Funding for the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency was approved by voters as a 20 year extension of the local one-cent sales tax option in November 2014. The referendum is our promise to the community. It reads: “...To provide for projects designed to improve roads; reduce traffic congestion; protect lakes and water quality; reduce flooding; expand and operate parks and recreational areas; invest in economic development; and other uses authorized under Florida law; and to seek matching funds for these purposes, shall the existing one cent sales surtax within Leon County be extended until December 31, 2039, with project expenditures subject to annual independent audit and review by a citizens advisory committee.”

It is a pleasure to report the significant accomplishments of Leon County – City of Tallahassee Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency as we work to create transformational projects that shape the future of our community. The end of 2019 marks a major milestone for the successful Blueprint program as we transition from Blueprint 2000 to Blueprint 2020.

The past two decades have left a legacy of large-scale, signature infrastructure projects, including Cascades Park, Franklin Boulevard, Capital Circle Southeast, and Capital Circle Northwest, along with the preservation of sensitive lands and the construction of miles of greenways and trails. These projects have added immeasurable value to our community, and we thank all of those who have served on the Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors (IA Board) over the years for their leadership and direction, which was vital to Blueprint’s success.

Approved by voters in 2016 after a comprehensive two-year engagement process, Blueprint 2020 includes 27 projects located across the county and supports the newly created Tallahassee - Leon County Office of Economic Vitality. The projects include gateways and trails and add abundant economic vitality to ensure our continued growth while maximizing our public resources and assets as these projects advance through construction.

While the official start date of the new program is January 2020, the IA Board gave direction to begin several projects in advance of that date. As a result, the Blueprint 2020 program is underway with many high-impact projects already moving forward, including Orange Avenue-Meridian Road Placemaking, the Northeast Gateway, Lake Jackson Trail and the Northeast Connector Corridor.

Of significant note was the establishment of the Office of Economic Vitality in advance of the 2020 funding, allowing us to continue to create the vibrant community our citizens desire with a diverse local economy that benefits everyone. Our economic outlook is bright. More and more businesses, from tech to manufacturing, are choosing Tallahassee-Leon County. Taxable sales are up, unemployment is down, the private sector continues to grow, and the word is out: Tallahassee-Leon County is Florida’s Capital for Business!

The Blueprint 2020 program is off to a strong start and will continue to thrive under the leadership of the Intergovernmental Agency Board, ensuring our continued success over the years to come.
The Blueprint Infrastructure Program has made significant progress towards realizing improvements for the Tallahassee - Leon County community. Projects initiated within the past year will provide $100 MILLION COMMUNITY INVESTMENT in improved roadways, new parks and trails, enhanced community spaces, and new mobility options. $22 MILLION was allocated for infrastructure in FY 2019.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- Orange-Meridian Placemaking Temporary Improvements: COMPLETED
- Capital Cascades Trail Segment 3D-A: COMPLETED
- Northeast Gateway PD&E: INITIATED
- Blueprint 2020 Infrastructure Program Implementation Plan: APPROVED
- Eight (8) Projects COMPETITIVELY ADVERTISED, including the Northeast Connector Corridor
- Broadmoor Pond Park: OPENED

AWARDS & GRANTS
TRAILBLAZER AWARD
FLORIDA LANDMARKS COUNCIL AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

2018 PROJECT OF THE YEAR
AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION (LOCAL AND FLORIDA CHAPTER)
CATEGORIES: $5-$25 MILLION TRANSPORTATION, BEAUTIFICATION, AND MULTI-FUNCTION
FAMILY!
Phase 2 Roadway Improvements & Capital Cascades Trail Segment 3D-A

CASCADES TRAIL SOCIAL SPACES GRANT
KNIGHT FOUNDATION COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
GRANT AWARD: $500,000
Capital Cascades Trail

WATER QUALITY GRANT
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION GRANT AWARD: $500,000
Capital Cascades Trail Segment 3D-B Regional Stormwater Facility

TRANSPORTATION GRANT
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, TRANSPORTATION REGIONAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM
AWARD: $5,500,000
Northeast Gateway

BLUEPRINT INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

ORANGE-MERIDIAN PLACEMAKING
In December 2018, the Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors, comprised of the County and City Commissions, approved the construction of a “POP-UP PARK” and “COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE.” After collecting citizen input on desired improvements to the site, construction began in June 2019 and was completed in September 2019. The site is currently home to many activities and the temporary improvements are designed to support and enhance community use of this public space.

Updates include the installation of a stage for community use, gravel parking area, a water fountain, bike racks, picnic tables, restroom, and lighting, as well as drainage and sidewalk improvements. Other features include the installation of a Little Free Library station and a kiosk to provide information on future Blueprint projects and community activities.

NORTHEAST CONNECTOR: BANNERMAN ROAD WIDENING
This project relieves congestion by WIDENING BANNERMAN ROAD TO FOUR LANES from Thomasville Road to Tekesta Road, studies the feasibility of widening to Meridian Road, INCREASES PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS with multi-use paths and sidewalks, and EXPANDS THE GREENWAYS SYSTEM by constructing the Meridian Road Trail from Bannerman Road south to Lake Overstreet. The PD&E re-evaluation and feasibility study were advertised during the reporting period.

NORTHEAST GATEWAY: WELAUNEE BOULEVARD PD&E
This project creates a GATEWAY FOR NORTHEAST LEON COUNTY through the construction of a regional road to support a possible new I-10 interchange, constructs Welaunee Boulevard and creates a 17-MILE TRAIL LOOP by connecting the Miccosukee Greenway to a NEW 8.4 MILE WELAUNEE GREENWAY via a bridge. The PD&E was initiated during the reporting period.
CAPITAL CASCADES TRAIL SEGMENT 3

Tallahassee’s newest, premier infrastructure accomplishment in the heart of the downtown and college district. Funded primarily by the local option penny sales tax, the facilities combine multi-modal design, recreational amenities (trails, playgrounds, and market areas), environmental improvements, and community culture and arts to create a project that embodies the Blueprint mission. After years of planning, Segment 3 opened to the public and has been consistently attracting visitors ever since.

1. Connects the Capital Cascades Trail to the ST. MARKS TRAIL and the Capital City to the Sea Trails network. The trailhead will feature on-site parking and a covered, well-lit pavilion for trailhead visitors.

2. COAL CHUTE POND provides stormwater retention and treatment for FAMU Way. The pond will be enhanced through the inclusion of large-scale musical instruments and a trail loop along with other amenities such as lighting, benches, landscaping, and a drinking fountain.

3. The signature SKATE PARK will have street-style skateable elements that also serve as public art installations.

4. A new RESTROOMS will be located near FAMU Way playground at Railroad Square to serve this frequently visited social gathering space.

5. The HISTORY & CULTURE TRAIL honors the rich history of resilient neighborhoods, civil rights advocates, and economic engines along FAMU Way and Capital Cascades Trail through artistic, cultural, and historical interpretations.

6. This new space will complement nearby residential areas, promote community gathering, and provide recreational opportunities.

7. The four-acre pond will provide water quality treatment for the St. Augustine Branch Watershed.

The facility, coupled with FAMU Way, now serves as a gateway to the FAMU community, and has greatly increased the area’s sense of place and has expanded recreational areas consistent with the Blueprint Promise Goals. Segment 3 from Pinellas Street to Gamble Street opened to the public in the reporting period and the next phase will bring new opportunities to play, relax, and reflect on the history of this unique space in the Tallahassee-Leon County community.
Since voter approval of the 2014 referendum to extend the penny sales tax through 2040, the IA Board has taken significant action to prioritize all projects and to ready the Blueprint 2020 program for implementation. In 2017, the IA Board completed project prioritization and in June 2018, the IA Board approved an Implementation Plan for the first five years of the Blueprint 2020 program, funding 18 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS and providing a CAPITAL INVESTMENT TOTALING $274 MILLION.

**FUNDING STRATEGY**

The IA Board approved a forward thinking strategy to couple sales tax revenues with a bond in FY 2022 to advance the construction of major regional transportation improvements and community enhancements.

**REGIONAL MOBILITY & GATEWAY PROJECTS**

- Capital Circle Southwest (FY Priority)
- NE Connector Corridor: Widening of Bannerman Rd.
- NE Connector Corridor: Widening of Thomas St.
- Orange Avenue: Widening from Adams St. to Springhill Rd.
- North Monroe Gateway

**COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT DISTRICTS, CONNECTIVITY, & QUALITY OF LIFE**

- Orange-Meridian Placemaking
- Meadow Medway
- Lake Lafayette and St. Marks Regional Park
- Monroe-Adams Corridor Placemaking
- Midtown Placemaking
- Lake Jackson Trail

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

During this reporting period, Blueprint has participated in OVER 50 COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES including public meetings, pop-up events and door to door outreach. Public engagement is the cornerstone of the Blueprint Program. All projects have been, and will continue to be, developed in partnership with the Tallahassee-Leon County community so that the end product reflects the community’s vision.

**PUBLIC SPACES TO GREAT PLACES SUMMIT**

**SKATEABLE ART OUTREACH**

**LAKE JACKSON TRAIL**

**DEBBIE LIGHTSEY NATURE PARK**

**NORTHEAST GATEWAY: WELAUNEE BOULEVARD PDA**

**COAL CHUTE POND**
When you are looking to grow, relocate, or start your business in Florida’s Capital City, the TALLAHASSEE-LEON COUNTY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC VITALITY can guide you in a variety of ways: site location, talent solutions, and/or financial assistance, for instance.

To foster a strong business climate, the Office of Economic Vitality provides data, resources, and support to site selectors, state partners, and business leaders in the community alike. We serve as the connector between state economic development, workforce development, and business development partners to ensure that Tallahassee-Leon County remains competitive for expanding businesses and emerging opportunities.

The Magnetics Task Force was formed in 2018, as directed by the Tallahassee - Leon County Economic Development Strategic Plan. This taskforce conducts business intelligence to identify potential customers for applied science technologies which may benefit from a location close to the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory and other research centers of excellence.

Since its inception, staff has worked to scout high-technology business leads and prioritize recruitment efforts. In a year of targeted business development efforts, project activity has tripled.

AMERICA’S COMPETITIVENESS EXCHANGE AMBASSADORS PARTNERS SINCE 2017

Selected to be Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) Ambassadors and participate in a tour of Puerto Rico’s centers of innovation and entrepreneurship.

TALLAHASSEE - LEON COUNTY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC VITALITY

AWARDS

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (IEDC) | CATEGORY: INNOVATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEEK, SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN: #FLCAPITAL4Biz

CATEGORY: INNOVATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2ND ANNIVERSARY, WORKING CLASS WEDNESDAY

NACEDO | CATEGORY: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SILVER AWARD RECIPIENT FOR HURRICANE MICHAEL | CATEGORY: RESILIENCY, RECOVERY, AND MITIGATION, POPULATION: 200,000 TO 500,000

EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MWSBE PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

NACEDO | CATEGORY: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

QUARTERLY ECONOMIC DASHBOARD

NACEDO | CATEGORY: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2018

EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2019
INTERNATIONAL TRADE ASSOCIATION
Partnered with the International Trade Administration to assist Tallahassee - Leon County companies that want to sell their products and services abroad.

POWER FORWARD ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCHANGE
Hosted the Power Forward Workshop Entrepreneurial Exchange, in partnership with First Commerce Credit Union, as follow up to the February Power Forward speaker series with Shark Tank’s Kevin O’Leary, which hosted over 50 attendees.

DISPARITY STUDY
Completed a 2019 Disparity Study of the City of Tallahassee, Leon County Government and Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency and continue to finalize consolidation of the MWBE Policy and Procedures for better collaboration.

TRAINING OUR TALENT
Hosted the second Training Our Talent program and attendees engaged with nationally acclaimed multi-generational expert, Alicia Rainwater, from the Center for Generational Kinetics.

LEON WORKS EXPO
Staged the Annual Leon Works Expo to connect 60+ employers with high school students from Leon and Gadsden (est. 480) and community job seekers (est. 100) interested in finding new opportunities in skilled careers.

MWSBE WEBINARS
Filmed four webinars on building business capacity and conducted monthly certification workshops for Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises focused on bonding, securing business capital, risk management and financial preparedness.

ECONOMIC INDICATOR TRACKING
Actively tracking more than 80 economic indicators for the Tallahassee - Leon County area, with 20% consisting of monthly or quarterly data, and the remainder annual data.

QUARTERLY ECONOMIC DASHBOARD
Produced the Quarterly Economic Dashboard presenting data on thirteen economic indicators including Employment, Tallahassee International Airport (TLH) Passengers, Median Home Values, & Commercial Vacancy Rates for Tallahassee’s Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

DATA DRIVER
Launched the Data Driver series, to give a monthly picture of macroeconomic, large employer, and startup activity, representative of the Office’s commitment to a robust dialogue about characteristics of the local economy and to spotlight ecosystem partners. The monthly compilation includes Employment, Unemployment, Taxable Sales, Vacancy Rates, SBA Loans, and Commercial Utility Starts.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC VITALITY

BUSINESS VITALITY & INTELLIGENCE FY 2019
42 BUSINESS CONSULTATIONS
7 ECONOMIC DATA PUBLICATIONS
25 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS
1,000 BUSINESS LEADERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE
38 ACTIVE PROJECTS

BUSINESS VITALITY & INTELLIGENCE FY 2019

ECONOMIC DASHBOARD

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC VITALITY VISION
Elevate Tallahassee-Leon County’s profile to promote and support our diverse and vibrant economy.

MINORITY, WOMEN, AND SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES
73 CERTIFIED BUSINESSES
59 BUSINESS CONSULTATIONS
84 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED
80 ACADEMY ATTENDANCES
31 BUSINESS REFERRALS FOR ASSISTANCE
16 SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

“...all our communication with the Office of Economic Vitality, we have witnessed them as the glue that binds people and resources, and a facilitator that paves the way for new horizons.”

BURAK SEN
CONNECTED WISE
AFTER A RECENT VISIT TO TALLAHASSEE-LEON COUNTY, HOSTED BY OEV

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS: 25
BUSINESS CONSULTATIONS: 42
ECONOMIC DATA PUBLICATIONS: 7
BUSINESS LEADERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: 1,000
ACTIVE PROJECTS: 38

cost of living
Participated in the C2ER Cost of Living Index, which ranked the Tallahassee metro area at 3.4% below the national average for cost of living out of 270 urban areas.

TRAINING OUR TALENT

ECONOMIC INDICATOR TRACKING

DATA DRIVER

Launched the Data Driver series, to give a monthly picture of macroeconomic, large employer, and startup activity, representative of the Office’s commitment to a robust dialogue about characteristics of the local economy and to spotlight ecosystem partners. The monthly compilation includes Employment, Unemployment, Taxable Sales, Vacancy Rates, SBA Loans, and Commercial Utility Starts.
After the Targeted Industry Study identified Applied Science and Innovation — and highlighted magnetics specifically — as a key industry, the Office of Economic Vitality formally launched the “MAGNETIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD” campaign in January 2019. The campaign was established to highlight Tallahassee - Leon County’s resources such as the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, Danfoss Turbocor, Innovation Park, FSU-FAMU College of Engineering, and other research centers of excellence.

Did you know that Tallahassee - Leon County is home to nearly 20 dynamic government technology firms who are on the leading edge of innovation in this sector? The Office of Economic Vitality coordinates sector-wide collaboration between government technology firms to help local firms identify synergies and issues they have in common. The Office of Economic Vitality leverages resources to support talent recruitment and retention and executes marketing campaigns to promote government technology and its importance for Tallahassee-Leon County.

Nationwide, employment of information technology professionals is projected to grow 13% from 2016 to 2026, faster than the average for all occupations. Demand for these workers is higher in our community and stems from a greater emphasis on cloud computing, information security, and the collection and storage of big data.

In 2019, 824 GovTech industries employed 5,564 people across our community at an average annual wage of $89K.

SOURCE: BLST