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# 1. Introduction

*The Community Vision*

## Section 1.1 WB CCB Overview/Context

The approximate 5,266 acre land area in Eastern Nassau County known as the William Burgess District (WBD) finds itself at a crossroads. One path continues the current low-density, suburban scale development pattern that has been prevalent across Northeast Florida and Nassau County since World War II. This path encourages a pattern of development that is not fiscally or environmentally sustainable and is based on the separation of land uses, dependency on the single occupant automobile, and is void of historic context and an authentic sense of place. The other path embraces the organic development patterns by which cities, towns and communities formed prior to contemporary influences. This path seeks to leverage the unique characteristics and history of Yulee/Harts Station/Nassau County, places a priority on civic and communal life, and encourages a pattern of development that is people-centric, fiscally sustainable and environmentally responsible. **No matter which path is chosen there is one certainty, the choice will have a generational impact on Nassau County, its civic institutions, communal life, and fiscal and environmental viability.**

The William Burgess Context + Connectivity Blueprint (WB CCB) represents a philosophical shift in land-use planning for the citizens of Nassau County. **A shift necessitated not by political actors or outside influences but rather by a citizen-lead and crafted vision for their community - the Vision 2032 Plan.** The Vision 2032 Plan is a shared vision that requires quality-of-life for current and future citizens of Nassau County be central to all public policy and directs the crafting of people-centric live, work, play, and stay communities with strong social centers from which a sense of place can be strengthened.



Figure 1.1 William Burgess District Boundary

community feedback is found in Appendix A of this plan.

With that said, creating vibrant and engaging people-centric places that are both fiscally and environmentally sustainable requires the collective vision of all community members. The collective vision of the WBD is captured in the WB CCB, a 24-month planning initiative which has taken a holistic view of the land areas served by William Burgess Boulevard. Initial efforts centered around a critical area of approximately 500 acres situated near the intersection of William Burgess Blvd., US Hwy 17, generally, and a CSX rail-line. Over the past ten (10) months, focus has expanded to include the approximately 5,266 acre land area defined by SR200/A1A to the north, the Nassau River to the south, US Hwy 17 to the east and I-95 to the west. See Figure 1.1 (left) for a more definitive boundary.

As part of the planning process over the last ten (10) months, Nassau County engaged property owners, local and state agencies, local officials, community groups, members of the development community, and the general public. In addition to numerous one-on-one meetings with various affected parties, partners and agencies, Nassau County hosted three community meetings, twelve publicly noticed workshops and four noticed public hearings. The feedback received during the public engagement process yielded invaluable information utilized in the formation of the WB CCB. Additional information related to

## Section 1.2 WB CCB Structure

The WB CCB is broken into five chapters:

1. Introduction: *The Community Vision*
2. Why Plan: *A Holistic Approach to Quality of Life*
3. What to Plan: *Considering Tomorrow*
4. How to Plan: *Implementing a Collective Vision*
5. Appendices: *Data and Analysis*

### 1. Why Plan: *The Community Vision*

This chapter of the WB CCB provides an overview of the WB CCB. It describes the purpose and intent of the WBD, applicability, and the planning process behind the plan to ensure we implement the community's vision.

### 2. Why Plan: *A Holistic Approach to Quality of Life*

Chapter 2 of the WB CCB provides a synopsis of growth in Nassau County, trends in development, how those trends could impact the development of lands within the WBD, and how those impacts can be mitigated. In some cases, the mitigation could be repositioned to implement the community vision as defined in the Vision 2032 Plan and 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

### 3. What to Plan: *Considering Tomorrow*

Based on the Vision 2032 Plan, 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and citizen feedback received as part of the WB CCB initiative, Chapter 3, analyzes adopted levels of service and other components necessary to create a vibrant and sustainable community that implements the adopted community vision - the Vision 2032 Plan.

### 4. How to Plan: *Implementing a Collective Vision*

Nassau County is charged with implementing the Vision 2032 Plan. Chapter 4 of the WB CCB is the regulatory policy necessary to serve that purpose. The policy is implemented through the creation of an overlay district adopted in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and through this document, the WB CCB.

The overlay defines overarching requirements related to the provision of civic facilities and public infrastructure, integration of land-uses, historic context, creation of an authentic sense of place, and other characteristics necessary to promote social interaction - a people-centric live, work, play, and stay community.

### 5. Appendices: *Data and Analysis*

In executing a planning initiative the scale of the WB CCB, significant data and analysis is necessary to create public policy that will be effective and defensible. In addition, there are supplemental design and performance standards of technical nature which are necessary to implement the WB CCB. The level of detail and analysis results in documents that are of significant size and/or contain technical details that clutter the primary text of the document, and make use-ability difficult. As such, the WB CCB includes seventeen appendices that are hereby adopted by reference and shall be utilized to support, supplement, and implement the WB CCB as amended from time to time.

## Section 1.3 Purpose and Intent

### 1.3.1 Purpose

It is the purpose of Nassau County to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Nassau County by proactively planning the William Burgess District (WBD). It is the purpose of Nassau County to guide development in the WBD based on the citizen-created and adopted Vision 2032 Plan. The guiding principles of the WBD are defined in this William Burgess Context and Connectivity Blueprint (WB CCB). The purpose of the WB CCB is to prepare for the future with a focus on high quality-of-life and preservation of the unique character of the community. The purpose is to facilitate community formation through a built environment that is people-centric, socially responsible, fiscally and environmentally sustainable, and ensures the civic facilities and public infrastructure necessary to support new development are provided at the same time as new development is undertaken. Further, the purpose of the WB CCB is to ensure, to the extent possible, the burden to provide civic facilities and public infrastructure to support new development is not placed on existing residents.

Policy FL.02.05, the William Burgess Mixed-use Activity Center Overlay District is implemented through the WB CCB. The land area associated with the WB CCB and WBD is the same land area defined in Comprehensive Plan Policy FL.02.05 as the William Burgess Mixed-use Activity Center Overlay District, shown as FLUMS-10.

### 1.3.2 Intent

It is the intent of Nassau County to take a proactive approach to community planning and establish a regulatory framework that will control and direct new development and redevelopment within the WBD. It is the intent of Nassau County that the regulations defined in the WB CCB will be the instrument directing all development within the WBD. More specifically, it is the intent of Nassau County that the regulatory framework defined in the WB CCB will, at a minimum:

1. Implement the Vision 2032 Plan and 2030 Comprehensive Plan;
2. Ensure the civic facilities and public infrastructure necessary to support new development is provided along with new development and is not solely the burden of existing residents/tax payers;
3. Prevent property owners and development entities from subverting the requirement to provide lands for parks, public schools, road rights of ways and other critical civic facilities and public infrastructure by incrementally entitling and developing lands;
4. Proactively address floodplain management and resiliency;
5. Promote growth that is fiscally and environmentally sustainable;
6. Protect natural ecological systems and functions;
7. Restrict development in environmentally sensitive areas of the WBD while encouraging development in other areas. In the areas where development is to be encouraged, minimum intensity and density standards are to be defined and shall be enforced to activate village centers and promote alternative modes of transportation;
8. Direct residential development away from the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) consistent with the 2030 Comprehensive Plan;
9. Beyond water dependent uses, limit public investment within the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA);
10. Result in a compact, walkable development pattern. The characteristics of a compact, walkable development pattern are:
  - the integration of different land-uses arranged at a human-scale and in a walkable pattern, preferably in the form of mixed-use structures;
  - complete communities offering live, work, play, and stay opportunities;
  - the ability to access retail, service, employment and entertainment options without dependency on the single occupant automobile;
  - the implementation of healthy community principles;
  - the integration of a variety of housing types to meet needs of a range of incomes; and
  - the creation of socially engaging communities with a sense of place derived from historic context.
11. Result in interconnected developments regardless of ownership. This includes but is not limited to ,interconnected street networks, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, private and public parks, open space, social spaces, architectural style, ecological systems, etc;
12. Create an authentic sense of place derived from the historic context of the area and requiring implementation



- through design, form/pattern, and architectural standards;
- 13. Define development, design, form/pattern, and architectural standards including intensity and density minimums and maximums;
- 14. Define street types and minimum cross-section standards; and
- 15. Define a unified lighting and signage program.

## Section 1.4 Applicability

### 1.4.1 *Applicability*

The William Burgess Context and Connectivity Blueprint (WB CCB) is the Nassau County adopted public policy which implements Policy FL.02.05, the William Burgess Mixed-use Activity Center Overlay District. The provisions defined in the WB CCB are applicable to all lands within the boundary of the William Burgess Mixed-use Activity Center Overlay District as defined in Comprehensive Plan Policy FL.02.05. The use of the terms ‘William Burgess District (WBD)’, ‘the District’, ‘the Overlay’, shall have the same meaning as the William Burgess Mixed-use Activity Center Overlay District. Further the terms, “this document”, “this plan”, “this code”, “these regulations” or the “WBD design guidelines” throughout this document have the same meaning as the William Burgess Context and Connectivity Blueprint. The boundary of the WBD is shown graphically in Figure 1.1 William Burgess District Boundary, on Page 2.

Chapter 4 of the WB CBB provides for a more narrowed statement of applicability governing individual site design standards, architectural standards, and other regulatory controls.

## Section 1.5 Planning Process & Public Engagement

### 1.5.1 Introduction

Public engagement is the key to creating a policy which implements the community's vision. In addition to the public engagement conducted during the drafting of the 2032 Vision Plan and adoption of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the planning process for the WB CCB included, three community meetings, twelve publicly noticed workshops, four noticed public hearings, community surveys, and countless one-on-one meetings/conversations with individual property owners, industry groups and development entities with stake in the WBD. In addition to the citizen engagement conducted, County staff engaged the North East Florida Regional Council, St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Health, Nassau County School Board, Florida State College at Jacksonville Board of Trustees, Nassau County Economic Development Board Executive Director and others during the creation of the WB CCB.

### 1.5.2 Public Input and the Plan Development Process

Nassau County PEO staff held two open house events prior to the creation of this document. To invite the public to these meetings, PEO staff direct mailed 847 flyers to property owners within the WBD boundary, handed out flyers at Western Nassau Heritage Preservation outreach events, posted event information on the County website and Facebook page, posted flyers at county offices and Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) in Yulee, sent out emails to interested parties and stakeholders, and mentioned the meetings at televised BOCC public meetings. After a working draft of the WB CCB was created, PEO staff hosted an additional open house using the same advertising techniques.

In addition to using the Vision 2032 Plan as a basis for this plan, PEO staff created questionnaire-based surveys to solicit feedback from the community. Overall, 1,639 individual data points were collected from the questionnaire-based surveys. The survey results are detailed in Appendix A. The surveys were structured to determine what residents/property owners wanted the future of the community be as it related to six categories: live, work, play, archaeology and history, natural features and ecology, and visual preferences. A brief synopsis of the results are listed below:

*The Nassau County Department of Planning and Economic Opportunity offered a variety of ways for the public to stay informed and participate directly during the development of this plan.*

*These included:*

- Open Houses
- Planning and Zoning Board Workshops
- County webpage dedicated to the William Burgess District
- Board of County Commissioners Meetings
- Inter-agency meetings
- One-on-one meetings with property owners and stakeholders in the William Burgess District

1. Live - It important for residents to have close healthcare options and elderly care for families, community-based social events and groups, close proximity to parks, recreation, grocery stores, retail, and restaurants - preferably within walking or biking distance, and access to public water and sewer.
2. Work - Residents want opportunities to find a high paying wages in Nassau County, to attract high wage employers, and have more employment opportunities . They wanted their jobs close enough to walk or bike to.
3. Play - Results show that residents want opportunities to recreate close to home, whether it be private or public recreation facilities. They also want opportunities to access entertainment centers and experience cultural arts. Access to the Nassau River and its tributaries was a top priority.
4. Natural Features & Ecology - Residents strongly support directing growth to suitable areas while leaving ecologically sensitive zones natural, preserving wetlands, protecting streams, marshes, aquifers, and forests. They want to have access to public waterways, state forests, and use these resources to promote Eco-tourism. Floodplain management was a common theme heard by both long-time residents and new residents.
5. History & Archaeology - Residents want to preserve the heritage and history of the area. They want to preserve sites and buildings of historic significance, and have access to museums and cultural resources.
6. Based on the results of the visual preference survey, residents support more mixed-use, traditional design at a human scale. The survey showed a priority on bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and open spaces/parks for recreation and access to the river.

The WB CCB took into account the results of the survey, public engagement feedback, the Vision 2032 Plan, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and community planning best practices when drafting this document.

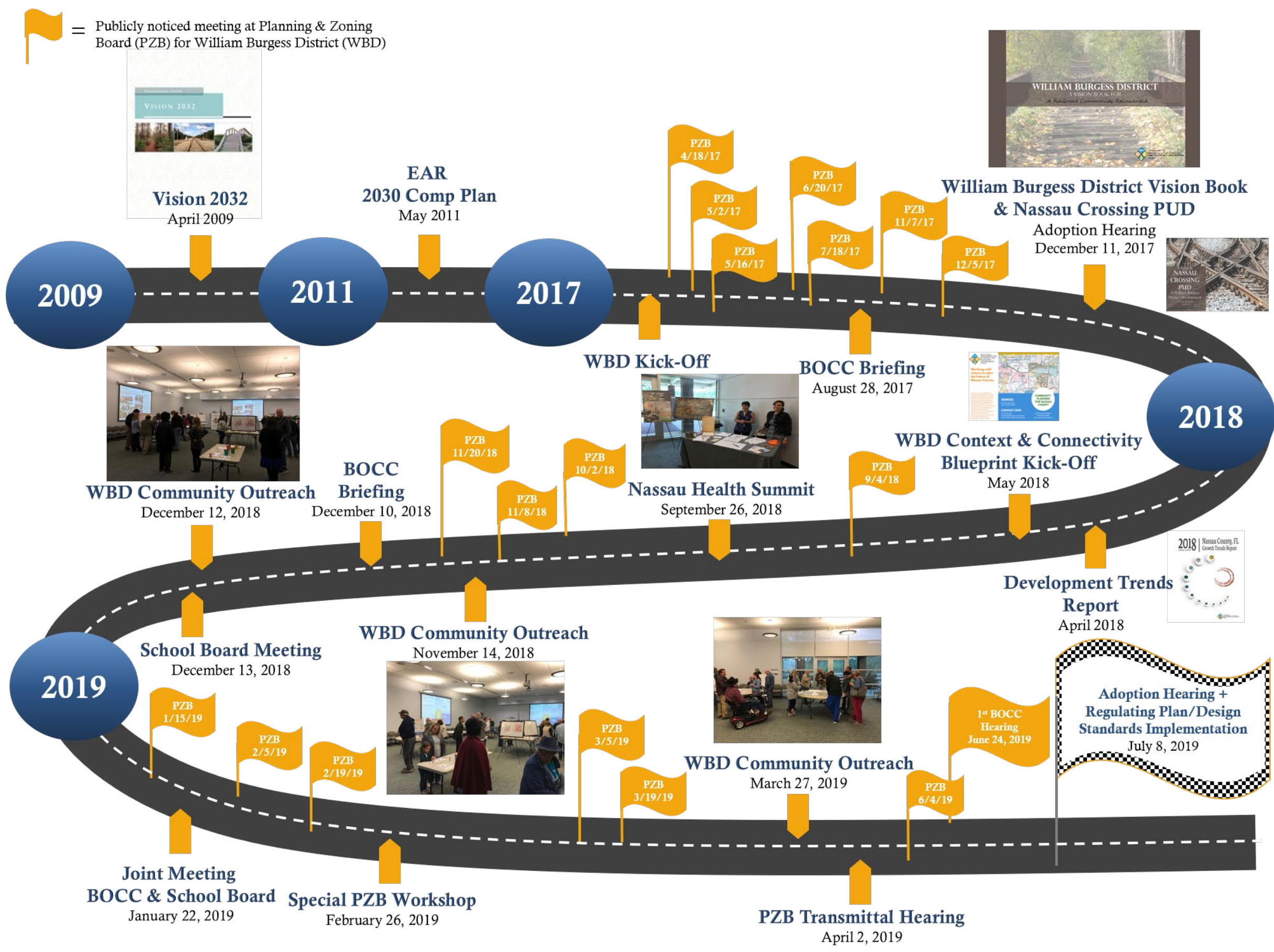


Figure 1.2 The William Burgess District Road Map to Adoption  
This figure maps out the adoption process for the William Burgess District. This plan will implement key components of the Vision 2032 Plan and the EAR 2030 Comprehensive plan.

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