterfront to be in the future and the steps necessary for achieving this desired future. The plan should guide the partnership’s day-to-day activities and should be updated as the local revitalization priorities evolve. The Waterfronts Florida Program requires vision plans of each of its designated partnership programs. Each Waterfronts Florida Vision Plan must contain the following components:

The Body of the Document:

- Title Page
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Mission Statement
- Introduction/History of the Area
- Boundaries of the Waterfronts Florida Designated Area
- Goals, Objectives & Strategies ~ Addressing each of the Four Waterfronts Priority Issue Areas

- The Implementation Plan~ Addressing party responsible for implementing action, potential partners, possible funding sources and timeline for completion
- Visual Representations

The Appendix

- The Visioning Process
- Community Events
- Waterfronts Committee Organizational Chart
- Bylaws

Each Waterfronts Florida Vision Plan should at minimum, have the above listed components. However, the actual content in each vision plan is expected to vary from community to community based on different needs of each of the state’s diverse working waterfronts. The effectiveness of the local vision plan at outlining a clearly understandable and actionable future for the waterfront depends on the visioning process used to create the document. The visioning process is critical to the quality of the final visioning document. This manual describes the basic components of the vision plan and provides guidance on how to conduct a visioning process. It offers an initial instruction on how to create a vision plan. However, the Waterfronts Florida Program is available on a request basis for additional assistance and guidance on how to conduct a visioning process, create a vision plan, and implement the local vision. The plan should guide the partnership’s day-to-day activities and should be updated as the local revitalization priorities evolve.

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The Vision Plan Process

First Steps: The visioning process begins by reviewing any existing documents, plans, and regulations covering the designated Waterfronts Florida area; doing an inventory of local current conditions through surveys and photo inventorying exercises and other methods; and recruiting stakeholders to become involved in the visioning effort.

The Process: The vision plan requires that the partnership host a series of interactive workshops to gather input from a wide range of stakeholders in the community. The visioning process can include a design charrette, focus-group style break-out sessions, community mapping exercises, etc. The visioning process and resulting document identify the community's issues and plans for addressing the Waterfront Florida Partnership Program four priority areas:

- 1) Public access to the waterfront area;
- 2) Hazard mitigation;
- 3) Environmental and cultural resource protection; and
- 4) Economic enhancement

Implementation: As part of the vision, the community develops an implementation plan with specific actions, timeframes and responsibilities for achieving the goals outlined in the vision.

In the **first year**, the local Partnership builds momentum by completing small and medium size projects and laying the groundwork for large project implementation.

During the **second year**, the community continues to implement its vision plan, focusing on incorporating its vision into the comprehensive plan and undertaking priority projects that will further its efforts to revitalize and preserve the working waterfront. The public dialogue and the partnerships developed with state agencies, private organizations and other Waterfronts Florida communities across the State will enable a designated community to identify and carry out proactive solutions to address community concerns.

Components of a Good Vision Plan

The following are generally considered to be good components of a community vision plan. The format of the plan consists of *a body*, which could act as a stand-alone document, and an *appendix* which should provide additional information about your visioning process and your partnership. The plan will address, at a minimum, the four priority areas of Waterfronts Florida. It is anticipated that the plan will be adopted by the local governing board and appropriate components of the plan will be incorporated into the local government comprehensive plan.

“We have nowhere else to go...this is all we have.”

~Margaret Meade

The Body of the Document

Title Page

Create a title page that best represents your community and what makes it special. Some communities in the past have come up with catchy slogans for the title of their Waterfronts Florida vision plan. Be sure to include a picture that represents your waterfront, the name of your community, the date it was created, and that it is a waterfront vision plan.

Additionally, every publication paid for with grant or match funding should include language that acknowledges the partnership between the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)/ Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), along with department logos as shown below.



Acknowledgements

The acknowledgements page should identify those who helped in writing, developing, photographing, editing, etc., of the vision document. Since this will be a public document, this will give those who helped a feeling of

appreciation from their waterfronts partnership. This page also provides a picture that key stakeholders approved the contents of, and support implementation of, the plan.

Table of Contents

Include a table of contents that outlines each of the main components of your vision document.

Executive Summary

The executive summary should contain enough information for one to read the summary and grasp the vision and mission of the community, its overall major issues and goals, and the key objectives and strategies to reach those goals, without becoming bogged down with details. The executive summary can be used as a handout to interested parties without providing the entire vision document.

Vision & Mission Statement

Each Vision Plan should have vision and mission statements. The vision Statement can be one adopted previously by the City, County or task force. The Vision Plan will have a mission statement developed to achieve the “vision”. Mission statements will probably change over time – more frequently than a vision statement will.

Vision Statement

An effective Vision Statement will convey what changes are preferred in order to create the desired future of the community. The vision

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~Margaret Meade

statement describes the desired situation as if it exists today. Write in the present tense. While crafting the statement, remember that you’re describing the dream of your communities' highest potential.

Mission Statement

An effective mission statement must resonate with the people who are creating the waterfront vision as well as those who will be asked to support the implementation of the vision (e.g. political bodies or grants programs). It must express its purpose in a way that inspires innovation, commitment and support from those who are a part of the waterfront revitalization effort.

The mission statement should answer the following questions:

- **The purpose:** What are the needs or issues that must be addressed?
- **The business:** How are we going to address these needs?
- **The values:** What principles or beliefs guide your work?

Introduction/History of the Area

This section should provide an introduction to the document and give a brief history of the waterfront area describing significant changes to the local economy and built and natural environment that have occurred over the past 50 years. This section captures what the area represented in the past, it characterizes present challenges and opportunities facing the community, and it sets a stage for the description of what the local community wants to be in the future.

Boundaries of the Waterfronts Florida Designated Area

Include a map of the designated waterfront planning area with clearly defined boundaries. Additional features such as land uses, vacant parcels, major roads and major public facilities may also be added to this or subsequent maps.

Goals, Objectives & Strategies: Addressing the Four Priority Issue Areas:

1. **Providing Public Access to the Waterfront**
2. **Protecting Environmental and Cultural Resources**
3. **Preventing Losses from Disasters**
4. **Enhancing the Waterfront Economy**

Your vision plan should address, at a minimum, the four priority areas and should include the following components:

- **Goals** ~ Goals are statements that when met mean that the program is successful and the mission and vision have been achieved. Remember to keep your goals specific. If goals are vague, it is very difficult to tell when they are achieved.
- **Objectives** ~ Objectives are specific, measurable milestones along the way to achieving your goals. It should state *what* and *when* and a result that can be observed, demonstrated or proved. There should be more than one objective for each goal and the objectives should be easy to understand, as well as consistent with your goals.
- **Strategies** ~ Strategies are methods to accomplish objectives and reach goals. Strategies could include comprehensive plan or land development code changes necessary to meet

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your goals and objectives. (See Goodwin book, *Land Use Development Controls and Incentives*, pp. 78-83).

Note: Sample goals, objectives and strategies are located in the Resources section of this document.

The Implementation Plan

Outlining a plan of action prior to initiating redevelopment efforts will be critical to your community's success. Redevelopment does not happen overnight. After spending the better part of a year developing your community's vision, it is very easy for a community to lose momentum and focus as enthusiasm and support efforts tend to languish or disappear. Therefore, it is critically important for a community to prioritize both long- and short-term goals and to include large-scale and small-scale and community-driven goals for the revitalization process in order to avoid such lapses.

- 1. Short-Term Goals** ~ Short-term goals provide for small, measured successes that give the community a sense of accomplishment. Make decisions on what your short-term goals are. Determine what steps or priority actions can be achieved within a relatively short period of time to represent small 'wins' for your community. These will allow your community to see the progress that Waterfronts Florida is making and give everyone involved incentive to keep moving forward.
- 2. Long-Term Goals** ~ Long-term goals keep a community from getting off-track in the long run. Determine what you want your waterfront area to be like five years from now, then ten years, fifteen, and so on. Then prioritize which goals will be

implemented within this longer time frame based on funding, resources, time, and partnerships.

- 3. Community-Oriented Goals** ~ Just as vision plans should have a diversity of long, mid, and short range goals, each plan should also have a mixture of community-oriented government oriented goals. Community-oriented goals usually describe projects or programs that can be implemented by volunteers independent of government support. Not every goal will neatly fall within one of these two categories as most projects will likely require collaboration between government and citizens. However, the vision plan should not exclusively contain policy recommendations or capital improvement projects that require government support to implement.

Once you summarize your short- and long-term and community-driven goals, you must provide the following information:

- Name the person responsible for taking the lead in the project.
- Name the partners who will assist in the project's implementation.
- State the funding sources available or to be sought to pay for implementation of the project.
- Formulate a timeline when each project should be completed.
- Write an evaluation plan that will enable you to measure whether or not you have successfully met each action step. In other words, what indicators would you use to track these revitalization efforts?

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Choose a format to present this information which will most benefit your community. An example spreadsheet has been provided below; however, it is not able to capture all of the information and some summary paragraphs would be necessary to answer the questions posed above.



Apalachicola Pier, 1977. Source: State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/242367>

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Sample Implementation Plan:

WATERFRONTS FLORIDA PRIORITY ISSUE AREA: NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION									
Strategy 1: Reduce direct discharge of storm water into waterways							Priority/Timeline		
Action	Lead Role	Potential Partners	Possible Funding Sources	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
1.1: Connect existing storm water system to existing retention and detention ponds at the Bagdad Mill Site Park when available.	Santa Rosa County	Natural and Environmental Resource Protection subcommittee, Blackwater River Foundation, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection	Santa Rosa County Grant Funding		X	X			
1.2: Use native vegetation or a natural filter, such as bald cypress trees in retention and detention ponds at Mill Site Park and elsewhere in village.						X			
1.3: Create a plan for storm water management for the village.						X	→	X	

“The fruits of a tree are bitter – or do not develop at all – if there are serious problems at the roots.”

~Anonymous

Visual Representations

Visual representations are an excellent way to bring your goals to life and can offer more to your vision than just plain text. Document your waterfront area, as well as the people involved in the public visioning process, and include them in your vision document.

Four general types of graphics (taken from *A Guide to Community Visioning*, Oregon Visions Project, 1993):

- **Data graphics:** display or translate statistics (graphs, tables, pie charts, etc.).
- **Maps:** present land form information (jurisdictional, land use, site maps, etc.).
- **Planning and Architectural Graphics:** provide 2D/3D perspectives on future environments (design features or development concept graphics).
- **General Illustrations:** general illustrations of present and/or future community elements (artist’s concepts, sketches, photographs, etc.).

The Appendix

The Visioning Process

Outline how your written vision came to fruition by describing the advance preparations made, the process used to develop the plan, who was involved, the number of meetings, and the overall results of the process.

Advance Preparations:

- How was the public visioning process advertised or promoted?
-

Community Visioning Meetings:

- Who was involved?
- Outline meeting dates and attendance numbers
- What visioning process and/or techniques were used?

Results:

- What were the overall outcomes of the meeting(s)?

Lessons Learned:

- What were the major lessons learned to improve planning the next time around?

(See Guiding the Way to Waterfront Revitalization: Best Management Practices, pp 16-22).

Bylaws

If already adopted, include a copy of your partnership’s bylaws as approved by the county/city for the purpose of regulating activities

Community Events

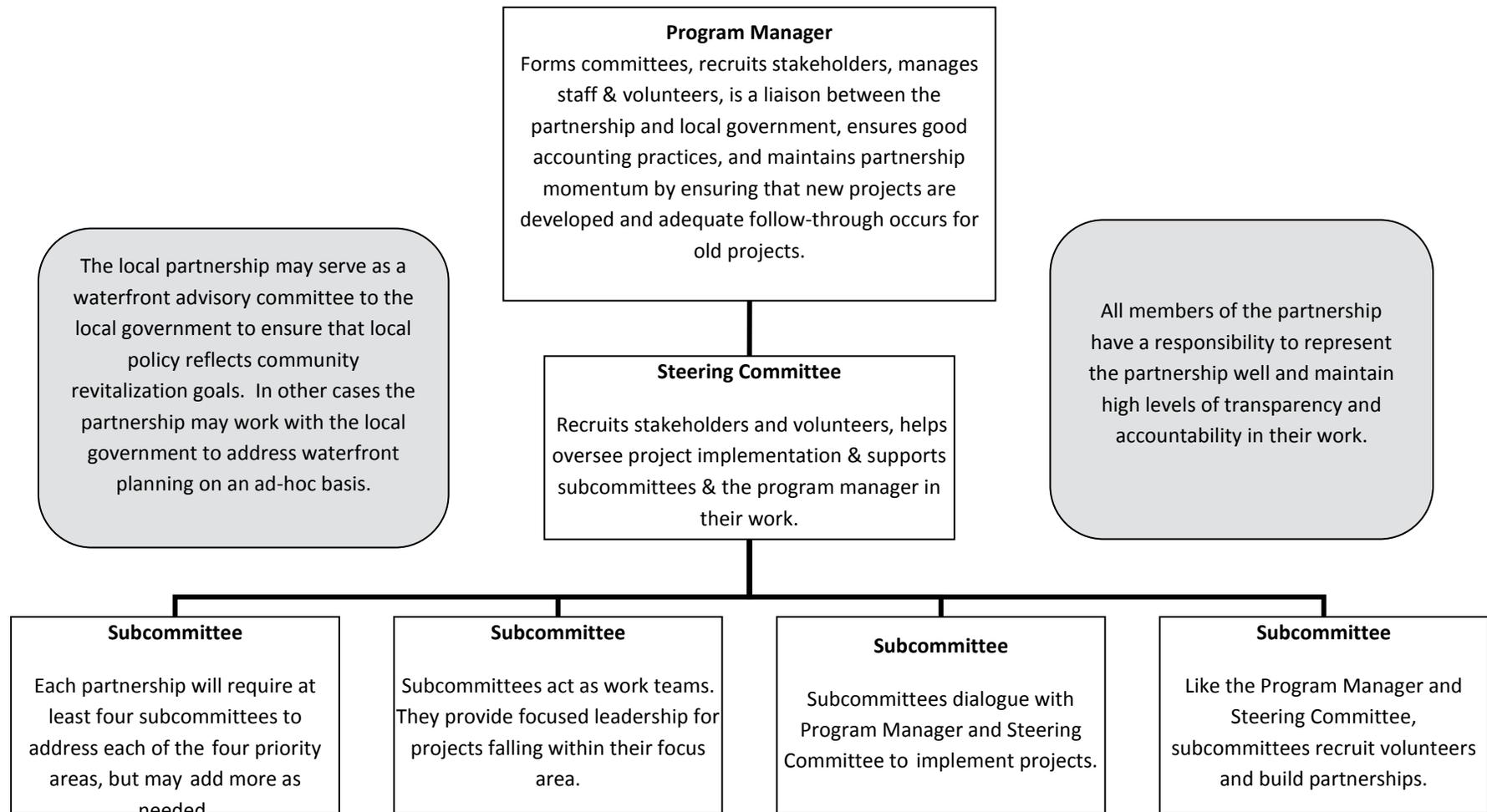
Make a list of any events, festivities or celebrations that your community currently hosts that make it unique, as well as any newly planned events that are a result of the visioning process.

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~Anonymous

Waterfronts Steering Committee Organizational Chart

Include an organizational chart of your Waterfronts Florida steering committee. If subcommittees have been formed, you may want to include this organizational structure as well. Typically partnerships are structured in the following manner:



“Create plans that are used...preferably not as dust collectors.”

~Anonymous

Resources

Sample Goals, Objectives & Strategies:

Goal: Create an organizational structure that will implement the Waterfronts Florida Vision.

Objective 1: Ensure there is a strong volunteer network to provide support to the partnership.

Strategy 1.1: Conduct volunteer recruitment meetings throughout the community to increase the number of volunteers.

Strategy 1.2: Partner with other local organizations to pool volunteers.

Objective 2: Create partnerships with local government officials and agencies to support projects outlined in the vision.

Strategy 2.1: Invite and encourage staff of local government agencies to attend monthly partnership meetings.

Strategy 2.2: Visit local government offices to personally distribute the Waterfronts Florida Vision and discuss its goals and objectives.

Graduate Waterfronts Florida Community Vision Plans on the Web:

Each Waterfronts Florida Program Vision Plan is available on the Waterfronts Florida Program Designated Community Web Pages. The directory of Designated Community can be found here: <http://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/programs/comprehensive-planning/planning-initiatives-and-programs/waterfronts-florida-program>

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The Waterfronts Florida Library:

There a number of resources in a variety of formats available to support your local visioning effort. First and foremost, communities seeking to prepare Waterfronts Florida Vision Plans are encouraged to consult Waterfronts Florida Program staff for hands-on advice and idea-sharing. Other resources include:

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) guide to working with stakeholders- available here although additional NOAA materials on this topic are available from Waterfronts Staff on request: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/stakeholder/>
- The National Park Services’ (NPS) guide to visioning exercises - available here: http://www.nps.gov/nero/rtcatoobox/index_comtoolbox.htm