

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE
CITY OF JACKSONVILLE CHARTER
CREATING THE URBAN CORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Section I. Findings.

(a) In 1968, the newly formed Consolidated City of Jacksonville covenanted with its citizens that the Consolidated City would furnish governmental services throughout the community, including childcare, fire protection, health, hospital, library, police protection, recreation and parks, and welfare services. Charter, Section 2.04. In addition, special consideration was given to the area which had constituted the original city of Jacksonville, "the first urban services district". In addition to streets and highways and other general services, the Consolidated City promised to provide "water supply, sanitary sewers, street lighting, street cleaning, and garbage and refuse collection." Charter, Section 2.05. As stated in the 1966 Blueprint for Improvement of the City of Jacksonville:

If we are to prosper as an economic area, as a community of the future, as individuals in pursuit of our goals in life, we must insure that our core city is viable and able to speak to the world as a living testimony of our accomplishments. To settle for anything less will inevitably lead to the compounding of our community problems and the infliction of further personal hardships on our citizens as individuals."

However, as found by the Task Force on Consolidated Government in its 2014 Blueprint for Improvement II, and notwithstanding the promises of Consolidation and the guarantees of the Charter, "Yet, many neighborhoods [of the Urban Core] still do not have basic public services, such as city water and sewer services, paved roads, and functioning storm water systems, and a renewed commitment to the promise of fundamental government services for all is in order."

(b) Some 50 years after the citizens of Jacksonville voted for consolidation, and after the residents of the Urban Core were promised they would receive essential services to "insure that our core city is viable and able to speak to the world as a living testimony of our accomplishments", the Urban Core of the Consolidated City and, in particular, the northwest area of Duval County, continue to have miles of unpaved roads, nonexistent or poorly maintained sidewalks, many homes and businesses without water lines or city sewer services, deteriorating storm sewers and sanitary sewers and a lack of basic city services and infrastructure. Without needed infrastructure and services, economic development has stagnated and as portended by the 1966 Blueprint, this has "inevitably led to a compounding of our community problems and infliction of further personal hardships on our citizens as individuals".

(c) The Urban Core largely correlates to what is referred to by the Florida Department of Health as Health Zone 1. The data show that the decades of

socioeconomic and health and welfare deficits in the Urban Core are incompatible with minimum standards of living for a modern, first world city. This area of Duval County, which includes northwest Jacksonville, has the lowest rates of education, employment and real estate values, the greatest health and infrastructure disparities and the highest crime of any other area. Approximately twice as many residents of Zone 1 live below the poverty line than residents of other areas of the county; the unemployment rate is nearly double and the median household income is approximately 40% less than the county as a whole; and residents of Health Zone 1 live 6 years less than their fellow citizens living in other areas of Duval County. The deprivation, poverty and failure of basic health services to the residents of the Urban Core is reflected in the infant mortality rate, a primary indicium of basic health and welfare of a community and its quality of life. A child born to a mother living in Health Zone 1 has a 40% higher likelihood of infant mortality than a child born to a mother living outside Health Zone 1. The infant mortality rate in Health Zone 1 not only leads Duval County, but is one of the highest in the State of Florida and the nation. Not surprisingly, given the deep poverty and socioeconomic and health deficits in Health Zone 1, this area of Duval County has the highest crime rate and is a major contributor to Duval County leading the state of Florida year after year in homicides per capita.

(d) Given the generational poverty and longstanding disparities in education, health, economic opportunity and infrastructure that define the Urban Core when compared to the rest of Jacksonville, there is a sense of hopelessness, frustration and a longstanding and strong belief of area residents, which are predominantly African American, that the City has ignored its responsibilities to their community and the promises of consolidation.

- The 2019-2020 Charter Revision Commission finds that the Urban Core and Health Zone 1 have not received the basic water, sewer, street and other infrastructure services and capital investment which are essential to economic development and the health and welfare of a community; nor have they received the minimum governmental services and socioeconomic support expected of a modern, progressive government and essential to an acceptable quality of life.
- The 2019-2020 Charter Revision Commission finds that the substantial disparity in the health, safety and economic development of Zone 1, as compared to other areas and communities of Duval County, has existed for decades and is a major contributor to the generational poverty, crime, unemployment and poor health besetting many residents of this area.
- The 2019-2020 Charter Revision Commission further finds that the City of Jacksonville cannot achieve the rightful expectations of its citizenry or fulfill its potential unless and until there is reasonable equality of services, economic development opportunities and quality of education, health and welfare shared by all Duval County residents; that to achieve that goal, it is necessary and proper that an Urban Core Development Authority be created to focus the necessary attention and resources on the Urban Core as defined herein, and assure

comparable services and opportunities are available to all areas of the Consolidated City of Jacksonville; and to finally give priority to fulfilling the decades old promise of the Consolidated City of Jacksonville that "we must ensure that our core city is viable and able to speak to the world as a living testimony of our accomplishments".

Section II. Establishment of Urban Core Development Authority; Purpose.

(a) There is hereby created and established the Urban Core Development Authority of the Consolidated City of Jacksonville which shall provide a singular focus on the infrastructure, governmental service needs and economic development of the Urban Core; establish and implement a master plan and coordinate public and private resources to address and resolve the poverty, socioeconomic and other disparities of the Urban Core; collect data and undertake research as necessary to establish benchmarks against which progress can be monitored and measured; provide leadership and work collaboratively with other governmental agencies, departments, nonprofit organizations and community groups to provide the cohesive engagement necessary to address the multifaceted issues and deficits of the Urban Core; and seek, apply and administer the resources and assets necessary to empower the citizens of the Urban Core in redeveloping and improving their community in order that it may become a healthy and viable participant in the growth and prosperity of the City of Jacksonville. The Urban Core Development Authority shall assure the promises of consolidation to the Urban Core are finally met; establish short term and long term goals and performance expectations which shall be regularly evaluated and reported to the public; and shall assure implementation of initiatives that provide maximum benefits to the community and the health, welfare and economic prosperity of its residents.

(b) The geographic area of the Urban Core Development Authority shall be Health Zone 1 of the Consolidated City of Duval County as identified by the Florida Department of health in 2019 and shown on the Boundary Map attached hereto.