



# MAYPORT



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### Community Snapshot

**VISION:** “Although Mayport is a part of the City of Jacksonville, the fishing village’s charm sets it apart from the rest of Jacksonville. The present zoning in the village is not conducive to Mayport’s unique character. The Partnership feels that the village will need to have its own zoning (overlay zone). This new zone will be incorporated into the Mayport Waterfront Revitalization Plan that will aide in the future development, growth, and revitalization of the Village. The plan will also address architecture, ecotourism, landscaping, parking and recreation, as well as other issues. The plan will be used by the Partnership to achieve the goals and objectives that were derived from the visioning sessions: the ‘Mayport of the Future, the Mayport of the Past.’”

**DESIGNATION:** 1997

**APPLICANTS:** City of Jacksonville and City of Atlantic Beach

**STATUS:** Active; steering committee and sub-committees meet regularly; Partnership now established as a non-profit organization.

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Master plan for recreational facilities; installed underground utilities and sidewalks; participated in Mayport Road corridor study; drafted Working Waterfront language for planning overlay; completed Historic Resources Survey for Mayport Village; developed Design Guidelines for Mayport Village.

**CURRENT CHALLENGES:** Loss of city supported planning staff in early 2008; Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT) announced plans to locate a cruise ship terminal and parking garage along the Mayport waterfront.

#### FLORIDA ASSESSMENT OF COASTAL TRENDS DATA:

<b>Number of Active Volunteers:</b>	20
<b>Volunteer Hours Contributed:</b>	1,900
<b>Public Dollars Contributed:</b>	\$4.9 million

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Mayport Village is a community in flux. One of the first three communities to enter the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program, this historic fishing village faces large scale change if the Jacksonville Port Authority — JAXPORT — carries out plans to shift super-size cruise liners from upriver wharfs to the St. Johns River Inlet, a move that would likely displace shrimp boats and other fishing vessels from the Village waterfront.

With less than 300 souls, modest homes, limited commercial or industrial fare, and empty lots and buildings, Mayport is an out-of-the-way pocket in the consolidated City of Jacksonville, which tallies a population of 745,000. The settlement is waterside to the St. Johns River, backside to the Mayport Naval Station, and split down the middle by Scenic Florida Highway A1A.

JAXPORT operates the car ferry — the last of its kind in the state — that connects Mayport to industry, communities, and federal and state parks and preserves north of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. The mile-long waterfront supports a waterfront seafood restaurant, day-trip gambling ship, seafood exporter, and, until recently, a net shop and traditional fish house, the latter cantilevered over the water to ease offloading.

## THE WATERFRONTS FLORIDA PARTNERSHIP

Mayport has seen better days — in the early 1900s the draw was fishing, hotels, and amusements; in the 1950s and 1960s “head boats” lured tourists from Jacksonville to try their hand at fishing like no one had ever seen in Ohio, Indiana, or other parts of the Midwest. The Village lost ground — literally — eginning in the 1950s when the U.S. Navy set up shop beachside, creating a base that grew over the years to serve as home port for various submarines and surface carriers in the Atlantic fleet.

By the time Mayport joined the first cycle of the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program in 1997, the community had been through more than one round of redevelopment over a 20-year period. The designation promised hands-on technical help from the state planning agency, seed money for studies, support from the City of Jacksonville, and hope.

The Mayport Waterfront Partnership set up shop in space provided by a local businessman for \$1 per year, outfitted with donated air conditioners, desks, a conference table, and chairs. A steering committee was formed, establishing itself as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation to better attract grants. The City of Jacksonville provided much of the support, including meeting space and a part-time planner. In collaboration with the City and the Mayport Civic Association, the group worked to open and maintain a police station that created a law enforcement presence to quell drug-related crime. Waterfronts Florida paved the way with ideas and encouragement, offering guidance on the fundamentals of the work.

By July 1998, locals set about creating a vision of the future, establishing that the fishing industry, the ferry, and the Marine Science Center were essential to the Mayport way-of-life and agreeing to do something about

<b>St. Johns River Ferry</b>	
<i>Gateway to Fort George Island</i>	
Pedestrian/Bicycle	1.00
Motorcycle	2.50
2 axle (Private)	3.25
2 axle (Commercial/RV)	3.50
3 axle (Private/Commercial/RV)	3.25
4 axle (Private/Commercial RV)	4.00
5 axle (Private/Commercial/RV)	4.50
Passenger Bus	8.00
Semi-Tractor/trailer	Prohibited
TOLLS COLLECTED ONBOARD	
(M-F) 6:00am, 8:20am, 7am, and continuing on the hour and half hour Final Departure 10pm	
(S-S) 6:20am, 7am, and continuing on the hour and half hour Final Departure 10pm	
Operated by: <i>Hornblower Marine Services</i>	



the rundown look of the place and the need for central sewer and other infrastructure. The visioning exercises were facilitated by Waterfronts Florida planners.

Between 1998 and 2006, the Mayport Waterfronts Partnership worked its way through a series of research and design projects and installed parts of the modern-day public services needed to

revitalize the Village — underground utilities, sidewalks, a master plan for recreational facilities, and a study of the Mayport Road corridor. Additionally, the group, which met monthly at a waterfront cottage in Mayport and acted as an advisory committee to the City, drafted language that could be added to future building permits, hoping to put new property owners on notice that Mayport has a working waterfront, complete with the sounds and smells associated with the business of commercial fishing.

In 1999, the Partnership used a \$650,000 award from the City to bury the town's power and cable lines, re-build a parking area, and install new street lights; they attended to landscaping and signage; relocated the old Spanish cemetery and sold bricks to support the project; and they crafted the language for a zoning overlay to protect Mayport in future discussions on development.

Then a developer bought some of the riverside property, envisioning low-rise condominiums and shops. The Mayport Waterfronts Partnership initiated conversations about possibilities for a public-private partnership that could build the waterfront boardwalk suggested in the recreational plan. Buildings were bulldozed, and sites made ready for action. The real estate market then collapsed.

In 2008, the developer sold the property to JAXPORT and the plans to add multi-story cruise ships to the Mayport waterfront came to the forefront. The City of Jacksonville, because of budget cuts, recalled the Mayport planner and shuttered the meeting space. The Waterfronts group was left without its long-term, valued partner and without a home.

## SUCCESSION: A NEW ERA

The Mayport community sees itself as strong with grassroots leadership. The Civic Association started the ball rolling in the early 1990s with a cleanup-pickup trash removal project, then followed up with development of a local park supported by City decisions and funds. At a time when the main waterfront industry — commercial fishing — faces increasing regulation and economic pressure, the recent disagreement with the City have undermined local morale. Local residents fear that a cruise ship terminal and companion parking garage will dominate the mostly single-story Mayport skyline.



The Partnership and the rest of the community are pulling together. Although heavily outnumbered, the locals hope that they can work out a continuing relationship with the City, a feat they see as critical to creating a kind of revitalization that keeps in character with Mayport Village over time. They are reaching back to their roots with the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program by attending quarterly meetings to draw on the experience of sister communities. The Jacksonville Maritime Museum recently expressed interest in relocating from downtown Jacksonville to Mayport, which could be symbolic and an economic boost.

For now, the plan is to develop local leadership and take revitalization one project at a time. The organization's non-profit status puts the Partnership in position to receive grants from foundations and other sources independent of the City. The Mayport Village Waterfronts Partnership plans to follow its own advice — if you want to be able to predict the future, help build it.