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We already have a dream city; let's not lose it

By Nancy Foster
My View

Re: "Dreaming too big" (Gerald Ensley, July 8).

Thank you, Gerald Ensley, for the wonderful column about Tallahassee.

We have lived here since 1968 and have wondered for years why so many Tallahasseeans want to emulate Austin, Texas. Austin was our home for four years, and the only thing we want to take from Austin is Southwest Airlines.

Those who are dissatisfied or bored with Tallahassee need to learn to appreciate and build on all of the incredible resources we have - two public radio stations (more than Chautauqua, N.Y., or Berkeley, Calif.), access to two public television stations, as well as music, theater and dance departments at our universities and community college that provide quality performances throughout the year, many of which are free.

Seven Days of Opening Nights is unique to Tallahassee and speaks for itself, while the Artist Series, two symphony orchestras, Tallahassee Little Theater, Tallahassee Museum, MOAS, The Museum of Florida History, our Leon County Public Library and its branches, our public schools, the Senior Center, Railroad Square Art Park, as well as LeMoyne and other fine galleries, add knowledge and culture to our lives.

Our city parks are award-winners: Forestmeadows, Lafayette, Winthrop, Trousdell, Hilaman, to name a few, providing, tennis, swimming, baseball, football, soccer, gymnastics, golf, etc., to both children and adults, while Lake Overstreet, the Miccosukee Greenway, Maclay Gardens, Wakulla Springs and St. Marks Trail provide paths and watering holes for bikers, walkers, runners, dogs, and even horses at Overstreet.

The St. Marks Wildlife Refuge is a wonderful resource for all.

Other pluses are friends with the fresh flowers and produce at Market Square, Tomato Land and the Lake Ella Market, plus all the wonderful little restaurants such as Renaissance Coffee and Tea and Kool Beanz.

Florida State University has provided a first-rate education for three of our four sons, an advanced degree for me and for one son, a wonderful place for me to teach for 17 years, and a livelihood for my husband of 35 years. Even though there have been some disappointments

lately, the athletic programs have given all of us sports-minded Tallahasseeans quite a ride. The Leach Center, Seminole Reservation and circus keep both young and old students and faculty thriving.

FAMU is on the mend with James Ammons at the helm. He served FAMU well in the past, and his wife, Judy, was the best of the best as a first-grade teacher at Florida High.

Now if state workers are ever paid and appreciated commensurate with the quality of life they bring to all Floridians, life will be extra good in Tallahassee.

What frightens me for the future of our community is the lack of respect for our neighborhoods, trees, lakes, air quality, and the awesome beauty of our springtime on the part of some of our elected officials. They have allowed the Fallschase disaster to happen and now want to build on what used to be our greatest asset, Lake Jackson. This is the same mentality we see on our "forgotten coast."

These people do not seem to realize that we can have growth and at the same time protect the incredible assets that can never be reclaimed once they are lost. And to add salt to the wounds, Florida residents will have to pick up the tab for the loss of coastal dwellings that should never have been built in the first place.

I, for one, shall never shop at any of the stores at Fallschase. I hope others will do the same. Hopefully, the Corps of Engineers will step in to outlaw some of the plans under way for development on our coast, just as they did in Taylor County.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the environmentalists who have been working tirelessly to protect our coast.

Living in Tallahassee has been wonderful for us, for our children, and now for our grandchildren. We hope that our trees, lakes and coastal areas will be protected for all of us to enjoy in the future rather than remembered in the past. There is so much to appreciate about Tallahassee.