

**Task Force on the Consolidated Gov't of Jacksonville  
Neighborhoods Subcommittee  
Draft Recommendations on the St. Johns River**

*(Taken from the 2005 River Dance Study)*

**Recommendation 1: Is this still relevant, and do you all see modifications that can be made since it was first published nearly 10 years ago?**

The City Council should create an “all county” riverfront zoning overlay to provide guidelines for waterfront development which incorporates both criteria for public access and riverfront design. The zoning overlay should be administered by the city’s Planning Department with the Jacksonville Waterways Commission acting as its and the City Councils sub-regulatory and advisory boards, much as the Planning Commission currently operates for other Zonings.

The zoning overlay should:

- Extend at least 500’ feet from the river’s edge and be made a part of the City’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan;
- Increase the amount of permanently set-aside general public access spaces;
- Identify the transportation needs (pedestrian, bicycle\*, and vehicular) for those public access areas;
- Determine setbacks for distance from the river greater than currently required;
- Provide provisions to protect, preserve, and encourage port and other water dependent activities; and
- Outline design elements that respect the natural environment in harmony with their riverfront surroundings (via landscape architecture and amenities).

\*Bicycle was added

**Recommendation 2:  
Ordinance Change?**

The City Council should review the makeup and funding of the Waterways Commission to ensure it has the means and authority to function as a sub regulatory and advisory board able to make as-needed changes to the City’s Ordinance Code. The Commission should include seats for both the City’s Planning Director and the Executive Director of the Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council or their designees.

**Last, the River Dance Study had this recommendation.**

The Downtown Master Plan, Celebrating the River, describes Jacksonville as the “celebration of a great, international river and extensive public green space, where city parks and attractive water features are essential components of busy, sustainable urban neighborhoods.” When fully executed, this master plan will revitalize McCoy’s and Hogan’s Creeks, provide critical links to downtown’s “Emerald Necklace”, and expand the amount and type of public access and recreational opportunities available along the river system.

**Based on other recommendations we have prepared, what do you think about reshaping it? Having this information will help in the future planning by neighborhoods along these tributaries.**

**Recommendation 3:**

The St. Johns River and its many tributaries are vital features of our neighborhoods. As such, the Neighborhood Councils should have more direct access to the data pertaining to the health of these tributaries. Reports on the health of the river and its tributaries include but are not limited to:

- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection Lower St. Johns River Basin TMDL annual progress report;
- St. Johns River Water Management District annual reports from water quality monitoring stations, groundwater quality, and project status updates;
- JEA annual reports on drinking water quality;
- City of Jacksonville water quality reports;
- Department of Health studies and reports on water quality;
- Army Corps of Engineers relevant projects or planning documents that affect the St. Johns River or its tributaries.

This information must be provided, on an annual basis, to Neighborhood Councils compiled by the Division of Environmental Quality or other relevant city department including reports on incidents of chemical spills, water pollution, groundwater contamination, and other relevant health hazards received by the Division of Environmental Quality on a timely basis.

**Air Odor Noise Committee**  
Tony C. Bellamy, P.E. – Chair  
Lucinda Sonnenberg, Ph.D.  
Michelle Tappouni  
Mobeen Rathore, M.D.

**Education & Public Outreach**  
Steven Jenkins  
Gary Bowers, M.D.  
Michelle Tappouni  
Lucinda Sonnenberg, Ph.D.



**Water Committee**  
Nick Howland – Chair  
Gary Bowers, M.D.  
Amy Fu, P.E.  
Bobby L. Baker, P.E.

Steven Jenkins – Chairman  
Michelle Tappouni– Vice Chairman  
Lucinda Sonnenberg, Ph.D., Gary Bowers, M.D.  
Nick Howland, Tony C. Bellamy, P.E.  
Bobby L. Baker, P.E., Mobeen Rathore, M.D., Amy Fu, P.E.

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Thoughts: James Richardson, EPB Administrator

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\*Bicycle was added

The Waterways Commission (WWC) is not regulatory. They are advisory to the City Council. The WWC already provides input to the Council on land use & zoning issues that abut waterways. That process is being tweaked a bit to try and have the Planning Commission also benefit from their input. The Planning Commission is the quasi-regulatory body that would, and should, have some input into this. Given those thoughts, I suggest deletion of the items identified above.

The recommendation from the River Dance Study could still be relevant today. It might provide the best way to get enforceable full-scale planning changes/concepts in place for the river. Attention should be paid to the concerns and issues raised in the Implementation Report from that study.

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**Recommendation 2:**  
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The WWC has no funding and is advisory to the City Council. The EPB is the regulatory body in place to address environmental issues, including water. The Planning Commission addresses land use & zoning issues. Both make necessary recommendations to City Council should changes to the ordinance code be considered. There should not be any reason to add any regulatory function to the WWC. The City Council is the only body that has authority to make changes to the ordinance code and they are not likely to give away that authority.

There could be changes made to the ordinance code (Sec 95.103) to include a seat for the Planning Director, or designee, and the ED of the NFRC, or designee. As there are some overlapping issues/concerns, it could also be changed to include a seat for a member of the EPB, or designee.

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**Based on other recommendations we have prepared, what do you think about reshaping it? Having this information will help in the future planning by neighborhoods along these tributaries.**

There may not be a need to go through a lengthy process of refining the Downtown Master Plan discussed above. As the newly created DIA has been formed, there could be some consideration to include a strongly worded encouragement for them to implement the plan referenced. Then you might be able to slightly tweak the quoted language to your liking, but that would be just a paragraph.