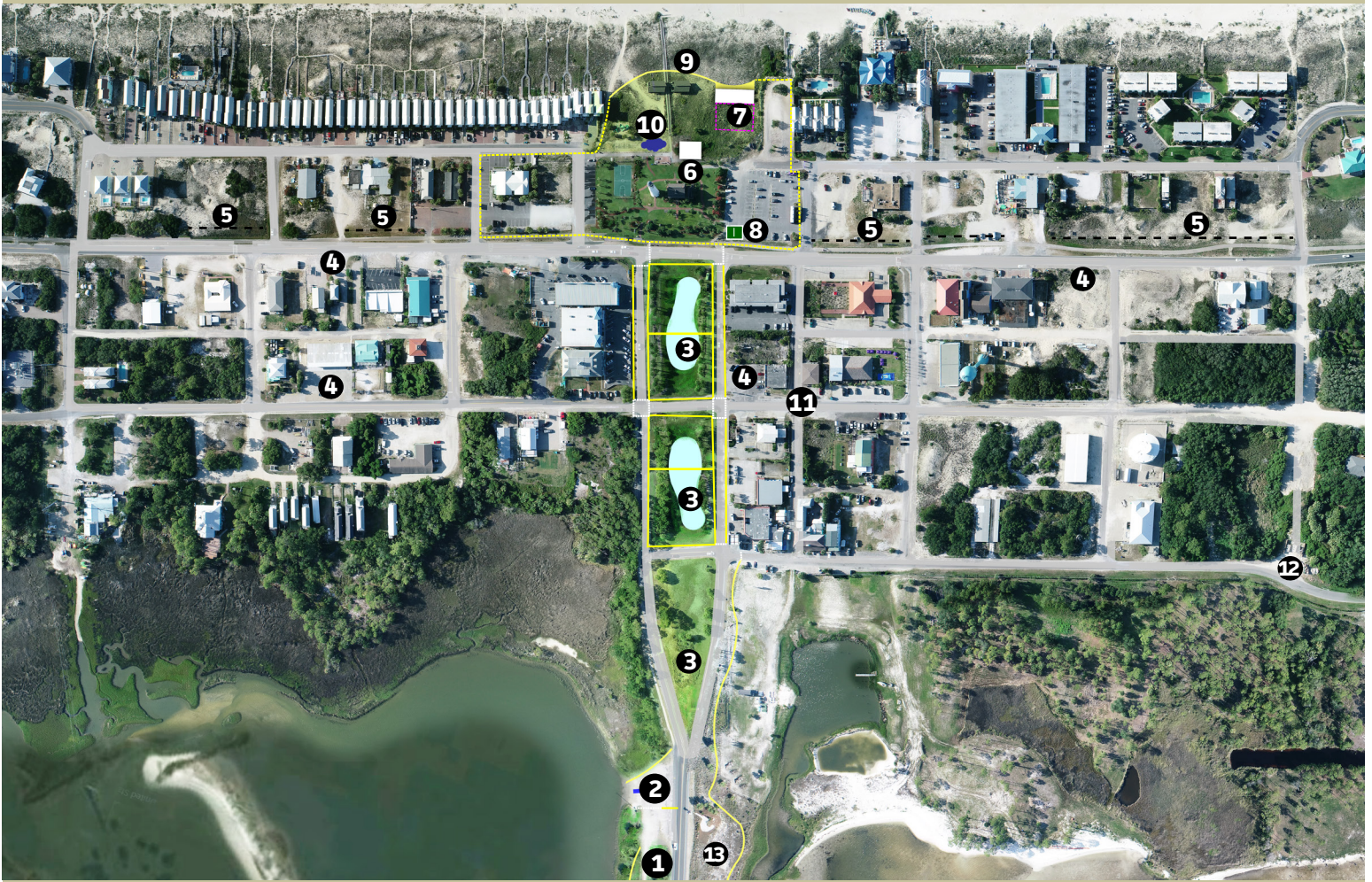


SGI 2025—A Shared Vision for the Future of St. George Island Business District

The goal of SGI 2025 **VISION** is to identify improvements to the Island Business District that address our crowded and deteriorating infrastructure and features that will result in a more viable community and attractive place to live, work, and play.

Over the next seven years—or as many as it takes to implement this plan—our casual coastal community will become more safe for pedestrians and vehicles when flooding is reduced, inferior roadways are improved, and suitable parking is provided within the Business District. This Civic Club's Vision is grounded in maintaining the current height and density restrictions. As it is today, the Island will continue to be one of the economic engines for the county. Any additional proposed improvements will be scaled to be consistent with the laid-back, modestly-developed island that drew us here. We want to keep St. George, The Uncommon Florida.



The Master Plan for the Vision

All of these priorities are subject to change based on the damage caused by Hurricane Michael. Over the next seven years, depending upon whether the county receives these once-in-a-lifetime grants for St. George Island, the Business District will become more safe, reflecting a more livable community and attractive place to live, work, and play.

LEGEND

1. Fishing Pier Restrooms and Safe Boat Ramp
2. Causeway Sunset Park Revised
3. Welcoming Entrance on Franklin Boulevard
4. Business District Expanded Sidewalks
5. Vehicle Parking Improvements Revised
6. Renovate Lighthouse Park Restrooms
7. Community Center Revised
8. Pickle Ball Court Revised
9. Boardwalk and Fitness Trail Loop Revised
10. Inclusive Playground, with Shade and Misters Revised
11. Improved Roadways (throughout district)
12. Recycling Area Safety Improvements
13. Mitigate Causeway Erosion



Infrastructure Projects are Priority One.

The SGI Civic Club has put together a list of projects that we believe are vital to maintaining the character of St. George Island as we face increasing pressures for growth.

We have confidence that these modest enhancements will reinforce our message to the world that we are The Uncommon Florida and never want to be like our neighbors to the west.



Above is an Island parking area made of durable permeable materials. Inset photos are of existing public parking area near Lighthouse Park that are unsafe, unattractive, and suffer from flooding and erosion.

PARKING IMPROVEMENTS

The existing county easement along the south side of Gulf Beach Drive is used for public parking today, with businesses, peddler trucks, and tourists typically parking in a haphazard and unsafe manner. The plan proposes converting these neglected-looking areas into attractive, paver-based parking areas, with appropriate landscaping, improved storm-water run-off, and safe exits unto side streets. The materials will include durable permeable surfaces, not asphalt. The landscaping will be native and low maintenance.

SIDEWALKS AND WALKABILITY

Our island entrance leading to the Lighthouse is our most attractive man-made improvement. With the addition of appealing landscaping, sidewalks, and crosswalks, the area will be the heart of our more walkable and pedestrian-friendly Business District. This illustration indicates how modest improvements will retain the character of our community while enhancing the livability of the island.

RESURFACING ROADWAYS AND MITIGATING FLOODING

Few would argue that mending deteriorating roadways and eliminating growing flooding problems is fundamental to any plan for improvements here. With more than 250,000 people driving through our island every year to visit the State Park, the increasing pressure of traffic will make our problems worse. We want to approach the improvement of our Business District roadways in logical steps, addressing safety, efficiency, and appearance. Proper drainage—even on this barrier island—can be accomplished with proper engineering and federal RESTORE funds can help with stormwater management and flooding controls. The island Business District needs better roadways and a plan for ongoing maintenance.



*Flooded sidewalk, above.
Eroding roadways on St. George Island below.*



Make SGI Welcoming by Maintaining Amenities Used by All.

The goal of the Civic Club's SGI 2025 **VISION** is to identify improvements to the island that will address our crowded and deteriorating infrastructure while preserving our unique character.



The facilities at Lighthouse park are not handicap accessible and are grossly inadequate for the 50,000 visitors who come here each year.

LIGHTHOUSE PARK RESTROOMS

Like many other SGI public use structures, the original construction of the Lighthouse Park Restrooms was accomplished by volunteers. When the island was truly "forgotten" by the tourists, these quaint facilities—much like an old-fashioned summer camp toilet—were part of the island's charm. Today, such facilities are sub standard and inconsistent with the lovely lighthouse park in which they sit, for the large public beach which they serve, for the entire county which recognizes the growing economic value of the island to the county's revenues.

State and federal grants, and TDC funds, have improved restroom facilities in the City of Apalachicola, Carrabelle, Eastpoint and elsewhere. With its more than two hundred thousand people coming to the island every year, the island needs sanitary and adequate public restrooms.



Long lines to enter the restrooms at Lighthouse park

Creating a Welcoming Entrance is a Core Goal.

The SGI 2025 **VISION** includes a focus on existing island facilities and features that badly need updating or repair. Those threatening health and safety are top priorities in this category. Consistent with Franklin County Ordinance 2018-02, the Civic Club wants these facilities to be welcoming and attractive and reflective of an economically prosperous community.

The Civic Club wants to keep St. George Island, The Uncommon Florida.



Parking and safety issues abound at the causeway entrance.

CAUSEWAY SUNSET PARK — TO BE A WELCOMING ENTRANCE

Today, as a result of County Ordinance 2018-02, the county's mission is to create a welcoming entrance to the island that is fitting a prosperous coastal community. Our loveliest natural resource view is the causeway area which is bound on two sides with the waters of Apalachicola Bay. Today, the area, which is part of state land holdings, is generally neglected with haphazard vehicle parking and no clearly marked entrance or exit. We can improve the safety for both pedestrians and vehicles with a marked entrance and a simple, designated parking area that stops the damage being done to the fragile shoreline.

Unlike the RESTORE-funded Island View Park in Carrabelle, this little area does not need docks, pavilions, restrooms, lighting, and other unnecessary improvements to provide an easy to access location for wading, learning to cast a net or to fish, and enjoying the spectacular sunsets and sunrises over the Bay. Safety improvements and additional benches will keep the natural look while providing public waterfront access.



Creating pedestrian-friendly sidewalks throughout Island Center will enhance visitor experiences and improve livability.



Safety is the Most Important Part of the Plan.

BOAT RAMP SAFETY

Nothing better epitomizes the prosperous coastal life style than private boating in the clear waters of the Gulf and Bay. Unfortunately for this existing public boat launch, located at the foot of the old fishing pier bridge, is a safety hazard for weekend and vacationing boaters. Stories abound of near-swamping conditions that threatened personal property and lives because the ramp does not provide calm water entrance. Many experienced captains refuse to use the island ramp—choosing instead to trailer their boats across the bridge to other communities and venues.

St George Island must have a safe boat launching site, with adequate trailer and vehicle parking, if it is to fulfill the vision of a unique and prosperous coastal community with the quality of life we desire. State and federal funds are available for re-engineering this ramp to meet our safety demands. We are eager to work with the county to seek these grants for this extremely important and valuable asset.

FISHING PIER RESTROOMS

When the beautiful sweeping Bryant Patton Bridge to the island was built, the community chose to retain portions of the original bridge as fishing piers. Today, a portable toilet provides the only restroom for the families that often spend hours fishing here. The permanent restrooms recently constructed on the Eastpoint side of the fishing pier were paid for with federal oil spill RESTORE dollars. We request that the county apply for such funds to construct island fishing pier restrooms to make this area as well as the island boat ramp a complete and sanitary facility.

WASTEWATER STUDY

One of the island's oldest controversies is about shared waste water and aerobic systems. Some islanders insist that some businesses are operating with less than ideal systems that pose a real danger to the island's environment and the Bay. Scientists generally agree that circumstances and local conditions must dictate the best system or combination of systems for an area, but the critical factor in any successful aerobic or anaerobic operation is adequate maintenance, backed up by ongoing, quality inspections and code enforcement.

The best next step is to authorize an independent study that examines all aspects of this issue, paid for by Oil Spill Funds. This review will assess current problems, make recommendations for enforcement, and identify solutions—solutions that will protect our island from the growth in density that we all fear while protecting our waters, fragile ecosystems, and personal health for future generations.



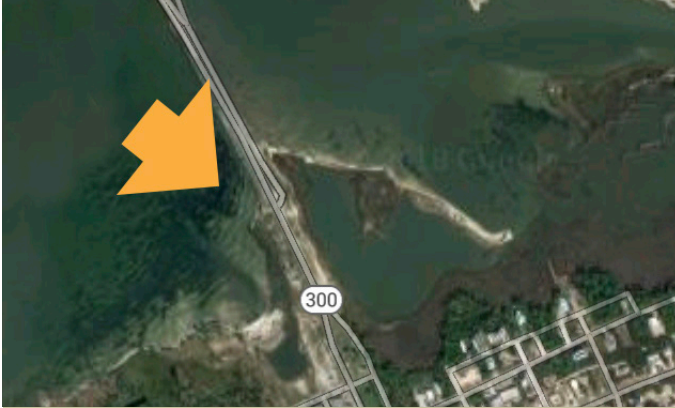
A change in weather can turn an afternoon on the water into a life-threatening event. Re-engineering of the boat ramp is important to keep our citizens and visitors safe.



Replacing the single portable unit with a restroom that is comparable to the one recently built on the Eastpoint side of the Bryant Patton Bridge is greatly needed.

MITIGATING EROSION ON FRANKLIN BOULEVARD

An area of the Causeway, close to the western base of the beautiful Bryant Patton SGI Bridge, has been changing as all coastlines do. The erosion in this region has been alternately abated and ignored. A proposed remedy for the erosion and a protection



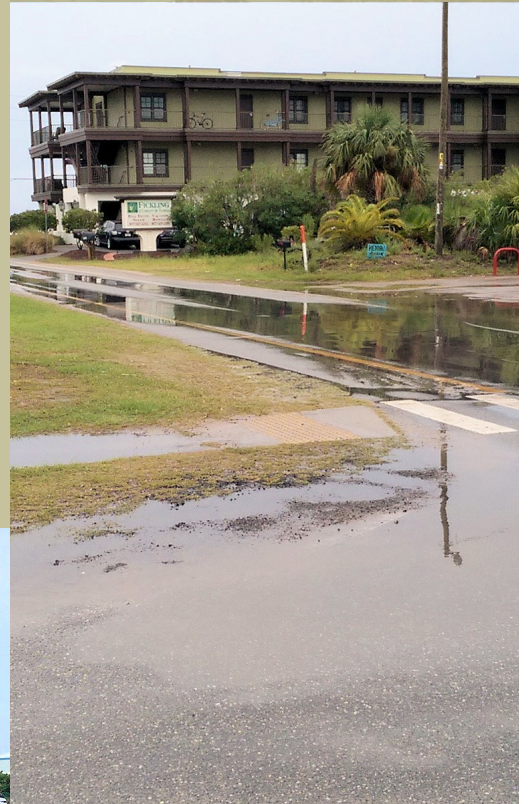
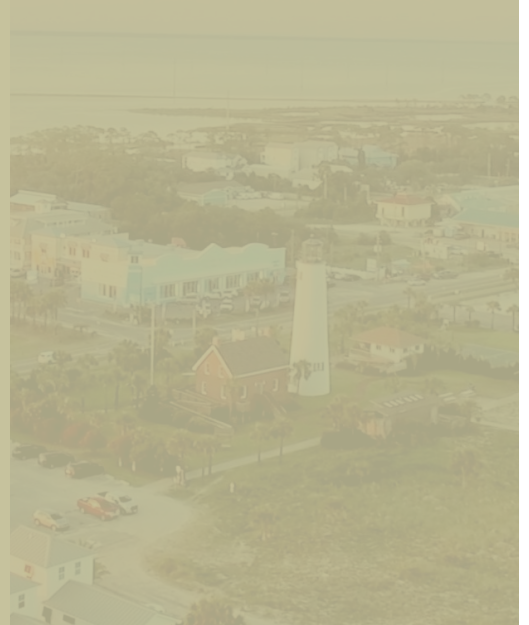
for existing palms is the creation of a living shoreline to support this critical land.

Difficult to see from a moving vehicle (see aerial photo on left), the western causeway is best viewed on foot. At that approach,

the erosion, potential loss of land, trees, and protection for our bridge, is obvious.

CONTROLLING STORMWATER FOR HURRICAN PREPAREDNESS

Franklin County's history of hurricanes demonstrates that we must not only repair the damage but anticipate ways to harden our community and protect it from future storm events. Ordinary heavy rains can make the island roads impassable, with standing water for days. What might happen if storm surge and heavy rain occurred simultaneously? Stormwater management to protect from future disasters is critical.



Flooding and lack of drainage keep customers from approaching Island Center businesses.



RECYCLING AREA SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

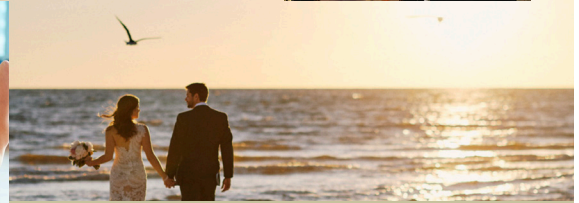
Residents and visitors to St George Island outpace the rest of the county when it comes to recycling cardboard, aluminum, paper and other recyclable materials. Unfortunately, some people—probably not from here—use the area to dump used toilets, appliances, household trash, and remodeling debris. The signage makes it clear that these objects must be taken across the bridge to the county's well-prepared waste recycling area. Recently, Sheriff AJ Smith installed security cameras to provide images of license plates, drivers, and make and model of vehicles. The Sheriff pledges to strictly enforce the illegal dumping rules. An additional improvement might include fencing and landscaping to improve the appearance in keeping with the island.

Better enforcement of recycling policies needs addressing as egregious abuse takes place.



Recreational Features will Encourage Healthy Lifestyles and Community Spirit for Island and Mainland Families.

The SGI 2025 **VISION** includes a few new facilities that are a modest and are a natural fit for our family-friendly island.



COMMUNITY CENTER — With a location to be determined by the County Commission, this one-story, locked facility on pilings will be well within the height limit. Its deep porches, easy to maintain, natural-looking finishes will feature turtle lighting. The interior will be one large room, accommodating up to 200 with additional space for storage, HVAC and other utilities, restrooms, and a catering kitchen that will be easy to maintain with easy-care flooring.

It will be ADA compliant with an audio-visual system, central heat and air, and high-speed internet service. Black out curtains for art shows and family video streaming and for turtle season protection will make this an area asset and offer our community and our Eastpoint neighbors a much needed place to host educational, recreational, and fund-raising events.

PICKLEBALL COURT — The Fastest Growing Sport In America This decades-old game appeals to all ages and skill levels. It's fast moving and works well as a team sport with various experience levels.

FAMILY PLAYGROUND AND FITNESS LOOP — The Island is perfect for family vacations, with its large homes designed for multi-member gatherings. Its recreational facilities, however, make few accommodations for persons with

special needs. Our playground needs updating with this goal in mind. The area needs a comprehensive plan with cooling misters and a fitness loop that provides opportunities for families to enjoy a healthy lifestyle on the island.

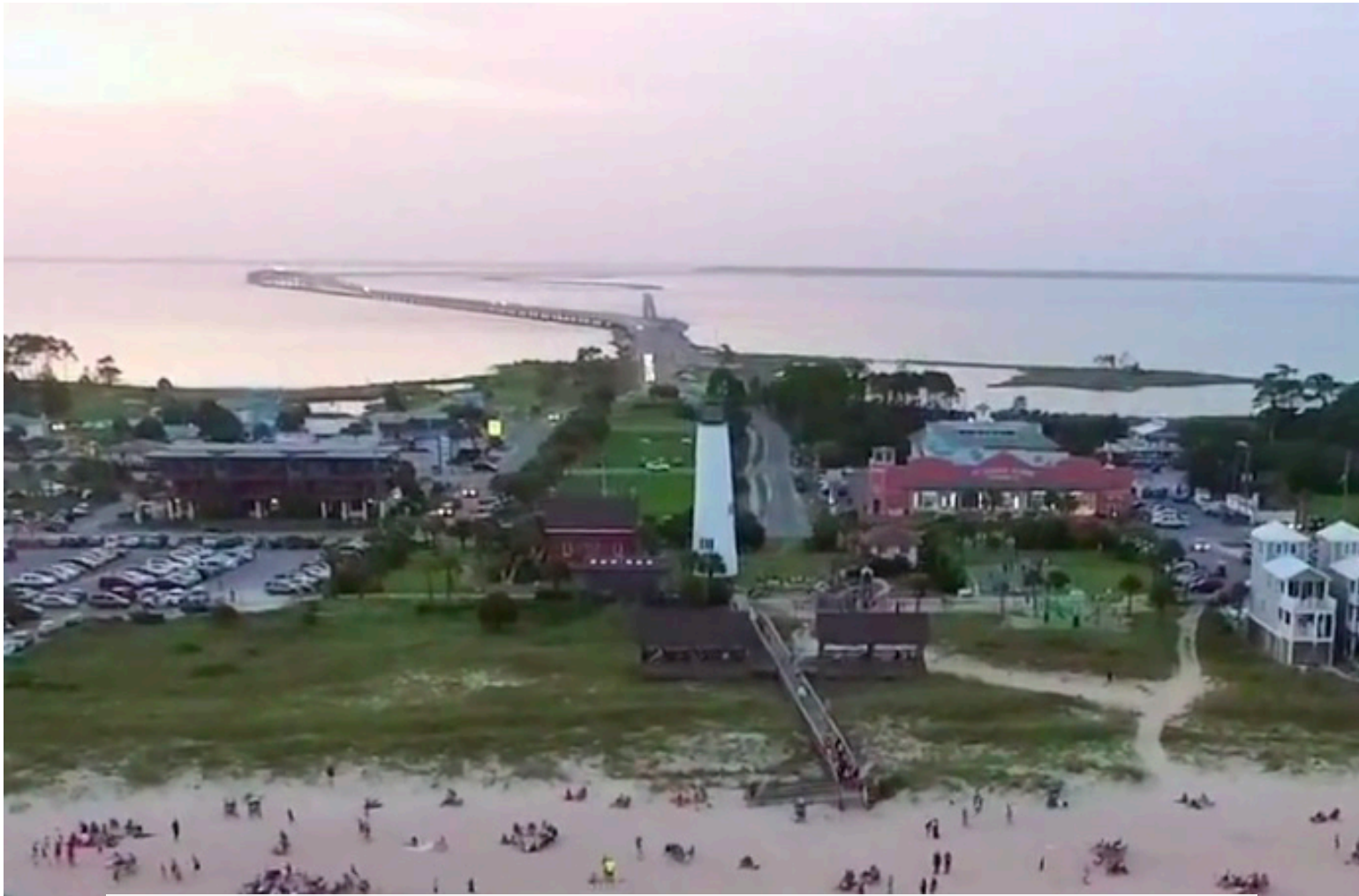
The BP oil spill award is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, to fund SGI 2025.

Through its research, the Civic Club has identified a wide range of state and federal sources for grants that other neighboring communities are using to fund similar improvements to those in SGI 2025VISION. After research and personal meetings, unfortunately, we have concluded that one large fund of approximately \$1.5 Billion, apparently, will not be a source for any of the capital projects identified within the plan. The “TRIUMPH” investments are for large job-creation projects; none of the proposals in this plan meet this criteria since they are focused on sustaining island life as it is known today. Although the island experienced the same ill-effects of the oil spill, the committee is not in favor of the “transformative economic development” required to receive funding. The committee members continue to discuss and research the possibility of funding for expansion of high-speed internet throughout the county, which could provide jobs as well as educational opportunities within the county.

AND THERE ARE OTHER FUNDING SOURCES TOO.

State and federal grant programs have been used in other locations within the county to fund similar improvements contemplated in SGI 2025. These grants are limited to individual construction projects, requiring separate grant applications. For example, the **United States Department of Agriculture** provides resources to rural communities that can be used for parking lots. This agency can also build community centers and help with fire department equipment. The **Florida Department of Transportation** can support beautification efforts along state roads, like SR 300 Franklin Blvd—and actually did so, twenty years ago when we received funds to plant palms. The St George Island Boat Ramp can be made safer through a grant from the **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**. A potential federal source is also Oil Spill funds dedicated to this county called “**RESTORE**.” The county will receive millions for several years from this account also. are top priorities in this category. Consistent with Franklin County Ordinance 2018-02, the Civic club also wants these facilities to be welcoming and attractive and reflective of an economically prosperous community.





SGI 2025 VISION
ORDER OF IMPLEMENTATION

