



**CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023 - 3:30 PM
ALCAZAR ROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

◆ Roll Call

2. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

3. LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM PRESENTATION

3.A.

- Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager
- William (J.B.) Miller, Land Management Coordinator
- Todd Grant, Public Works Director

4. ADJOURN

NOTICES: In accordance with Florida Statute 286.0105: "if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based." ***In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the individual or agency sending notice not later than seven days prior to the proceeding at the address given on the notice. Telephone 904-825-1007; 1-800-955-8771 (TDB) or 1-800-955-8770 (V) via Florida Relay Services. ***The City of St. Augustine encourages anyone wishing to present the invocation at city commission meetings to contact the City Clerk's office, to be placed on the rotation list, and encourages people of all religious affiliations or of no religious affiliation to present a non-denominational invocation to inspire us in the work of the City Commission. The materials prepared and presented are part of the City's ongoing Florida Public Records and Government in the Sunshine compliance and are not intended to be relied upon or to reach investors or the trading markets.

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Birchim, AICP
City Manager

DATE: November 1, 2023

RE: Land Conservation Program Presentation

Please find attached the Land Conservation Program Presentation for the Special City Commission Meeting on November 13, 2023, at 3:30pm. Per the request of the City Commission, staff have researched surrounding land conservation programs and provided a proposed mission statement and goals to consider for the City's program. Staff are also prepared to discuss the proposed programs process for selecting, acquiring, and managing properties.

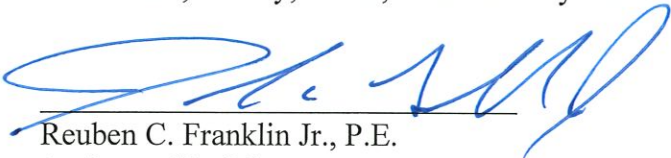
The proposed mission statement is:

To acquire, improve, and manage environmentally sensitive lands that protect water resources, wildlife habitats and natural areas which improve the community's health and resiliency.

The proposed goals are:

- To be accountable to the taxpayers and to treat partners, landowners, and sellers with respect.
- Protect and preserve the City's natural resources, including water quality.
- Bolster resiliency and reduce losses and impacts from floods by preserving floodplains and vulnerable areas.
- Conserve, maintain and restore the natural environment to facilitate adaptation to climate change, including sea level rise.
- To provide community-based parks and open space throughout the city.
- Preserve archaeological & historical resources, including cultural landscapes.
- Preserve & maintain scenic landscapes.
- To encourage a community land ethic.

The above mission statement and goals are intended as a starting point for the City Commission to consider, modify, delete, or add as they choose. Please let me know if you have any questions.



Reuben C. Franklin Jr., P.E.
Assistant City Manager

cc: City Attorney & Department Heads



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City of St. Augustine

Land Conservation Program Presentation

City Commission

3:30pm

November 13, 2023



Agenda

- Introduction & Background
- Example Goals of Existing Land Conservation Programs
- Proposed Mission Statement & Goals for the City's Program
- Proposed Process – from Selection to Acquisition to Management
- Funding, Website, Communications, O&M
- Next Steps



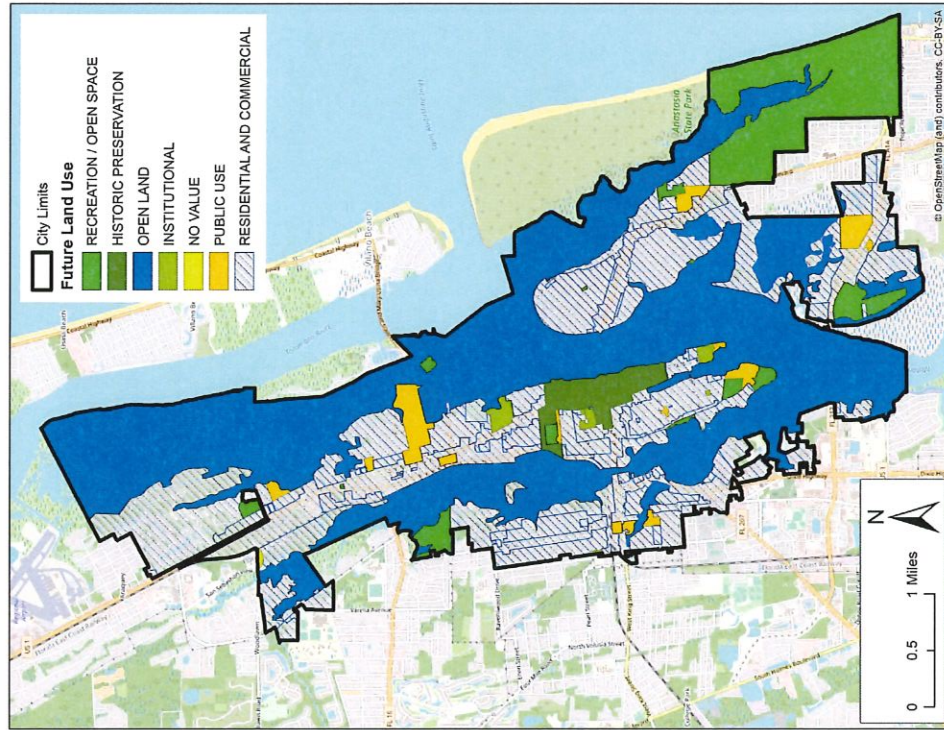
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Comp Plan 2040 – Conservation and Coastal Management Element

Comp Plan 2040 Excerpts - Environmentally Sensitive Areas

CCM Objective 1.7 The City shall conserve, protect and appropriately use native wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas.

CCM Policy 1.7.1 The City shall seek to increase its conservation areas, through land acquisition, when possible, and incentives for protective easements, and other appropriate permanent protective mechanisms to ensure the preservation of natural communities and listed animal species habitat.





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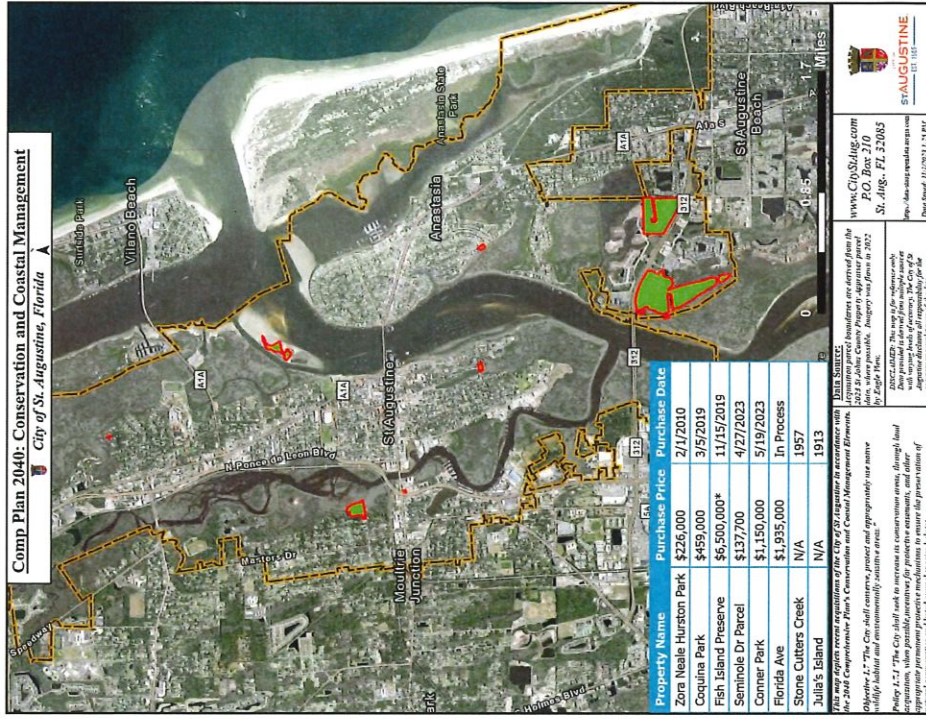
Recent Property Acquisitions & Conservation Efforts

Property	Address	Area (acres)	Purchase Price	Purchase Date	Notes
Zora Neale Hurston Park	101 S. Ponce de Leon Blvd	0.36	\$226,000	2/1/2010	Open Land, Recreation
Coquina Park	91-93 Coquina Ave	0.63	\$459,000	3/5/2019	Open Land, Recreation, Flood Mitigation
Fish Island Preserve	N/A	59	\$6,500,000*	11/15/2019	Stated Owned, City Managed
Seminole Dr	N/A	0.18	\$137,700	4/27/2023	Conservation, Stormwater Management
Conner Park	5 South St	0.79	\$1,150,000	5/19/2023	Open Land, Recreation, Flood Mitigation
Florida Ave	N/A	6.57	\$1,935,000	N/A	In Process to Purchase, Conservation, Stormwater Management, Flood Mit.
Stone Cutters Creek	865 Fish Island Rd	31	N/A	1957	Draft Management Plan, Inquiring about Conservation Easements
Julia's Island	N/A	5	N/A	1913	Draft Management Plan

*State purchased land

Total land purchased by the City will be 8.53 acres for \$3,907,700

Comp Plan 2040: Conservation and Coastal Management
City of St. Augustine, Florida





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Example Goals of Existing Land Conservation Programs

St. Johns County LAMP

- Preserve/Conserve and Maintain Environmentally Sensitive Lands
- Create Greenways, Blueways and Connecting Corridors
- Protect Water Quality
- Preserve Historic, Archaeological, Scenic and Cultural Resources
- Increase Recreational Sites

Alachua County Forever

- To be accountable to the taxpayers
- To acquire the most environmentally significant habitats
- To use a “No Loss of Conservation Values” stewardship ethic
- To treat partners, landowners and sellers with respect
- To leverage the County’s local investment
- To encourage a community land ethic

Volusia Forever

- Conserve, maintain and restore the natural environment and provide access for the enjoyment and education of the public
- Provide resources to ensure that sufficient quantities of water are available to meet current and future needs
- Meet the need for high-quality resource based outdoor opportunities, greenways, trails and open space
- Preserve the habitat and water recharge
- Ensure that the natural resource values of such lands are protected and that the public has the opportunity to enjoy the lands to their fullest potential

Nassau County CLAM

- Water Issues
 - Quality, Flooding, Storm Surge, Sea Level Rise Adaptation
- Species and Habitat Protection
- Outdoor Recreation and Quality of Life
- Working Lands
- Value for Money



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Proposed Mission Statement & Goals

Proposed Mission Statement

To acquire, improve, and manage environmentally sensitive lands that protect water resources, wildlife habitats and natural areas which improve the community's health and resiliency.

Proposed Goals

- To be accountable to the taxpayers and to treat partners, landowners and sellers with respect.
- Protect and preserve the City's natural resources, including water quality.
- Bolster resiliency and reduce losses and impacts from floods by preserving floodplains and vulnerable areas.
- Conserve, maintain and restore the natural environment to facilitate adaptation to climate change, including sea level rise.
- To provide community-based parks and open space throughout the City.
- Preserve archaeological & historical resources, including cultural landscapes.
- Preserve & maintain scenic landscapes.
- To encourage a community land ethic.

Salt Marsh at Fish Island Preserve

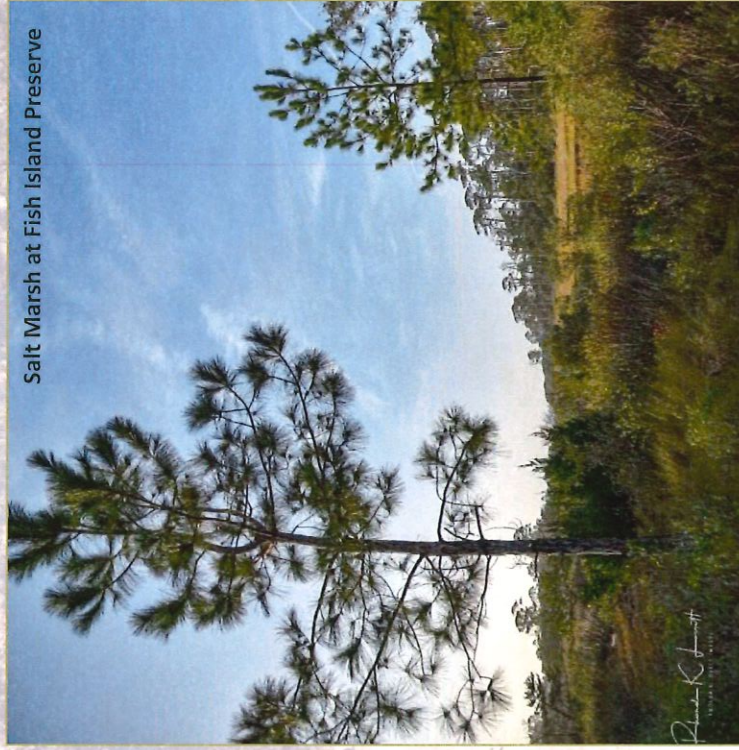


Photo Credit: Rhonda Lovett



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The Process

Sec. 2-2. - Real estate acquisition procedures.

The following procedures are hereby adopted for the purchase of real property by the City of St. Augustine, whether for fee simple or other property rights in the subject real property, such as, but not limited to, easements:

- (1) Purchase price not to exceed seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000.00): Staff analysis of need for the property, negotiated agreement with seller, approval by the city manager.
- (2) Purchase price over seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000.00) but not more than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00): Evidence of valuation, staff analysis of need for the property, negotiated agreement with seller, approval by the city commission.
- (3) Purchase price of over two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00): Minimum of one (1) appraisal, negotiated agreement with seller, approval by the city commission.
- (4) Paramount public purpose or essential government need real estate purchase: Evidence of valuation, justification by city manager of paramount public purpose or essentiality needs of the city for the particular purchase, negotiated agreement with seller, findings and approval by the city commission. This category of real estate purchase may be approved by the city commission due to an identified essential need for the purchase even if the purchase price exceeds the evidence of valuation.

(Ord. No. 21-11, § 1, 6-14-21)



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- Develop selection matrix.
- Develop appraisal process.
 - Use state-approved appraisers and survey criteria?
- Who will negotiate purchase?
- Is an environmental audit needed (Phase I)?
- Who will do closing?
- Preliminary (conceptual) management plan.
- If city isn't going to own and/or manage the property.

The Process

Example

ST JOHNS COUNTY LAMP BOARD PROPERTY			
Owner:	Parcel ID:		
Location:	*Type of Property:		
	*(Vacant, Forested, Use description, etc.)		
Goals	Acquisition Criteria	Rank 0-5	
Environmental	Preserves ecological diversity and habitat	0 Poor	
	Provides habitat for listed species	1-3 Fair - Average	
	Restores degraded lands and opportunity for restoration	4-5 Very Good - Excellent	
	Preserves open or green space (property is not developed)		
	Establishes a connection to corridors, provides connection to adjacent conservation lands		
Recreation	Preserves hydrologic resources		
	Provides outdoor resource-based recreation, considering diversity and community need		
	Expands existing resource-based properties		
Cultural	Provides access to land or water-based trails		
	Preserves archaeological sites or historic structures		
Education	Promotes environmental or cultural resource education		
Infrastructure	Existing and proposed access and improvement cost (scored higher for low cost)		
	Protects property from sea level rise, including adj properties		
	Purchase cost per acre (scored high for lower cost)		
Acquisition	Suitability for grant funding		
	Listed on State or Federal agency acquisition priority list		
	Public Support		
	Likelihood of development proposed		
Maintenance	Long Term operational costs (scored high for lower cost)		
	Restoration cost, suitability to restore or not (scored high for lower cost)		
	Exceptional quality or uniqueness		
Bonus			
Total Property Score		0	
Recommendation:			



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The Process

Example

Clay County Land Conservation Program Property Decision Matrix					
Project Name - Property - Date					
CATEGORY	Criterion	WEIGHTING	Enter Criteria Value Based on Site Inspection	Average Score	Average Criteria Score Multiplied by Relative Importance
(I-1) PROTECTION OF DRINKING WATER RESOURCES	A. Whether the property has geologic/hydrologic conditions that would easily enable the installation of a well to provide adequate quantities of water for drinking water purposes.		5		
	B. Whether the property is in the watershed area for a community drinking water well or more than 5 individual private drinking water wells.		5		
	C. Whether the property has documented federal or state listed species.		5		
(I-2) PROTECTION OF THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES	A. Whether the property contains plants or animals that are endemic or near endemic to Florida or Clay County.		5		
	B. Whether the property serves as a special wildlife migration or aggregation site for activities such as bird watching, hunting, or fishing.		5		
	C. Whether the property contains a diversity of natural communities.		5		
(I-3) PROTECTION OF RARE AND IMPORTANT HABITATS	A. Whether the natural communities present on the property are rare.		5		
	B. Whether the ecological quality in the communities present on the property is high.		5		
	C. Whether the property is adjacent to properties that are in a predominantly natural condition, or are in public conservation ownership, have other environmental protections such as conservation easements.		5		
(I-4) PROTECTION OF FARMS AND WORKING FORESTS	A. Whether the property is relatively free from internal fragmentation from roads, power lines, and other features that create barriers and edge effects.		5		
	B. Whether the property is in active agricultural use and follows Best Management Practices.		5		
	C. Whether the property is used for more than one agricultural product.		5		
(I-5) SOCIAL AND HUMAN VALUES	A. Whether the property has been in agricultural use for generations.		5		
	B. Whether the agricultural products from the property are sold locally.		5		
	C. Whether the property owner actively uses the property to support agri-tourism, agriculture education or other community-based activities.		5		
(I-6) SOCIAL AND HUMAN VALUES	A. Whether the property has high quality soils for timberland.		5		
	B. Whether the property offers opportunities for compatible resource-based recreation, if appropriate.		5		
	C. Whether the property contributes to urban green space, provides a municipal defining greenbelt, provides scenic vistas, or has other value from an urban and regional planning perspective.		5		
AVERAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN VALUES			5	5.00	6.67
RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE		1.333			
(II-1) MANAGEMENT ISSUES	A. Whether the property has a low incidence of non-native invasive species.		5		
	B. Whether it will be practical to manage the property to protect its environmental, social and other values (examples include controlled burning, exotic removal, maintaining hydro-period, and so on).		5		
	C. Whether this management can be completed in a cost-effective manner.		5		
(II-2) ACQUISITION ISSUES	A. Whether there is potential for purchasing the property with matching funds from municipal, state, federal, or private contributions.		5		
	B. Whether the overall Conservation Values justify the potential cost of acquisition.		5		
	C. Whether there is imminent threat of losing the Conservation Values of the property through other means such as eminent domain, expropriation, or other legal means.		5		
AVERAGE FOR ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT VALUES			5	5.00	3.33
RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE		0.667			
TOTAL SCORE					10.00

- Develop selection matrix.
- Develop appraisal process.
 - Use state-approved appraisers and survey criteria?
- Who will negotiate purchase?
- Is an environmental audit needed (Phase I)?
- Who will do closing?
- Preliminary (conceptual) management plan.
- If city isn't going to own and/or manage the property.



Funding, Website and O&M

Funding Opportunities

- City General Fund
- Bond
 - Group approved properties together for one large purchase
- Grants (State, Federal, Legislative)
- Tax?

O&M

- Program housed in administration?
- Staffing
 - Manager?
 - Grounds crew to maintain?
 - Contract maintenance?
- Minimal infrastructure

Communications

- Solicit applications via social media, News & Notes
- Post about opportunities for community engagement (i.e. cleanup events)

Website

- Application/Nomination Form
- Annual Priority Acquisition Properties
- List and map of properties acquired
- Each acquired property has its own page that includes a boundary map, a description of why it was acquired (benefit to the city), cost and conceptual management plan



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Next Steps....

Q & A

Digital References: State Archives of Florida



Figure 1-4.7: The City shall seek to increase its conservation status, through land acquisition, permanent protective mechanisms, to ensure the preservation of the park area.





City Properties





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City Properties





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City Properties

