City of Jacksonville

117 W. Duval Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Meeting Minutes

Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, October 21, 2026

12:00 PM

Don Davis Room,
1st Floor, City Hall

Jacksonville Waterways Commission

CM Rahman K. Johnson, Ph.D, Chair
CM Mike Gay, Vice Chair
CM Jimmy Peluso
CM Matt Carlucci, Alternate
Jon Michael Barker
Robert Birtalan
James Hobson
State Rep. Dean Black
Mark Devereaux
Andrew Fraden
Marc Hardesty
Matt Jones
Scott Thomas
General Public Rep - Vacant
D. R. Repass, Planning Commission
Adam Hoyles, Environmental Protection Board

Rebecca Bolton, Legislative Assistant II
Shannon MacGillis, Office of General Counsel
Dr. Gerard Pinto, Jacksonville University
Steven Libby, Council Research
Jim Suber, Waterways Coordinator

1. Call To Order

Chair Jon Michael Barker convened the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

2. Review of Potential 2027 FIND Projects

Mr. Brian Burket, Parks Department, presented an overview of potential 2027 Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) projects to the Subcommittee. He began by stating that the FIND projects the City applied for in 2026 were all funded in full. He stated that those projects were Downtown Dredging, the Sisters Creek Transient Facility, and the T.K. Stokes Boat Ramp bulkhead design project.

Mr. Burket then provided an overview of projects since 2022. He explained that projects begin in a design phase and then transition to a construction phase. He discussed the Hans G. Tanzler Jr. Marina project and stated that FIND funded its design costs, but that construction costs are $36 million, which FIND could not afford due to its funding caps. He added that the City Council had already funded $12 million for the first phase of the marina's development, and that future allocations would require returning to the City Council. He then discussed the Pottsburg Creek project, whose design phase was funded in 2022, and explained that the City received construction funding for the project in 2025. He added that the project recently went out to bid, but that all bids had to be rejected, and that the project would be readvertised soon.

Mr. Adam Hoyles asked why the bids were rejected. Mr. Burket stated that one of the fourteen contractors that responded to the bid filed a complaint about the process, having found a discrepancy in the advertisement. He added that the Procurement Division determined that the fair way to resolve the issue was to reject all bids and readvertise.

Mr. Burket then stated that the Mike McCue Boat Ramp project and the Oak Harbor Boat Ramp project are both complete. He added that the design of the Thomas Creek Fish Camp Adaptive Kayak Launch was funded by FIND, that its construction was funded through the CIP, and that the project is also complete.

Mr. Burket then reviewed new design projects funded in 2023, which were the Sisters Creek project and Downtown Dredging. He added that the construction phases of both projects were funded in 2026.

Mr. Burket then reviewed the only new design project funded in 2024, the Wayne B. Stevens Boat Ramp Improvements. He added that the project is on the list of staff-recommended FIND projects for 2027.

Mr. Burket then reviewed the new design project funded in 2025, which was the Seiden Park development. He added that more time would be needed to finish its design, and that the project is projected to be ready for consideration in 2028.

Mr. Burket then reviewed the list of staff-recommended FIND projects for 2027. He stated that the Sisters Creek Dock Extension project and the Wayne B. Stevens Boat Ramp project are both continuation projects. He added that the Sisters Creek Transient Facility project was also funded in 2026, but because the project's scope totaled $6 million, it was divided into two phases. He explained that the City received FIND funding in 2026 to build the bathhouse and the access pier, ahead of construction of the dock. He noted that the FIND request is $2 million, for a total project value of $4.4 million with the City's match.

Mr. Burket then reviewed the Wayne B. Stevens Boat Ramp Improvements project, stating that the design is nearing completion and permits are pending. He described the project's design and stated that

the original intention was to restore the boat ramp, but that it was discovered that JEA had installed a force main under the boat ramp some years ago, which prevents the ramp from being restored. Mr. Burket explained that the discovery required the project to be reevaluated, and that because boat ramps are already in the area, the City could instead build a recreational use the park does not currently have, a dedicated kayak launch and fishing area. He explained that the project would include additional revetment to stabilize the shoreline, a grassed area to give the site a more park-like appearance, a pad for a picnic table, accessible pathways from the parking lots, and a new ADA space.

Mr. Burket then reviewed the St. Johns Marina Boat Ramp Replacement project, noting that it is the only boat ramp Downtown. He stated that the boat ramp is currently closed because the construction of a tower next door has made it unsafe for public use, but that the closure is an opportunity to make enhancements to the ramp.

He explained that the City had previously attempted to dredge and lengthen the boat ramp, but had been unable to because the design criteria of the adjacent bulkhead were unknown, and no engineer would authorize design drawings for the project. He stated that the bulkhead has since been replaced by the City in preparation for development of the adjacent property, and that the project can now proceed.

Mr. Burket added that DIA had provided funding for the design and permitting, and that because the project is a replacement rather than a new boat ramp, permitting should proceed fairly quickly. He stated that if the project received FIND funding, construction should be complete by the ribbon-cutting for the adjacent property.

Mr. Andrew Fraden asked about a previous discussion of adding parking to the area, and whether the parking had already been added. Mr. Burket stated that the parking had not yet been added, but that the work has been contracted. He added that the current driveway entrance would become the back door area for the redevelopment of the adjacent property, and that the new entrance to the boat ramp would be underneath the Acosta Bridge.

Mr. Burket stated that those three projects bring the City to its expected FIND cap, but that Commissioner Callaway, the FIND Commissioner for Duval County, encouraged him to request more than the City might receive. Mr. Burket stated that the Stinson Park bulkhead is a wooden bulkhead in need of replacement, and that without FIND funding, a considerable amount of Parks Department maintenance funds would need to be used. He stated that the Director of Parks was therefore asking for support to recommend the bulkhead replacement as a FIND project for 2027. He added that the proposal is to replace the wooden bulkhead with vinyl sheets and a concrete cap, which would have a longer lifespan.

Mr. Burket then provided the Subcommittee with a list of potential alternative FIND projects for consideration, along with a list of other projects that were considered but are not advisable at this time. He added that most of the projects not advisable at this time are in that category because of a lack of site control.

He noted that there has been considerable public interest in reopening the pier at George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier State Park, but that it is a state park and the City has no site control. Chair Barker noted that the Hogpen Creek dredge is listed as a considered project, but expressed uncertainty about whether

it is something the Subcommittee could help with. He added that the problem may not be site access, but that the extent of the issues is unknown and that FIND funding should not be used for repeat projects such as dredging.

Chair Barker then stated that the site control issue applies to the Collins Road and Blanding Boulevard kayak launches. Mr. Hoyles stated that he had spoken with the land trust about the matter the previous week, and that the land trust may be amenable to a conversation about it. Chair Barker stated that more than the land trust property would be needed.

Mr. Burket stated that the City had spoken with the North Florida Land Trust, which was willing. He stated that when the City tried to incorporate the launches into Public Works road widening projects, the construction cost estimate was over $1 million, and that he could not justify that price for a roadside kayak launch. He noted that the road widening project is moving ahead without the kayak launch, but that the launch could be added later if there is interest.

Mr. Fraden asked for clarification on whether the three acquisition projects listed under Potential Alternative FIND Projects would involve purchasing the properties. Mr. Burket stated that they would, but that for acquisition projects, FIND awards only 25 percent of the costs, compared with 50 percent for development projects. He stated that the City would have to provide the remaining 75 percent. Mr. Burket stated that the City has applied for acquisition projects in the past, but that acquisition projects involve more risk. He explained that deals with landowners could fall through, leaving the City with funds allocated to a grant that may not go anywhere.

Chair Barker asked for clarification on the Back River channel marking project. Mr. Burket stated that the project concerns the shoaling area near Palms Fish Camp. He explained that FIND considers dredging ineligible if the area is outside a designated channel. He added that channel markings would be used for safety reasons, but could also indicate when a shoal grows past a marked channel and becomes eligible for dredging.

Chair Barker asked whether design work had already been done on the Metro Park dock redevelopment project. Mr. Burket stated that Metro Park is being redesigned as an entirely new park, and that the redesign includes the park's waterfront. He added that design and permitting of the replacement dock are underway, and that the estimated construction cost comes from that work.

Mr. Burket stated that the funding allocated for the park by the City Council does not include funds for the waterfront portion. He explained that the options are to prioritize FIND funding for the waterfront portion over other projects for 2027, to wait another year to consider it, or for the City Council to fund it directly.

Mr. Marc Hardesty asked who was responsible for determining where the navigation markers would be placed. Captain Jim Suber, Waterways Coordinator, explained that the Coast Guard mandates and inspects the markers, but that the City is responsible for maintaining them.

Mr. Scott Thomas asked whether the City had its own maintenance crew for aids to navigation (ATONs). Captain Suber stated that the City does not have any dedicated crews for private aids to navigation (PATONs), but that it has a continuing contractor. He added that he and his assistant inspect

the PATONs and notify the contractor of any issues.

3. Prioritize and Rank Projects

Chair Barker asked members whether they had any questions for Mr. Burket regarding the staff-recommended FIND projects for 2027. No questions were asked. Chair Barker stated that the list is well thought out and would expand public access to the City's waterways.

Chair Barker asked Mr. Burket whether, if FIND did not favor one of the recommended projects, the Metro Park dock redevelopment project could replace that proposal. Mr. Burket stated that it may be better to wait a year, and that it may be premature to push for funding of that project because it may impede construction activities at the park. He stated that he would look into it.

Chair Barker asked the Subcommittee whether, if FIND did not favor one of the recommended projects, it wanted to prioritize a particular alternative project or proceed down the list in order. Mr. Fraden asked whether the Back River channel marking project needed to be prioritized to address any major safety issues. Mr. Burket stated that he would defer to Captain Suber, but that maintaining the safety buoys in that area would address safety issues. Captain Suber agreed that maintaining the safety buoys in that area to mark the zone would address safety issues. He then asked Mr. Hardesty about the possibility that the sandbar could be expanding. Mr. Hardesty stated that the sandbar is currently stable. He added that there were initially issues with the buoys' tethers breaking, but that the tethers have been in good shape for a year to a year and a half. Captain Suber agreed, stating that the buoys have survived nor'easters and high water.

Chair Barker asked whether there were enough resources to repair the buoys if needed. Mr. Burket stated that the City has maintenance funds to keep the buoys in place.

Chair Barker asked Mr. Burket whether there was a particular alternative project he would prefer to prioritize. Mr. Burket explained that the first two staff-recommended projects are continuation projects, so he expected them to receive support from FIND. He then explained that the St. Johns Marina Boat Ramp Replacement project is new, but that it takes advantage of an opportunity, and he expressed hope that it would receive support from FIND. He stated that he believed it might be questionable whether the fourth project listed, the Stinson Park bulkhead replacement project, would receive support from FIND. He added that if the Subcommittee was considering alternatives to that project in that price range, he would advocate for the Mayport Boat Ramp dock replacement project.

Mr. Burket explained that the docks in that area are heavily used, and that because of their location near the mouth of the river, with heavy boat traffic and strong currents, the docks are regularly damaged. He added that maintaining the docks requires regular spending of maintenance funds, which adds up over time. He explained that the City can continue to maintain the docks, but that it is a matter of long-term planning. He added that the City has used sturdier docks in other locations, and that he believed doing so here would help offset the regular maintenance costs.

Captain Suber asked Mr. Burket to confirm that the Stinson Park bulkhead replacement project would not require design work because it is a replacement. Mr. Burket confirmed this and added that the project is eligible for a permit exemption.

A motion to adopt the staff-recommended FIND projects for 2027 was made and seconded. The motion was approved without objection.

A motion to rank the potential alternative FIND projects in list order, beginning with the Mayport Boat Ramp dock replacement project, was made and seconded. The motion was approved without objection.

4. Public Comment

Mr. John Nooney expressed support for the Subcommittee's discussions.

5. Adjournment

Chair Barker adjourned the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

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Posted: 10/28/26, 4:00 p.m.