

**Tri-County Community Partnership Initiative Advisory Board Meeting
Northwest Florida State College, Student Services Building**

December 05, 2023

Nathan Sparks, One Okaloosa EDC Executive Director and John Schuliger, TCPI facilitator provided opening comments. Advisory Board members and guests were welcomed.

The mission of the Advisory Board and meeting agenda were overviewed.

Program Updates

Association of Defense Communities

- The Association of Defense Communities, ADC, hosted its tenth Installation Innovation Forum in Orlando November 6-8. Kay Rasmussen, Dale Marks and Dana McIntyre attended.
- The focus tracks included; 1) Building resilient installations and communities, 2) Implementing new technologies, 3) Improving installation-community partnerships, 4) leveraging state and federal programs, and 5) supporting military family quality of life.
- Concurrent breakout sessions included housing, childcare, spouse licensing, IGSA/EUL, gaming/virtual reality.
- Two major discussions included the Air Force installations' requirement for all on-base vehicles to be EV by 2025; and the threat of foreign investment near military installations.
- The need to continue to decrease operating costs without compromising mission was stressed.
- Mission realignments authorized by Title 10 will continue to take place outside of a BRAC round.

Okaloosa County Reclaimed Water Pipeline

- Mark Wise, Deputy Director Okaloosa County Water and Sewer presented and overviewed slides. The idea of the new pipeline was a result of a TCPI workgroup ten years ago and began with the Arbennie Pritchett Water facility. The project required three partners and an MOU was engaged between Okaloosa County Water & Sewer, the City of Niceville, and the 96th Test Wing.
- A recent ribbon cutting celebrated the 11.6 mile reclaimed water pipeline.
- OCWS is working with the City of Niceville to extend the reclaimed water main another 3-4 miles down the Mid Bay Connector Road.
- Additionally, OCWS is in the infancy stages of another potential pipeline partnership with the City of Niceville and Eglin AFB. The project would consist of an 11-mile water supply pipeline that could feed additional drinking water to the City, Bluewater Bay, and Eglin parcels from our 30" water transmission main that comes from OCWS wells in Crestview. A conceptual map was shared. No engineering work has even begun, and the project is not funded. The concept has to be proofed out.

AFSOC/CC Traffic Roundtable

- Steve Loken, 1 SOCES Deputy Base Civil Engineer reported. Lt. General Bauernfeind hosted a traffic roundtable at Hurlburt Field in September. The traffic congestion to the west of Hurlburt was highlighted as a critical threat to AFSOC missions.
- Four take-aways were highlighted; 1) construct a proposed Collector Road north of Hwy 98. Requires Eglin easement. Okaloosa County has authorized a PD&E study; 2) Hwy 98 widening from four lanes to six lanes from Escambia County to the Brooks Bridge in Okaloosa County; 3) Possible connector road to SR 87 in Santa Rosa County; and 4) a potential new west gate.
- Senator Wright, Chairman Florida Defense Support Task Force requested a meeting with General Bauernfeind to discuss options and legislative support.

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Transcribed by Kay Rasmussen and are not verbatim or inclusive.

- A follow up meeting is targeted for February.

Line of Effort Updates

Quality of Life; Colonel Wood, 1 SOMSG/CC

Housing Spotlight

- Shelia Fitzgerald, Okaloosa County Deputy Administrator reported and overviewed slides. Okaloosa County is finalizing an Attainable Housing Study, which included a county-wide community survey.
- The scope of work will provide recommendations designed to promote the development, preservation, and access to housing to help meet the need of Okaloosa's resident workforce and families. The project has been underway for several months and is expected to be completed within 90 days.
- The draft plan is currently under review and the final plan is anticipated after the New Year.
- Some recommendations include, strategic allocations of existing resources, exploring legislative remedies, utilization of Eglin underutilized orphan parcels, possible community land trust, possible modification of land use policies and redevelopment of districts.
- Randall Rowland, co-chair presented. Okaloosa County and the 96th Test Wing are in discussions regarding the potential North 9 207 acres agreement for a mixed use development to include housing. Freedom Tech Park on Lewis Turner Boulevard will include 312 luxury apartments. Eglin's Hidden Oaks duplexes will be renovated. The Eglin mobile home FamCamp will be expanded. Approximately 100 Live Oak homes on Hurlburt are being delayed for demolition. The development of apartments is being investigated. A EUL industry day will be announced soon for an EUL opportunity for the 98 acres adjacent to the UF REEF in Shalimar. A Poquito Bayou EUL opportunity is also pending in FY25, but is not likely to provide options for additional housing.

Childcare

- Tamera Gerstbrodie, Co-Chair briefed. Childcare is one of AFSOC's top priorities
- New Florida law supports FCC and provides 6 months to obtain state licensure. Establishing a FCC provides a second income opportunity for families. The Air Force will assist with business insurance, training and immunizations. The same level of care is provided off base as on base.
- Eglin will construct a new CDC in Crestview which will provide approximately 200 slots.
- Eglin's #1 CDC is completing renovations.
- Employee attraction and retention remains a focus at both installations.
- Higher Ground Education has identified a new development partner and is reported to have a parcel under contract for a future Montessori-based childcare facility benefitting military families.
- Hurlburt Elementary School will care for children before school hours.

Education/Training; Colonel Davis, 96 MSG/CC

Career Readiness

- Kelly Jordon, co-chair reported. Stephanie Talcott is Hurlburt's new co-chair.
- Job Fairs and hiring events held since the last meeting were highlighted.
- English as a second language classes are needed for military spouses.
- An update from the volunteer TAP surveys was provided. The conservative cost savings since January 2022 in PCS and unemployment compensation is measured at \$717,088 with 58% of respondents saying they will stay in the area after transition. This data is critical to measuring the

success of this work group and is utilized by economic development partners to demonstrate the workforce pipeline.

Infrastructure; Colonel Hammill, 96 CEG/CC

Traffic

- Eric Rushing, co-chair reported. The Eglin Westside Expansion Plan continues to move forward. The design for the new bridge-to-bridge multi-modal path across Okaloosa Island is complete. FDOT is finalizing approval for construction. A resiliency study is required for stabilizing Hwy 98 across Okaloosa Island. FDOT will conduct a feasibility study for Hwy 85 expansion.

Oversight; Nathan Sparks, One Okaloosa EDC

Grant Funding

- Steve Loken, co-chair reported. At the last meeting, Kay Rasmussen provided an overview on the Florida Defense Infrastructure Grant program. As a result, Walton County EDA submitted an application for Hwy 20 support.
- The OLDCC Defense Community Infrastructure Program application process will be opening in the Spring and an informational webinar is expected to take place early in the new year. Work Groups are encouraged to consider possible project applications.
- The Federal Defense Access Roads (DAR) program may be an option for transportation infrastructure.
- Identified funding spreadsheet is available on the TCPI website.

Emerging Topics

Participants were invited to share any emerging topics or areas of need not currently addressed by a standing work group.

- Civilian talent pipeline, talent acquisition, is a challenge.
- The locality rate pay contributes to the talent retention and attraction.
- There is a need for software engineers.
- More EUL opportunities are requested in order to respond to the housing crisis.

Closing Comments

- Brig General Geraghty is hosting a 96th Test Wing strategic off-site tomorrow with targeted community leaders.
- The next Eglin CPP meeting is scheduled for January 24.
- The next TCPI Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for May 27.

Meeting adjourned.