Emerald Coast Regional Rural Transportation Plan

Executive Director Chris Rietow introduced Angela Bradley from ECRC. ARPC has received a contract to develop the Regional Rural Transportation Plan (RRTP) for five counties within the Apalachee Region (Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Jackson and Liberty counties). An RRTP serves as a blueprint for maintaining and enhancing the region’s rural transportation system. ECRC has recently completed an RRTP for the Emerald Coast Region, and Ms. Bradley gave an overview of ECRC’s process to develop the Emerald Coast RRTP. An RRTP provides rural communities with the opportunity to collaborate with regional local governments and FDOT to determine the priority of transportation needs within each county of the region. It is essential that each county is represented within the project to ensure a cohesive and effective RRTP. The Emerald Coast RRTP included bridge replacement and resurfacing, which isn’t typically included in an urban transportation plan.

Ms. Bradley provided an overview of the process utilized, and presented the map created through this regional collaboration. All priority projects are reflected on the final map, and include notes from the State. Initially responses were not forthcoming, so the Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee reached out to the municipalities individually to convey the importance of the RRTP and encourage local governments to participate. Ms. Bradley emphasized the importance of determining upfront 1) what type of projects to include, 2) what funding sources are available for different categories of projects, and 3) how many projects will be accepted from each county? ECRC created a weighted point system to determine the priority of each project, and the final RRTP plan includes 26 short term projects and 289 long term projects. The project priority list was adopted separately from the RRTP to allow for flexibility in the priorities in the future.
FRANKLIN-98 (F-98) LIVING SHORELINE RESILIENCY PROJECT

ARPC has successfully sourced one of the necessary contractors for the Franklin-98 project. Gulf Corps of the Forgotten Coast, based in Franklin County, is the contractor responsible for the planting portion of the restoration process. The Gulf Corps team has been busy harvesting, transporting, and propagating Sporobolus alterniflorus (formerly Spartina alterniflora), smooth cordgrass. The grass comes from a Duke Energy donor site in Crystal River.

Mr. Rietow and staff recently met with Joe Taylor of Gulf Corps. Gulf Corps provides opportunities for youth in the Region to learn skills related to environmental restoration. The Gulf Corps students have been propagating thousands of Spartina grass plants that will be utilized in the living shoreline project.

NEXT ARPC BOARD MEETING: MAY 25, 2023
Through this new partnership, The Data Center and the Shimberg Center will work to increase the capacity of the Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) in the Florida panhandle to disseminate data that will move the Region toward a more equitable recovery. ARPC will enhance their climate/disaster relevant data intermediary function for their 9-county region, with specific focus on Liberty and Calhoun counties. In doing so, the team will transform the existing Long-term Recovery Plans (LTRP) for each county into equity-based plans incorporating more data resources.

Adequate housing and infrastructure are critical components of resiliency. Yet local data on housing and infrastructure is often difficult to access. Shimberg will work with ARPC to develop a network of practitioners working in different facets of community planning, floodplain management, hazard mitigation, and housing planning. The network will facilitate integration of high-demand data through the sharing of data, tools, and best practices that are important to all members. Democratizing data and open data are fundamental values of ARPC, Shimberg, and The Data Center. The data tools developed will be open and accessible to the public.
APALACHEE REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS. REGIONAL IMPACT.

WAKULLA WONDERFUL
On March 11, 2023, the ARPC team participated in the Wakulla Wonderful event. As part of Wakulla Disaster Risk Analysis and Adaptation Plan project, the team utilized this event to provide awareness about the project. An interactive map was developed to depict the familiar Wakulla County assets like schools, fire stations, local government buildings, and community centers.

ACCESS 67 BROADBAND SUMMIT
In January, ARPC staff attended the Florida Association of Counties - Access 67 Broadband Summit in Ponte Vedra. ARPC staff served on a panel and presented on the work completed in collaboration with FSU on Broadband Feasibility Studies for Liberty and Wakulla counties.

GIS TRAINING-COACHING SERVICES
The 8-week GIS training & coaching course is tailored based on the knowledge and skills level of the learner. Pictured here is Ms. Robinson, GIS Analysts at Gadsden County Property Appraiser Officer on her 4th Week of the GIS training-coaching learning journey!

STAR METRO POP-UP
At the RideOn exhibit at the southside information fair hosted by StarMetro on February 18th, the public was offered free refreshments, brief tours on the bus, and RideOn incentive items.

WAKULLA COMMUNITY INFORMATION FAIR
This popular family event was held on March 4th at the public library. Pat Maurer and Divina Lade provided RideOn program information, as well as fitting FREE bike helmets to any who needed them.

NEXT ARPC BOARD MEETING: MAY 25, 2023