

CHARTER REVISIONS COMMITTEE URBAN SERVICES DISTRICT SUB-COMMITTEE

Recommendation justification:

Who (i.e., Urban Services Investment Authority) – Who is defined as the structure name. Considerations given to the various types of agencies provided electronically and/or other models brought forward by committee member.

Name
C. Griggs: Jacksonville Urban Services District Investment Authority
C. Denton: Urban Core Development Authority
C. Mills: Urban Services Investment Authority
C. Knight: Urban Services Investment Authority
Model Defined
<p>C. Griggs:</p> <p>The Jacksonville Urban Core Investment Authority would create an essential community revitalization tool for Jacksonville's urban core. The JUCIA is designed to strategically compliment development and community redevelopment agency for the most distressed area of Jacksonville. The JUCIA would be the sole governing body for the approved funding resource that guides the work of urban core redevelopment efforts.</p> <p>It is the intent of the City in creating this entity to provide a single, comprehensive organizational structure for the Authority and a single, comprehensive method of strategically addressing Urban Services District redevelopment.</p>
<p>C. Denton:</p> <p>A city independent authority, governed by a board of directors, to focus solely but comprehensively on addressing consolidation disparities by assessing and coordinating efforts to alleviate poverty, economic weakness, community deterioration and social failure in the designated area of the city.</p>
C. Mills: Economic Development
<p>C. Knight:</p> <p>For an Independent Authority, there are two types of funding sources; (1) millage tax or (2) through budget allotment from the Mayor's Office. This recommendation is</p>

based upon an operational budget from the Mayor' Office to manage the day-to-day functions of the office, but the project work would include a Capital Improvement Plan.

A Capital Improvement plan "is a multi-year forecast of major capital buildings, infrastructures, and other needs.The CIP is designed to be financially feasible and provides the funding source and amount of funding for the anticipated post-construction operation costs of each project." ... "In addition to the needs identified in the Capital Improvement Element, the CIP includes other improvements not covered by the Growth Management Act such as Public Safety, Targeted Economic Development, Government Facilities (primarily public buildings), and Environmental factors."

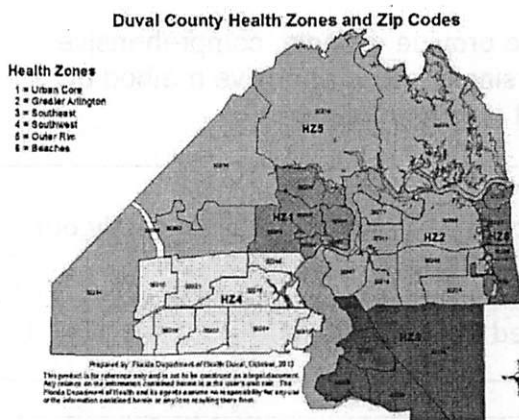
CIP projects include; drainage, environment/QOL, Government Facilities, Parks, Public Facilities, Public Safety, Roads/Infrastructure/Transportation and Targeted Economic Development. The current CIP was adopted in 2015 and set to expire 2020.

What – What is the scope of their work?

Define the geography

C. Griggs:

Boundaries for the JUCIA would be defined by what is currently known as Duval County Health Zone 1 (Zip Codes 32202, 32204, 32206, 32208, 32209, 32254). Because the zip code areas of Duval County were statistically unreliable for many health issues, multi-zip code health zones are recommended as boundaries for JUCIA.



Health Zones were created by the Florida Department of Health in Duval County to provide reliable and consistent data for sub-county analysis. Data generated on the basis of health zones also overcome Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) issues concerning protection of personal identifiers associated with geographic areas with small populations. The private and public health and social services sectors of the county use these health

zones extensively for community assessment and planning. The health zones have different demographic characteristics.

C. Denton:

Health Zone 1 as the core of urban pathologies, with possible additions based on socioeconomic, education, health, crime and other data. For the purpose of addressing consolidation disparities, the authority may consider the pre-consolidation City of Jacksonville.

C. Mills:

According to the most recent Census data the ten worst neighborhoods in Jacksonville exist in the Urban Core. There is a stark contrast between the ten worst that exist in the urban core and the ten best in Jacksonville. Those neighborhoods ranked by livability average the following:

	WORST	BEST
Median Income:	\$25,890	\$79,000
Median Home:	\$53,853	\$274,000
Unemployment:	11.3	2.9

This data is illustrated only to show the enormity of critical economic disparities that exist between the "Tale of Two Sides of Town." How do we address them? Incrementally? Or do we recommend a Marshall Plan?

C. Knight:

During consolidation, there was a general and five Urban Services Districts across the community. While each of these communities face challenges with infrastructure challenges today, the greatest disparity is found in the Urban Core of our community. A once thriving community, the northwest community of Duval County, has the lowest education rates, employment rates, real estate value, the greatest health and infrastructure disparities and the highest crime when compared to other areas in the community. With this in mind, the area of focus would be the Urban Services District #1 defined in the Consolidation map of 1968.

Define the type of work – Is it coordination? Septic Tank remediation oversight, economic development, etc.

C. Griggs:

The JUCIA would have powers and duties that include: the power to hire and compensate a Chief Executive Officer; to negotiate and approve economic development agreements without further City Council approval provided they meet certain pre-approved standards and forms; to develop and interpret a Urban Core Master Plan and approve urban core development and redevelopment; receive, dispose of and bond authorized revenues; establish, operate, license and lease public facilities within the defined urban core; acquire, manage, lease, operate and sell property; and to prepare reports, plans, studies and proposals for urban core redevelopment, among other powers, subject to certain City Council approvals.

Establish a Redevelopment Trust Fund of the Urban Core Investment Authority into which shall be deposited all existing funds and accounts, encumbered and unencumbered, for the recommended or proposed funding source. The fund shall also collect all revenues from sale of City-owned properties located in the defined Urban Core area.

We recommend three potential funding sources:

Community Benefit Agreements (CBA) - A CBA is a contract between a coalition of community groups and a developer in which the developer agrees to provide a slate of economic benefits in exchange for the coalition's promise not to oppose the development project.

Community benefits set forth in a CBA can cover a range of issues prioritized by the community coalition, such as affordable housing, local and targeted hiring, living wage requirements, open space, and so forth.

Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) - Monies used in financing CRA activities are locally generated, CRAs are not overseen by the state, but redevelopment plans must be consistent with local government comprehensive plans. Examples of conditions that can support the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area include, but are not limited to: the presence of substandard or inadequate structures, a shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways, and inadequate parking.

The goal of the CRA is to increase the city's tax base by creating employment opportunities and recruiting businesses that enhance the image of the area. More specifically, the JIA CRA is a mechanism to stimulate development and fund infrastructure improvements within the area.

Millage Rate Adjustment – Provide millage rate adjustment to specified areas of Duval County to account for disparate inconsistencies in Jacksonville's growth due to Consolidation.

C. Denton:

The authority will have two general missions: (1) study the designated area to determine the state of consolidation disparities and make recommendations for remediation and (2) work more broadly to assess, coordinate and initiate public, private and non-profit efforts to improve community building, economic development, code enforcement and social progress, including family support, education and health.

C. Mills:

C. Knight:

A USIA can serve as the voice and conductor for efforts needed to remedy, revitalize and set a tone where the community can begin to thrive. There has been a plethora of efforts in the community, but though some improvements were made, those improvements, in and of themselves aren't enough.

Efforts in the urban core would benefit from a single entity that would manage a strategic plan, pulling together the needs, priorities and resources under one unified process. There are several agencies facilitating efforts in the Urban Core. While the below isn't a comprehensive list, it represents the public groups, but it is important to note that DCPS and others have various priorities in the community as well. The agencies of note include the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Trust Fund, CDCs, CPACs, and City of Jacksonville Public Works projects. A brief description is provided below to illustrate their work but to also draw attention to the fragmented activity that is occurring across the community.

The Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Trust Fund (NWJEDF) was created "in an effort to assist identifying proposed projects to encourage economic development in the NW Jacksonville area. Specifically, "to assist new or existing businesses create jobs and make private capital investments within the area." There are four goals for the fund, however, the goals do not consider the physical environment, housing needs, education nor any factors related to wellness.

The voice of the community is heard through CPACs. The CPACs help to maintain open lines of communication between the residents and businesses, neighborhoods, community organizations, educational institutions and government. However, the CPACs have no funding resources nor appear to have authority to effect any change or develop/implement any programs that would positively impact the community they reside in.

What about a CDC?

What about Community Redevelopment District Area?

While City of Jacksonville's (COJ) annual operating budget is approximately \$1.2B, 55% of that budget is dedicated to public safety, vital services but reactive rather than preventive. The Public Works Department has established priorities to address septic tank replacement and repair, but those efforts are sorely underfunded, it has been shared that over \$1B is needed for this work. In addition to septic tanks, there are established standards on how roads are selected for repair, and no process for sidewalk repairs. Creating an agency to consolidate this work is critical for basic elements identified by the Center for Disease Control as a Built Environment, critical for public health. A built environment influences a person's level of physical activity and access.

While each of these agencies are commended for the efforts made, their individual effort lack coordination and illustrate a significant gap in focus. None of these

agencies have housing, education and/or health in their prioritization. A holistic approach to the community's wellness must include all of these factors.

Why – What makes this the best option?

Why are you proposing this particular structure?

C. Griggs:

As stated in the Blueprint for Improvement II: Task Force on Consolidated Government, "The promise of urban services and the assurance that no one would be taxed for services they did not receive was a major selling point of consolidation. The concept was incorporated in the Charter in the distinction between Urban Service Districts and the General Service District. Yet, many services remain incomplete today, especially in older, less affluent urban neighborhoods, and a renewed commitment is in order."

C. Denton:

Using the Downtown Investment Authority as a model, the Urban Core Development Authority will be the city's designated agency to address directly and exclusively the social, economic and infrastructure issues in the area of the city that contains the debilitating conditions that lead to individual and community failures and crime.

The UCDA may be seen as a reinvention and intensification of the Intensive Care Neighborhoods effort created in the Delaney administration but later abandoned, as it had little basis other than the mayor's executive order.

C. Mills:

Addressing the disparities that exist in the Urban Core is way beyond the scope of anything that the Urban Services Investment Authority can ameliorate or begin to resolve. Northwest Jacksonville and the Urban Core needs a local Marshall Plan to address sometimes benign and at other times willful neglect that pre-dates the Consolidation of city and county governments in Jacksonville, Florida.

The City Council is the catalyst for economic development in the City of Jacksonville. One of the top city council priorities is to encourage and spur economic development throughout the City of Jacksonville; residents of the neglected communities have patiently watched the city of Jacksonville grow in leaps and bounds in the midst of broken promises.

The Urban Services Investment Authority nor the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund can properly address the economic ills that plague the beleaguered Urban Core. Any recommendations we make to the City Council, if approved, would be sterile, ineffective exercises.

Conclusion

After trying my best to formulate ideas within the framework of the parameters set by the Charter Revision Committee, it would be hypocritical to make suggestions and recommendations that offer programs and projects that pacify rather than empower. You have heard it before, "the definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over while expecting different results." Real change, meaningful change will take place once we start to address problems rather than symptoms.

In the November 5, 2014, issue of Folio, former City Councilman, Bill Bishop correctly assessed the problem and provided viable solutions in the editorial entitled, "How to Revitalize Northwest Jacksonville." A copy of his editorial is attached as Attachment A.

C. Knight:

Model Benefits / Pros -

C. Griggs:

Building a structured and strategic effort to address systematic disparities that have developed since Consolidation.

C. Denton:

Singular focus on the city's most serious enduring issue.

City authority to coordinate existing anti-poverty and anti-crime efforts and mobilize other organizations and agencies to address appropriate needs.

A teamwork relationship with Duval County Public Schools, the Duval County Health Department, Kids Hope Alliance, the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and other public, non-profit and private agencies and organizations.

An important and visible presence on the city's agenda across mayoral administrations and City Council terms.

A small staff of professionals who become deeply knowledgeable about the complex issues involved in poverty, crime and social and economic failure and who can identify solutions that have been proven to succeed elsewhere.

The UCDA would be charged with developing a well researched and community-involved master plan, updated regularly, to address the key issues, encouraging coordination across agencies and organizations, as well as City Council and the mayor.

C. Mills:

C. Knight:

Current activities are fragmented and don't follow a unified direction. As such, success is not easily measured or observed in the community. An IA will offer (1) a dedicated voice that will ensure this communities interest are always at the table and (2) a unified approach based upon a greater strategy for the community as a whole.
Model Risks / Cons -
<p>C. Griggs:</p> <p>Identifying and implementing sustainable funding resource(s).</p>
<p>C. Denton:</p> <p>Reliability of funding if reliant on successive city budgets. Public reaction to such an intense focus and commitment to one specific health zones among the six across Duval County.</p>
<p>C. Mills:</p> <p>C. Knight:</p> <p>An Independent Authority is "contrary to the essence of a consolidated government. Yet, the complexity of their business operations and the efficient and effective manner in which they appear to be operated are strong evidence for their independence. The consolidated City government does not have the capacity to absorb these operations, nor is there evidence that any would be better run as a result." [2014 Blueprint for Improvement] [See p.30-31 of the report] p.63-78, 105-108</p> <p>The second and third challenge include a difficulty funding the effort and garnering city council member's support. It will be hard to convince them to support an effort that they may not believe is beneficial for their community's constituents.</p>
Solutions, if any, for the risks
<p>C. Griggs:</p> <p>Strong advocacy that educates the community and stakeholders on the benefits of a thriving urban core, where addressing disparities are priority.</p>
<p>C. Denton:</p> <p>Using public and private media and other forms of communication, a comprehensive and intense campaign to engage and inform public officials, private organizations, neighborhood groups and the general public about the importance of addressing Jacksonville's most important and dangerous issue. Widespread understanding in the different communities that the UCDA is not just about addressing historic inequities but, even more important, reducing the core's endemic and debilitating poverty and lowering crime rates across the city. The Downtown Investment Authority as a similar effort that has had, and is having, great success in its geographically focused mission.</p>

C. Mills:
<p>C. Knight: Invest in agencies in the area that have unique advantages to contribute to the community's economy. Those agencies include, but are not limited to the Florida State College of Jacksonville, Jacksonville Aviation Authority, Jacksonville Zoo, UF Health Jacksonville, existing businesses and other similar organizations.</p>
<i>Rationale for not choosing alternative models</i>
C. Griggs:
<p>C. Denton: Other models, such as the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Trust Fund, have narrower financial or operational missions. The UCDA, like the DIA, would be charged with studying the complex of interactive issues and, working with existing and other agencies and organizations, develop plans and remedial programs with rigid feedback and evaluation.</p>
C. Mills:
<p>C. Knight: Tax Increment District wouldn't be sufficient. Though there is a geographically designated area, the TID would be limited to the revenue it generates from the tax benefit of the neighborhood. In USD1, that revenue would be extremely limited due to value of the real estate in the area.</p> <p>Community Benefit – LISC Model. Need information</p> <p>CDC –</p> <p>Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA) – Local government are able to designate areas as CRA when certain conditions exist. The requirements of a CRA include that funding is derived from a Tax Increment Financing District. While this would be an effective model for a newly established IA, it is unlikely City Council/Mayor and citizens would be supportive.</p> <p>Expansion of Citizen Planning Advisory Councils (CPACs) – Expanding CPACs would be one way to ensure the needs of the community are being met. However, an expansion of CPACs without a subject matter expert leading the group would continue fragmentation. A leader is needed to pull the work together who understands the big picture and has the ability to command attention from key leaders as needed.</p>

How/When – What is the proposed rollout?

<p><i>How would this work be executed? (Be cautious to not be too prescriptive. Review the tone of the charter to ensure we are aligned its structure of direction, but offer enough information to demonstrate the value)</i></p>
C. Griggs:

There is precedent in the Ordinance Code (2016-140) related to the development of the Downtown Investment Authority. The JUCIA could be modeled after language used to address the JUCIA.

The recommendation is Council take action for implementation at the beginning of the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

C. Denton:

While the DIA was created by Ordinance Code, the UCDA should be in the charter because a large part of its mission would be addressing the perceived disparities resulting from consolidation in the charter.

Further work should identify funding sources for the UCDA. The small staff would leverage city, state, federal, foundation and private resources through its coordination function.

If appropriate, the UCDA could incorporate existing efforts, such as the Northwest Jacksonville, Economic Development Trust Fund with its residual funding through the Better Jacksonville Plan bond issue.

Subcommittee speakers suggested a number of possible funding sources, including creating a Community Benefits Agreement, a TIF district, a franchise fee, a Capital Improvement Program set-aside or a Community Redevelopment Area.

C. Mills:

C. Knight:

The most effective business strategy adopts activities where economies of scales can be gained. Where possible this should be adopted, however, those activities should prioritize the community first over individual priorities.

Possible measures of success (Be cautious to not be too prescriptive. Review the tone of the charter to ensure we are aligned its structure of direction, but offer enough information to demonstrate the value)

C. Griggs:

Success can only be measured through progress of indicators identified in the proposed JUCIA strategic plan.

C. Denton:

Contrary to the DIA, the success of the UCDA mostly would be long-term, through improvements in crime rates, employment, graduation and dropout rates, poverty measures and health statistics.

The master plan to be developed in the UCDA's first year would create a framework of such targeted improvement and set specific goals, to be assessed and reported annually.

C. Mills:

C. Knight:
Model Benefits / Pros -
C. Griggs:
The establishment of a long-term plan to address geographic disparities related to health equity indicators such as: injury prevention (intentional and unintentional), education, criminal justice, environmental, transportation, economic development and poverty.
C. Denton:
C. Mills:
C. Knight:
Model Risks / Cons -
C. Griggs:
Timing – Council will be able to work through nuances and details of sustainable funding.
Political will – Council and community stakeholders will need to be able to advocate for funding through unconventional means. This may be disruptive to current legislative priorities.
C. Denton:
C. Mills:
C. Knight:

Other Comments/Considerations

C. Griggs:
C. Denton:
C. Mills:
C. Knight:
<p>A city is only as good as the sum of its parts. With approximately 55% of our general operating budget dedicated to public safety, we have a focus on responding to problems rather than addressing the root cause through prevention.</p> <p>The 2014 Blueprint for Improvement Taskforce, a 33 member taskforce committee, provided a solid recommendation of improvements which could have positively impacted the area formerly known as Urban Services District (USD) 1. However, very little of their recommendation were adopted. Why?</p> <p>The report pointed out that the problem at a glance is that we have “A bureaucratic centralized City government that is unresponsive to the unique needs of the widely varied neighborhoods with distinct identities and issues that comprise this large geographic city, often implementing one size fits all standards and programs.”</p>

Further, there is "inadequate planning for present and future needs, and failure to implement adopted plans." Finally, "promises made, as a part of the consolidation campaign, for infrastructure improvements in urban core neighborhoods have yet to be kept." It further explained that they city needs "a single unified mission for all aspect of local government ...A structure that is responsive to the unique needs of the diverse areas of the City and its citizens....Adequate funding to maintain public safety, infrastructure, and quality of life and ensure economic viability."

Their solution included requiring "a percentage of the annual Capital Improvement Program budget be set aside for infrastructure projects to remedy unfulfilled promises from consolidation."

Posted Wednesday, November 5, 2014 12:00 am

HOW TO REVITALIZE NORTHWEST JACKSONVILLE

Despite the many broken promises made over the years, Jacksonville City Council member Bill Bishop writes that there is a pathway to a prosperous future for the troubled area

Bill Bishop

If you drive along Myrtle Avenue in Northwest Jacksonville, it doesn't take long to see the economic neglect of the businesses that still exist there — businesses that were once thriving. In its heyday, the neighborhood was a bustling source of economic, residential and cultural activity. Generations of families were proud to live, work and play in Northwest Jacksonville in close-knit neighborhoods filled with laughter and life.

Those days have long gone, but they have not been forgotten. Many of our city's champions believe there is an opportunity to provide a pathway to the future for this struggling area. Northwest Jacksonville is not forgotten by me and some city leaders.

Many promises were made to Northwest Jacksonville from before consolidation up to and including right before the last election that have never been fulfilled. These include neighborhood enhancements, drainage and infrastructure improvements, as well as an emphasis on economic development. It is quite clear that Jacksonville is currently a divided city, with both prosperous and long-neglected areas. As Abraham Lincoln once said, "A house divided upon itself cannot stand." Jacksonville cannot truly prosper as a city until all parts of our city have an equal opportunity to prosper.

In order for Northwest Jacksonville's residential neighborhoods and surrounding businesses to not just survive, but to thrive, three key drivers must be included in a vision for success. This is my vision:

- Neighborhood Revitalization and Development
- Family, Education, Job Creation
- Business Investment Opportunities

Neighborhood Revitalization and Development

Jacksonville has several examples of neighborhoods once on the decline that transformed themselves back into highly desirable areas. Riverside/Avondale and San Marco have succeeded. Springfield and Murray Hill are well underway. All of these neighborhoods were suffering from blight, increases in conversions of single-family houses into low-end rental property, degradation of commercial areas, and intrusion of commercial uses into residential areas. Each of these areas was successful in correcting these problems and reversing their

decline. They accomplished this through active community involvement and neighborhood associations.

The combined effort of residents and businesses used city government to correct problems and encourage quality redevelopment. Many of the neighborhoods in Northwest Jacksonville do not have active neighborhood associations, but they all have residents who take pride in their neighborhoods and desperately want to see neighborhood improvement. The city's Housing and Community Development Division has the resources and expertise to assist communities in establishing neighborhood associations, recruit active participants, and educate people on how the city government functions. This way people learn how to advocate for positive changes or oppose actions that will be detrimental, who to contact to report property safety code violations, and how to follow up to make sure issues are addressed.

There are many neighborhood commercial areas throughout Northwest Jacksonville that have historically provided for many of the day-to-day needs of the surrounding communities. As the surrounding communities have declined, so have these retail corridors. Commercial revitalization is an integral part of any neighborhood revitalization effort.

One only has to go to King Street, St. Johns Avenue and San Marco Square to see the transformative results of such efforts. In conjunction with establishing active neighborhood associations, a storefront improvement program similar to that proposed for Downtown by the Downtown Investment Authority consisting of low-interest loans and grants funded by the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund can be a very effective tool for putting a new face on these older commercial areas. This can be a relatively inexpensive program that will pay great dividends through increased business activity.

There is no substitute for taking pride in and having ownership of your neighborhoods.

Family, Education, Job Creation

From the youth to the out-of-work father of four to the single mother, creating educational opportunities close to home that will allow families to create a pathway to success is one of the most important strategies.

For many years our education system has focused on college as the end game. This educational tactic branded those without degrees as failures. This does a grave disservice to a multitude of students that do not thrive in an academic environment and robs young people of the knowledge about high-paying career opportunities in crafts and trades, resulting in a shortage of people in many manufacturing, technical and construction jobs. Unfortunately most people don't know that many of these jobs actually have salary structures on par or higher than many "professional" career paths. Northwest Jacksonville is home to a number of underperforming or failing schools that do not adequately prepare young people for life after high school.

Non-college post-secondary education is essentially left to private sector technical and trade schools, industry or trade union-sponsored apprenticeship programs, and to some extent Florida State College at Jacksonville's vocational programs. With the exception of FSCJ's Downtown campus, none of the other options is located close to Northwest Jacksonville, making attendance difficult for students without cars. Also, the cost of tuition

can be prohibitively expensive, and without adequate career counseling, prospective students are not prepared to work through possible financial assistance options.

Community-based job training programs can be created in partnership with the Housing and Community Development Division, FSCJ, Duval County Public Schools and business providers, and funded through the NWJEDF. Prospective students can, through proper counseling, take advantage of a multitude of financial aid opportunities. Many of these programs can be located in satellite facilities in or near neighborhoods. Location options include public schools (nights and weekends) and vacant commercial properties/storefronts. Benefits include close proximity and easy access for students, vacant properties that would have activity and income, and education partners that would have access to more students.

While it is not the job of the city to guarantee the success of private businesses, the city can and should take measures within its ability to foster and encourage prosperous local business in all of its areas. This was the intent of former Mayor Jake Godbold's creation of the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund. Jobs provided by a prosperous local business community provide opportunities for all our citizens to realize a better quality of life, as well as resources for neighborhood improvement and increased local tax revenue to better provide needed city services.

There are several ways this can be accomplished. Through the Office of Economic Development and the Department of Public Works, we can institute a program in which local businesses that have not done business with the city before are taught how to do business with the city. This can be modeled after a very successful program operated by the federal government in which businesses are trained in the federal procurement process. Government procurement can be cumbersome and time consuming for those without such experience.

We should also standardize the procurement process of the city and the five independent authorities. There is no reason for the city, JEA, JPA, JAA and JTA to each have a separate way to do what amounts to essentially the same function. This will encourage greater participation from the business community, potentially resulting in better pricing and the more effective use of tax dollars.

Other programs to support young, small startup businesses include eliminating the bonding requirement for projects under \$200,000 like the state of Florida does. Small, new contractors have a difficult time obtaining bonding primarily because they don't have a track record. Such a program provides a good opportunity for young contractors to establish themselves and represents a very small financial risk to the city as well as a savings to the taxpayers, as bonds are not free.

Conclusion

Northwest Jacksonville is not the only area that suffers from years of neglect, but it is certainly the largest and has suffered the longest. In fact, many wonder if the area would have been better off if consolidation had never occurred. The residents would probably say yes. I believe that consolidation has generally been good for our city, but now is the time to use the resources of our consolidated government to solve the longstanding problems that are keeping us from becoming one city for everyone.

This is my outline for the revitalization of the Northwest. Success will require competent, effective leadership, which has been sorely lacking, together with a vision developed from within the community that expresses the goals and desires of area residents and businesses. My plan will transform a neglected community. It has been done before, and it must be done now. We can revitalize, transform and improve the quality of life in Northwest Jacksonville. This will finally move us to become a city for everyone.

While it is not the job of the city to guarantee the success of private businesses, the city can and should take measures within its ability to foster and encourage prosperous local business in all of its areas.