



MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM #III.F

DATE: MARCH 17, 2025

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: STAFF

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION #25-01 (SB 1264 / HB 1125)

Regional Planning Councils are authorized and established in Chapters 163 and 186, F.S., with powers, responsibilities, and duties described in those and other chapters throughout Florida Statutes. Shortly before the commencement of the 2025 Florida Legislative Session, legislation proposing elimination of Regional Planning Councils entirely from Florida Statutes was introduced for consideration by Senator Collins (SB 1264) and Representative Owen (HB 1125) of Hillsborough County. A similar effort to eliminate Regional Planning Councils was introduced in 2021 and subsequently defeated.

While in 2021, SB 62 was singularly focused on Regional Planning Councils, SB 1264 and HB 1125 are lengthy bills which address myriad topics including the elimination of Regional Planning Councils from Florida Statute. Therefore, proposed SFRPC Resolution #25-01 requests that the language related to Regional Planning Councils be removed from these legislative proposals.

Please find herewith a Fact Sheet describing the services Councils provide across the state and their value to state and local governments, communities, and businesses. The Councils' work in the areas of Economic Development, Intergovernmental Relations, Urban Planning, Policy Development, Natural Resource Protection, and Emergency Management positively impact communities and regions throughout the state. In coordination with the Florida Regional Councils Association, legislative meetings are underway to inform state legislators about this legislation and the contributions of regional planning councils in their respective regions.

Recommendation

Approve Resolution #25-01



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RESOLUTION #25-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL REPRESENTING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF MONROE, MIAMI-DADE, AND BROWARD COUNTIES, FLORIDA; OPPOSING ELIMINATION OF STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION FOR REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS IN FLORIDA AS PROPOSED IN SENATE BILL 1264 AND HOUSE BILL 1125 OR SIMILAR PROPOSED LEGISLATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the South Florida Regional Planning Council’s three-county region is comprised of Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward counties, 67 municipalities contained therein, with more than 4.3 million residents; and

WHEREAS, the Council is a multi-purpose regional governmental entity with policy responsibilities including the areas of affordable housing, economic development, emergency preparedness, military installation readiness, data research and analysis, intergovernmental coordination and collaboration, and regional transportation; and

WHEREAS, for more than five decades Regional Planning Councils have served the public as Florida’s only multipurpose regional entities that coordinate intergovernmental solutions to multi-jurisdictional issues identified by their member local governments; and

WHEREAS, the 67 counties in the state are divided into 10 Regional Planning Councils which perform functions in Economic Development, Transportation, Emergency Preparedness, Regional Convening, and Resilience to the extent and as directed by their member counties, cities, and gubernatorial appointees; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Planning Councils compete for and bring to Florida millions of dollars in federal funds for Economic Development, Transportation, and Environmental and Brownfields Cleanup that would otherwise go to other states; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Planning Councils receive no regular general appropriation for operation from the State and, instead, are supported by local dues, federal grants, local contracts, and state contracts for specific programs implemented on behalf of the State; and

WHEREAS, Regional Planning Councils no longer exercise regulatory authority in the review of local comprehensive land use plans or, with the exception of the CityPark DRI which was legally grandfathered in Florida Statutes, existing Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) following the elimination of any new DRIs or state and regional views of existing DRIs in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Regional Planning Councils serve a critical role in hazardous material response coordination and training through the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) operated by each Council; and

WHEREAS, Regional Planning Councils regularly assist state agencies in implementing their statutory duties and legislative directives, along with coordinating these duties and directives with local input, at no charge to the State; and

WHEREAS, Regional Planning Councils assist local governments and other partners with information gathering and data analysis, work with local governments and various agencies to secure grant funding, provide staff support for specialized projects, and provide technical support and facilitation expertise; and

WHEREAS, proposed Senate Bill 1264 and House Bill 1125 will remove authorization and all references to Regional Planning Councils from the Florida Statutes, depriving the people of the State of the important work the Councils do and the Federal funds they bring into Florida.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL THAT:

Section 1. The Legislature is urged to remove all references to Regional Planning Councils from Senate Bill 1264 and House Bill 1125 or any similar proposed legislation and to leave Regional Planning Councils in the Florida Statutes; and

Section 2. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption hereof.

DULY ADOPTED by the South Florida Regional Planning Council this 17th day of March 2025.

Michelle Lincoln
Chair

Isabel Cosio Carballo, MPA
Executive Director

SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL COUNCILMEMBERS, EX OFFICIOS

FEBRUARY 2025

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Florida Regional Planning Councils: SB 1264 & HB 1125 Fact Sheet

Regional Planning Councils oppose the portions of SB 1264 and HB 1125 that remove all references to Florida's 10 Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) from Florida Statutes. Removing RPCs from Florida Statutes would negatively impact the state agencies, local governments and communities, small and large, who rely on RPCs to provide cost-effective services. Therefore, we respectfully ask that the language concerning RPCs be removed from both bills.

- **RPCs save state resources without duplicating services:** RPCs provide state agencies with a cost effective and efficient way to provide services and administer programs across Florida, which saves state resources.
- **RPCs help local governments meet state requirements and save money:** RPCs are recognized in Florida Statutes as the state's only non-regulatory, multipurpose regional entities that are positioned to address complex, regional and statewide challenges with innovative, effective solutions that meet the needs of the communities in each region.
- **RPCs provide critical services to small and rural communities:** RPCs ensure that small communities and rural areas can access technical assistance, grants and programs that would otherwise be out of reach due to limited resources and expertise.

Rural Communities and Small Urban Communities: Local Planning Technical Assistance; Map Modernization with GIS; Economic and Land Use Analysis; Economic Development Strategies; Rural Transportation Planning and Transportation Disadvantaged Programs; Emergency Preparedness and Long-Term Recovery Support.

- RPCs assist municipalities and counties by providing technical assistance and data/GIS expertise for policy analysis and guidance concerning issues such as, but not limited to, implementing state initiatives, conservation strategies, economic development, emergency management, transportation, ecotourism and trails, land use decisions, and other needs including day-to-day operations.
- Many fiscally constrained rural counties and small municipal governments have few planning staff and limited resources. RPCs provide **professional planning and GIS services to local governments** to assist in implementing their comprehensive plans and land development codes and to achieve community visions with data and map modernization. This includes assistance with state growth management and community planning requirements and other state regulations. RPCs provide these critical services, giving these communities the ability to meet state requirements and support development.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
 - The **Central Florida RPC** has completed a local mitigation strategy and continuity of operations plan for **Hardee County** and an economic development strategy for **DeSoto County**, and numerous additional projects at the request of their member counties and cities. The **Treasure Coast RPC** has provided on a pro-bono basis planning and zoning services for the **City of Pahokee** (population 5,666) and facilitated the first new office building and apartments in more than a decade.
 - RPCs implement the **Transportation Disadvantaged Program** which serves citizens that do not have access to transportation by providing bus transportation to medical services, work, school and other essential locations.

Economic Development Programs: U.S. Department of Commerce EDA designated Economic Development Districts; Small Business Revolving Loan Funds; Strategic Planning and Visioning; Economic Modeling; and Brownfield Assessments & Planning

- RPCs are directed in Florida Statute to assist local governments with "activities designed to promote and facilitate economic development" in their respective regions. **RPCs complement state and local government economic development efforts** in their role as EDA Economic Development Districts by developing and implementing regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies; **providing grant writing and technical assistance to local governments; and providing economic analyses** using Regional Economic Modeling, Inc. (REMI) software.
- **Assist community leaders and local governments** in developing and reaching consensus on shared regional goals and strategies with data driven analysis to address regional challenges and maximize opportunities; and implement economic development strategies linking businesses, job creation, infrastructure, land use, and transportation.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**

- The [South Florida](#) and [Apalachee RPCs](#) manage successful **Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Programs** to assist small businesses that do not qualify for traditional lending programs. The RLFs serve the local community by enhancing financing opportunities for businesses who want to establish or expand in the region, leading to new jobs and a stronger local economy.
- The [East Central Florida RPC](#) launched the first regionwide **Brownfield Program in 2021** with a \$500,000 3-year grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. ECFRPC's team identified and conducted Site Assessments on over 100 properties to reduce blight, promote new developments, public health and the environment. Due to the success of this program, ECFRPC has secured an additional \$1.5 million grant to continue the successful program to advance brownfield redevelopment in the region.

Resiliency Planning: Military Installation Readiness; Vulnerability & Adaptation Planning; Flood Mitigation; Florida Wildlife Corridor Planning; and Grant Writing and Administration.

- RPCs conduct state-funded vulnerability assessments, map coastal risk scenarios, and develop strategies with critical stakeholders to determine long term plans to mitigate and adapt to changing conditions.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
 - Direct partnership and funding with the Department of Defense to ensure community Military Installation Readiness. This is implemented through the **Military Installation Readiness Review (MIRR)** process to analyze risks and future climate conditions and implement actions to foster, protect, and enhance military installation mission readiness. **Six of Florida's RPCs have conducted MIRR for their region** in partnership with DOD including [Emerald Coast RC](#), [Tampa Bay RPC](#), [South Florida RPC](#), [Central Florida RPC](#), [East Central Florida RPC](#) and [Northeast Florida RC](#). RPCs are now working with regional stakeholders, the State of Florida, and the U.S. Department of Defense to secure funding for planning and infrastructure projects that will enhance mission readiness and national security.
 - The [Apalachee RPC](#) is currently managing the **Franklin County Living Shoreline project** that will create new nearshore reefs and facilitate natural restoration of marshes along Highway 98 to protect infrastructure, evacuation routes, and reduce shoreline erosion. ARPC was awarded a \$15 million grant and works closely with county and private sector partners, who were not otherwise eligible to apply for this grant.
 - Six RPCs across the state are working together through the **Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation program** to study changes in rainfall intensity and inland flooding to identify and mitigate against risks and provide data to support **Resilient Florida** priorities. In addition, cross-jurisdictional projects will be brought forward for communities to implement in conjunction with state and federal resources.

Emergency Preparedness and Long-Term Recovery Programs: First Responder Training; Emergency Response Planning; Healthcare Emergency Preparedness; and Long-Term Recovery Support

- RPCs work closely with first responders and state emergency management staff to ensure that communities are prepared for hurricanes and other natural disasters, as well provide first responder training for large scale medical emergencies, hazardous materials emergencies, and urban search and rescue throughout the state.
- RPCs provide compliance and documentation assistance to private industry on Hazardous Materials storage, ensuring notification to FDEM and emergency responders.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
 - The [East Central Florida RPC](#) Emergency Management team coordinates training and resources for all of **Florida's Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces in partnership with the Florida Department of Emergency Management.** [All RPCs](#) collaborate to bring hundreds of firefighters and other first responders, experts, instructors, and businesses together each year at the annual **Florida HazMat Symposium training event and skills competition**, to ensure that local responders have the best information and training available .
 - The [Tampa Bay RPC](#) developed **Project Phoenix 2.0: The Recovery** exercise that examines critical issues and capabilities of Tampa Bay area small businesses and emergency management agencies during disaster recovery. This exercise simulates a Category 5 hurricane hitting Tampa Bay and incorporates lessons learned and words of advice from small businesses impacted by Hurricane Michael in 2018. The Project is being updated once again to include **new data garnered from Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton.**

Transportation Programs: Rural Transportation Planning and Transportation Disadvantaged Programs

- RPCs collaborate with FDOT, the communities they serve, local governments, their transportation agencies, and stakeholders to plan and implement innovative transportation solutions, such as complete streets, greenways and effective transit design.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
 - The [Emerald Coast Regional Council](#) developed a multi-faceted initiative coined as the **7-Layer Cake**. The plan is comprised of seven projects that improve the Northwest Florida region safety and traffic efficiency. The projects address strategies and technologies to reduce traffic accidents, the installation of broadband fiber to support the new technology, and the creation of the Transportation Management Center to coordinate the new systems to reduce traffic accidents and save lives.
 - The [Treasure Coast](#) and [South Florida RPCs](#) worked with the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (Tri-Rail), municipalities, and developers to facilitate **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** across the system, leading to the approval of hundreds of new apartments at the **Boca Raton** Tri-Rail station and advancement of TOD at other station sites as well. The developer will pay to lease the land from Tri-Rail, reducing the need for operating subsidy, and new affordable housing will boost system ridership while accommodating growth in the area. Building on this success, more sites are in the planning process.

Who pays for the important services and programs provided by Florida's RPCs?

- RPCs are funded by member counties, cities, federal grants, and specific state contracts for services. RPCs **do not receive general appropriation dollars** and are **not staffed by state personnel**.