

# THE BAY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Charting Our Course To 2020



Adopted October 20, 2009



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## Charting Our Course To 2020

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*Crooked Creek, West Bay*



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**INTRODUCTION**

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Bay County was part of the West Florida region before East and West Florida were merged and became an organized territory on March 30, 1822, under military governor General Andrew Jackson. William Pope Duval became the first official governor of the Florida Territory and soon after the capital was established at Tallahassee. Florida became the twenty-seventh state of the United States on March 3, 1845. By an Act of the State Legislature, Bay County was created on July 1, 1913, from parts of Calhoun, Washington, and Walton counties.

Bay County is a coastal county with a terrestrial area measuring approximately 764 square miles in the Florida Panhandle along the Gulf of Mexico. Bay County derives its name from St. Andrew Bay that is part of a large complex of inland surface waters that include St. Andrew Bay, East Bay, West Bay, and North Bay along with their tributaries that include many named bayous and creeks. Bay County's terrain is relatively flat and ranges in elevation from sea level to almost 200 feet in its northern section.

The 1991 Bay County Comprehensive Plan was prepared in response to the "Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act of 1985." This law requires each local government to prepare a comprehensive plan in the form and manner prescribed by the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

On September 24, 1991, the DCA issued a "Statement of Intent to Find Comprehensive Plan in Compliance" for the 1991 Bay County Comprehensive Plan. The current Plan titled "*Heading 2010: Charting Our Course, the Bay County Comprehensive Plan*" was adopted on December 14, 1999.

In the spring of 2006, Bay County staff began the process of preparing an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR), in accordance with Section 163.3191 of the Florida Statutes. This section stipulates that each local government shall adopt an Evaluation and Appraisal Report, once every seven years assessing the progress in implementing the local government's Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the EAR process is to respond to changes in state, regional, and local policies on planning and growth management and changing conditions and trends, to ensure effective intergovernmental coordination, and to identify major issues regarding the community's achievement of its goals.

Following several public workshops and three public hearings before the Bay County Planning Commission (serving as the Local Planning Agency), the Board of County Commissioners, at a public hearing on September 5, 2006, adopted Resolution No. 2732 approving the 2006 Bay County Evaluation and Appraisal Report.

The adopted EAR was transmitted to the DCA and several additional state and local agencies on September 26, 2006, for review and a preliminary sufficiency finding. On December 22, 2006, the DCA issued their sufficiency review for the adopted EAR. The

department listed three major areas that the EAR did not adequately address. Briefly, these were:

- Population growth and changes in land area as a result of municipality annexations,
- Financial feasibility of providing infrastructure to achieve and maintain adopted levels of service, and
- The need to establish measurable intensity standards for all non-residential land uses.

Bay County staff prepared an EAR Supplement responding to the areas of concern identified by the DCA. On September 17, 2007, the Bay County Board of County Commissioners approved Resolution No. 07-17, to adopt the EAR Supplement. On December 21, 2007, the DCA determined the EAR and the Supplement was sufficient pursuant to Subsection 163.3191(2) of the Florida Statutes and issued their final determination on the Report.

This document was prepared in response to recommendations presented in the EAR, the EAR Supplement, and staff experience in administration of the Plan during the past eight years. In this regard, the format and content of this document is substantially different than that presented in the 1999 Plan.

The goals, objectives, and policies presented in this document represent the growth management strategies and directives of the Board of County Commissioners. The programs and initiatives presented are intended to provide a balanced framework of regulatory guidance to avoid past mistakes and problems and capital improvements to correct existing deficiencies and provide for future growth.

This Plan is not intended to be a regulatory document. It is intended to be a guidance document which articulates the policies of the Board relative to land use, development, and growth management.