

NEWS RELEASE
June 20, 2000

Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney announced today the formation of Citizens for a Better Jacksonville, a group of community leaders and advocates committed to supporting the September 5th referendum. The announcement was made at the Better Jacksonville Headquarters, 2727 Atlantic Blvd.

“These are civic, business, religious, education, environmental and community leaders who have all come together to move our city forward by volunteering to work for the passage of The Better Jacksonville Plan,” said Mayor Delaney. “This type of grassroots effort shows wide-spread community support for the plan.”

Citizens for a Better Jacksonville will be chaired by Ron Salem, a community leader and businessman from Arlington. The committee will be co-chaired by Flossie Brunson, a civic leader from the Urban Core area. The two will lead a group of volunteers to help educate the public about The Better Jacksonville Plan, increase voter turn-out September 5th and increase awareness about the benefits of the plan.

Other members of Citizens for a Better Jacksonville include:

- Judith Albertelli, Commission on the Status of Women
- Barbara Broward, Environmental Protection Board and the Preservation Project Oversight Committee
- Richard Browdy, Duval County Housing Finance Authority
- Cynthia Burgin, Commission on the Status of Women
- Ken Charron, Southeast Citizens Planning Advisory Committee
- Toni Crawford, Duval County Republican Party
- Vera Davis, neighborhood leader
- Margo Dundon, Museum of Science and History
- John Falconetti, Library Board of Trustees

- Mark Foss, Greater Arlington/Beaches Citizens Planning Advisory Committee
- Bill Gulliford, former Mayor of Atlantic Beach
- Dr. Anne Hopkins, President of University of North Florida
- Dr. Jimmy Jenkins, President of Edward Waters College
- Tomas Jimenez, Mayor's Hispanic American Advisory Board
- Warren Jones, former Jacksonville City Councilman
- Gary Keys, Jacksonville Association of Firefighters
- Emily Lisska, Jacksonville Historical Society
- Carol Mathews, Stewards of the St. Johns River and the Preservation Project Oversight Committee
- Jean McCorkle, Jacksonville Planning Commission
- Ginny Myrick, political consultant
- Rev. John Newman, Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
- Dr. Janetta Norman, Urban Core Citizens Planning Advisory Committee
- Robert Norton, President/CEO Shands Jacksonville
- Jake Olsen, Past President, Concerned Taxpayers of Duval County
- John Parker, union representative
- Rita Perry, Jacksonville Free Press
- Lanny Russell, Library Board of Trustees and the Preservation Project Oversight Committee
- David Stevens, Fraternal Order of Police
- Brad Straley, Northwest Citizens Planning Advisory Committee
- Penny Thompson, The Jacksonville Zoo honorary board member
- Clark Vargas, Hispanic American Business Association
- Arnold Whisenant, Southwest Citizens Planning Advisory Committee
- Carole Endsley Whitson, North Citizens Planning Advisory Committee

The Better Jacksonville Plan is a comprehensive approach to growth management, transportation, the environment and economic development for our city. The plan allows voters to decide if they would like to fund improvements through a half-penny increase in the sales tax.

The first part of the plan includes \$1.5 billion in improvements to our transportation system. The plan includes resurfacing every city-maintained road in Duval County that hasn't been resurfaced in the last 15 years, roughly 2,000 miles. The plan also includes much-needed drainage projects, new sidewalks and bike paths, safety grade crossings and the purchase of land for at least one rapid transit right-of-way. Through this accelerated road plan, projects that were expected to take decades will be complete within 7

to 10 years.

The second part of the plan includes using \$225 million to improve our environment and target economic development. Funding will be dedicated to preserving our urban forests through the Preservation Project, improving neighborhood parks, testing and remediating contaminated sites, and laying sewer lines in sanitary nuisance areas to get homes near the St. Johns River and its tributaries off septic tanks. In addition to efforts to protect and preserve our environment, efforts will be made to boost commerce in targeted areas north and west of the river. Additional funds to north Jacksonville will allow the Jacksonville Zoo, through a matching grant, to construct new exhibits and attract new visitors. The Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Trust Fund and Cecil Field on the Westside will be able to create new jobs in areas of our community that can accommodate growth.

The last part of the plan includes using nearly \$490 million to build new and improve existing public facilities. Funding will be dedicated to building a new main library and improving libraries in neighborhoods to better accommodate computer technology and the increase in demand for these facilities. Constructing a new sports and entertainment arena is also a priority because our current facility, the Veterans Memorial Coliseum, can not compete with other cities to attract desired cultural events. Plans also include building a new baseball park that will resemble a mini Camden Yards, with better amenities for fans. Finally, the plan sets aside funding for a new Duval County Courthouse, doubling the amount of existing space used for justice programs.

If approved by a majority of Duval County voters on September 5th, the sales tax would increase from 6 ½¢ on the dollar, to 7¢ beginning January 1st, 2001. The sales tax in Baker, Clay and Nassau Counties is currently 7 ¢, and officials in St. Johns County are seeking to increase their sales tax to 7 ¢ on the dollar. According to the Florida Department of Revenue, an additional ½ cent sales tax increase would cost the average Duval County household approximately \$85 a year, or less than \$3 per person per month.

Citizens with questions about The Better Jacksonville Plan can call the headquarters at 393-7982 or log-on to the website www.betterjax.com . Members of the media with questions can call Susie Wiles at 630-7312.

