# New Smyrna Beach 2020 Strategic Planning Summary

Final Report June 2, 2020



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS GROUP



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Guiding the pieces in Traditional and Contemporary Areas





Final Report: June 2, 2020

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In December, 2019 the City of New Smyrna Beach held several community conversations with the purpose of gathering Public Input, Staff Perspective and City Commission Review of potential strategic areas of community focus for 2020 and beyond. More specifically, the objective of the City Commission was to identify a framework for high level topics of common interest to the public; strategic to the general community dialogue about the overall direction and future of New Smyrna Beach above the day to day business of government management and budget requirements. The City of New Smyrna Beach utilized the competitive solicitation process to identify an appropriate facilitator for this effort and selected GAI's Community Solutions Group (CSG) to assist.

Working with Staff, CSG developed several tools and techniques to allow for focused community input. This included a series of Commissioner one on one Interviews and a staff round-table discussion on December 3, 2019. This was followed by evening open house Public Meetings on December 5 and 9 at the Brannon Center. The open houses were identical in format: A short presentation, followed by 4 Activity Stations that allowed participants provide information about priorities and concerns in different formats. Finally, additional values, mission and vision statements were submitted to the City by the New Smyrna Beach Residents Coalition. Taken together, all this information was compiled and formatted for presentation and discussion with the City Commission in a full day workshop session on December 12, 2019. At the end of the open session, members of the Public who attended made public comment that the overall discussion was productive and insightful, and these sentiments were echoed by the Commission as successful, and a desirable model for future strategic discussions.

The results of the work focus on five consensus Strategic Topics:

- 1. Communication and Trust
- 2. Quality of Life Measures
- 3. Growth Management
- 4. Environment & Resiliency
- 5. Transportation & Circulation

Following the workshop, the Strategic Topics were developed with Mission Statement language and preliminary goals, outcomes or actions as delineated in the Commission workshop. The City Staff has worked to organize these Strategic Topics and the associated initiatives into a **2020 Strategic Framework** that can serve as a living document to track progress as well as emergent ideas over time. Each Strategic Topic includes categories of Action: Technology, Administrative, Social and Construction. This completed Strategic Framework tool can be tracked and updated over time to allow for the management of the Topics through ongoing progress, benchmarks and metrics.

The balance of this report summarizes the steps and detailed thoughts that came out of these focused discussions in December, 2019 as the City leadership has continued to build the Framework for actions and ongoing program, even in the face of recent challenges with COVID-19 protocols and the associated community stewardship.

Additional detailed information about the results and meeting Presentations can be found in the Appendix

# **LISTENING & LEARNING: COMMUNITY INPUT**

On December 5th and 9th, CSG conducted identical 2-hour community input meetings designed to collect community input about fundamental values of New Smyrna Beach. Between the two meetings, over 60 members of the community attended. After a short introduction, the attendees were free participate in 4 Active Input stations that focused on the New Smyrna Beach:



**1** Quality of Life, captured through a questionnaire:

- a. What does Quality of Life mean to you?
- b. What are the Top Factors that support Quality of Life?
- c. How would you measure Quality of Life?



Desired Community Services, as measured through a 'spending' exercise that allowed each participant (10) \$1 NSB Dollars, to put in one of 7 buckets with notes regarding the need:

- a. Parks (11%)
- b. Public Safety (9%)
- c. Environment (22%)
- d. Infrastructure (25%)
- e. Neighborhoods (18%)
- Maintenance (13% f
- g. Other (2%)

**Communication Strategies** as measured through a questionnaire:

- a. Where do you currently get your information?
- What are the most important things to know? b.
- What would be the best way for you to be informed? C.

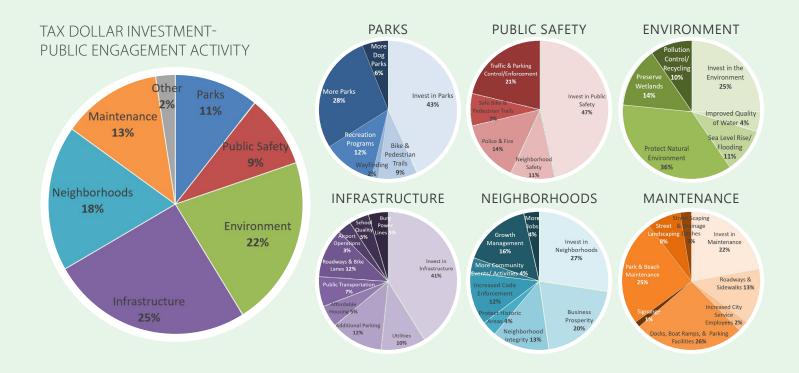


4 New Smyrna Places, noted on a live GIS touch screen that allowed participants to make specific input comments at specific geographic locations that were instantly recorded in our 'Story Map'.

The meetings were run in an 'open house' format that allowed participants to arrive on their own schedule during the 2 hour time block, participate as needed and speak directly to the CSG team, while also contributing to the exercises, which often led to productive discussion between residents. The sessions were generally high energy with a lot of conversation and movement.







### COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES INPUT

Current Information Source: NSB Website (25%), Local Papers, Email, Facebook

Preferred Source of Information: Website (23%), Emails, Public Mtg Minutes, Newsletter, Social Media

What's Most Important to Know? New Development and Proposed Projects (29%) Meeting Minutes / Dates / Locations (23%) Events Calendar (11%) How the City is Protecting the Environment (10%)









## LISTENING & LEARNING: COMMISSION & STAFF INPUT

Parallel to the Public Meetings, the CSG team met individually with each Commissioner, including the Mayor and Vice Mayor for about 45 minutes. Additionally, we conducted a 90-minute roundtable discussion with City Department Heads. These sessions were prefaced by a questionnaire and SWOT analysis for all participants to complete prior to the face to face meetings.

### The Questions for discussion during face to face meetings were (in order):

- 1. What are the 3 most important Strategic Issues to the future of New Smyrna Beach?
- 2. What are your Goals and Expectations for 2020?
- 3. How would you measure Progress against your top issues?
- 4. What are your objectives for this Strategic Planning Process?
- 5. What input / feedback from the Public is most valuable to you in this Process?

- Confirmation of Themes?
- Aspirational Mission Statement by Theme?
- Measures of Progress by Theme?
- Broad Vision for the future of New Smyrna Beach?
- Other?
- 6. Other key thoughts going into the process?

### SWOT Analysis was then completed on Following Page as an exercise:

Please fill in any thoughts you may have about the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to the sustainable future of New Smyrna Beach:

This input and the ensuing face to face meetings allowed our team to develop a Table of Top Issues for the Commission and for the Department heads which could become part of the overall picture of Strategic Topics for this effort.

		Commissioners					Dept.	
	Issues	Α	в	с	D	Ε	Directors	
NEIGHBORHOODS	Growth Management	•		•	•	•	•	
	LDR Updates		•	•			•	
	Building Elevation		•					
RHC	Attracting Quality Businesses			•			•	
HBO	US 1 CRA Redevelopment & Initiatives			•			•	
	Encourage Local Small Businesses				•			
z	Elimination of Enclaves					•		
	Prioritize Redevelopment						•	
NOI	Citizen/Customer Satisfaction	•					•	
COMMUNICATION	Public Awareness Campaign	•	•		•		•	
MUN	Transparency		•			•	•	
CON	Marketing & Branding		•					
	Recession Sustainability	•						
BUDGET & FINANCE	Maintain Millage Rate		•					
	Pursue Grant Opportunities		•					
	Employee Compensation				•		•	
	Employee Retention & Recruitment				•		•	
ITAL	ollaborate with UC, County & Neighboring Cities						•	
GOVERNMENTAL	Departmental Collaboration						•	
	Disaster Recovery						•	
	Improve Plan & Permit Review Time						•	
	Financial Systems & Reporting						•	

		Commissioners					Dept.
	Issues	A	в	с	D	Ε	Directors
INFRASTRUCTURE	Parking	•	•			•	•
	Transportation/Traffic	•	•	•	•		•
	Technology Improvements	•					•
STRU	Stormwater				•		
FRAS	Affordable Housing		٠			٠	•
Z	Eliminate Septic/Extend Sewer Lines				•	٠	
	Bike & Pedestrian Network				•		•
ENVIRONMENT	Sea Level Rise		•		•	•	•
	Wetland Management		٠		٠		
	Open Space Preservation		•		•	•	•
	Pollution Management		٠				
	Water Quality				•		•
NCE	Consolidate Facilities with UC		•				
MAINTENANCE	Maintain Public Facilities						•
	Maintain Aging Infrastructure						•
	Replace/Repair Fishing Piers						•
	Civic Center (Out West)		•				
PARKS	Recreation Programming						•
	More Parks						•
UBLIC SAFETY	Police & Fire Staffing				•		
	Traffic & Parking Enforcement				•		
BLIC	Eliminate Open Camping, Panhandling, Vagrancy						•
PU	Enhance Emergency Response						•

#### Additional Community Input:

A final layer of useful input was provided by the New Smyrna Beach Residents Coalition. This included a strategic Focus on four Top Priorities.

- 1. Preserving the historic areas of New Smyrna Beach
- 2. Protecting and expanding the city's small, one-of-a-kind businesses
- 3. Leveraging current city assets to support robust economic development
- 4. Defining development in a manner consistent with our small-town image

Detailed recommendations were given for each Priority and incorporated into the over community input of the project.

In addition, the NBS Residents Coalition provided a well-articulated Core Value Statement, Vision and Mission. These items were accepted by the City Manager, presented to City Commission in the Dec 12 workshop and were generally considered consistent with other input from the Community, Commission and Staff participants. These further added to the building blocks of the Strategic Framework and resulting Actions found at the conclusion of this document.

#### NSB CORE VALUE STATEMENT

All who represent the City of New Smyrna Beach are charged with the following Core Values:

#### I ACT

Integrity: We are honest, trustworthy and ethical in all actions.

**Accountability:** We take ownership and are responsible for our conduct and decisions.

**Communication:** We commit to the transparent, timely and collaborative exchange of information which provide opportunities to educate citizens and receive feedback.

**Teamwork:** We will work together embracing our differences to achieve the common good.

#### NSB VISION STATEMENT

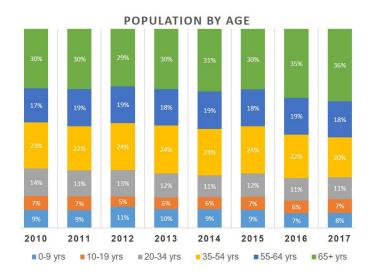
New Smyrna Beach is an inclusive community where businesses and residents work in joint stewardship to sustain our unique coastal lifestyle, natural resources and cultural vibrance for generation to come.

#### NSB MISSION STATEMENT

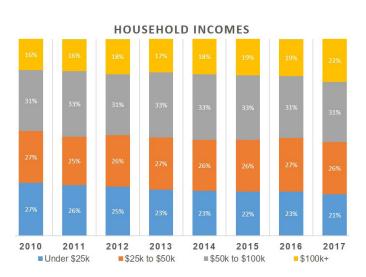
The City of New Smyrna Beach will provide the leadership to achieve our vision in a professional and fiscally responsible manner in order to preserve our unique quality of life and enhance the value of where we live, work, play and conduct business

#### Facilitator Preparation for Workshop:

In addition to collating and tabulating all the community input, CDG also review some high level demographic information to provide a snapshot of the New Smyrna Beach community for reference in the Commission Discussion.



# Population Growth20102017Avg. Annual<br/>Growth Rate22,54025,1031.6%



# SYNTHESIS: COMMISSION WORKSHOP

Acting as a presenter and facilitator, CSG presented the shared findings of all the community input, including the Public Meetings, Commissioner Interviews and Staff Department Director comments. Six Broad Themes were presented and discussed in detail in a full day work session on December 12, 2019. Each Theme was presented in detail by the Facilitator, and then each commissioner actively engaged in reaction, refinement and starter ideas.

The format for the day was 'Scan, Focus, Act'. SCAN: The input summary findings were reviewed by the facilitator so that each Commissioner was presented with the same information. FOCUS: Allowed each commissioner to speak to the Six Broad Themes with both personal observations and mission driven initiatives. ACT: Narrowed the approach to each of the Themes into specific 'starter ideas' that could be used to build the Strategic Action Plan.

As the afternoon proceeded towards more focused thinking, the 6 Themes were consolidated to 5 Strategic Framework elements, with preliminary actions ('starter ideas'). The public attendees were then given opportunity to comment on the workshop discussion, and there was general consensus regarding the quality of Commission dialogue and that this type of focused, but broad conversation regarding challenges, opportunities and ideas for the City was highly productive. All parties suggested that some additional similar sessions could / should be scheduled to continue to push momentum on key subjects.

### LOOKING AT **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS** FOR THE CITY OF NEW SMYRNA BEACH

New Smyrna Beach is a community of character and quality that has been established over decades and continues today as a coastal community of choice. The 'challenges' that NSB faces are largely issues of success. The passion that is expressed about opportunities and issues in NSB are a result of a highly engaged community, staff and commission that want the community to continue to be a distinct and special place for future generations. Within the following pages are the combined Framework Topics, with Mission Statement, Discussion Detail and initial Starter Ideas / Actions.





QUALITY OF LIFE



GROWTH MANAGEMENT



ENVIRONMENT



TRANSPORTATION



### 1. COMMUNICATION & TRUST

**a. Mission:** New Smyrna Beach will be a community of trust, transparency, inclusion and respect so that potential opportunities and complex issues can be discussed in a thoughtful and balanced way for the future of New Smyrna Beach.

#### Discussion and Intent:

i. Recognition that there are many trade-offs in virtually any topic affecting NSB, and that solutions need to reconcile many competing interests. Single minded viewpoints often do not adequately represent the true interconnection of environmental, economic, social and cultural factors at hand. The objective of the community, City staff and Commission is to set a fair and constructive platform to discuss the shared future.

#### b. Starter Ideas / Actions:

- i. Significant Social Media and Website reconstruction is nearly ready!
- ii. More Regular Commission workshop sessions to discuss Strategic Topics.
- iii. Develop a *Statistically Valid Survey* to benchmark community attitudes across a range of topics and by sub-areas and demographics, etc. Administer regularly (bi-annual?) to understand trends over time.
- iv. Reach out to include the historic Westside neighborhoods.
- v. Reach out to better include the new development neighborhoods on I-95/SR 44
- vi. Virtual Town Halls via Social Media / Livestreaming.
- vii. An *Interactive City Map* (story map) of current City projects & initiatives as well as a centralized location for objective, factual information regarding issues of shared concern.
- viii. *Measure* Social Media and Community Participation.
- ix. Measure Diversity participation, all demographics at public events.
- x. Maintain and build the Email Database.





### 2. QUALITY OF LIFE MEASURES

**a. Mission:** New Smyrna Beach will preserve and enhance the shared quality of community life across the spectrum of physical / environmental, economic opportunity and social / cultural aspects of the community.

#### Discussion and Intent:

- i. The community consistently references the 'charm and character' of New Smyrna Beach. These characteristics are hard to define because they relate to many diverse perceptions, including: parks and environmental access, scale and style of historic buildings, lively Main Streets with locally owned / authentic retail, walkable streets, community facilities for local use, friendly personal interactions and social fabric, community events, etc.
- ii. Quality of Life includes Community Services as well as quality of Communication because these set the tone for shared interactions.



- iii. It is important that the quality of life measures are enjoyed by all members of the community (beachside, land side/town, western development).
- iv. There is a fear that these qualities (and others) are threatened by change, and particularly with development growth and environmental degradation.
- v. However, for New Smyrna Beach to maintain its character and current levels of service (including vital public safety services), there must be economic viability and long-term fiscal sustainability to fund those services. New Smyrna Beach needs to be competitive in the field for quality employees and services. (Services cost money and NSB has one of the lowest tax rates in Volusia County).
- vi. New Smyrna has seen a recent increase in homeless population due (in part) to policies of other jurisdictions.
- vii. New Smyrna Beach is viewed by some as 'playing catchup' and not getting in front of difficult issues. This may be due to financial limitations, staff capacity or inability to proactively discuss challenges constructively and move toward viable actions.
- viii. While all strategies will require funding, lending rates today are very low.

#### b. Starter Ideas / Actions:

- i. *Clear metrics* information on basic City performance data such as police / fire calls, traffic safety, utilities, build permits, etc.
- ii. Can we *develop metrics* on identified quality of life / character items such as park acreage, water access, historic buildings, tree canopy, bike / ped activity, utilization of community buildings / facilities, etc. and then work to find pops to grow?
- iii. Develop a strategic working group regarding homeless issues, services and peer city success models. Services, Programs and Ordinances. This requires a shared / partnered approach (NSB can't lead or fund this issue by itself).
- iv. Potential use and water access at the former Administrative Office Building site.
- v. Develop programs to support local businesses and/or 'live where you work' programs.
- vi. Capitalize on the new western conservation lands acquisition (Turnbull Creek) and explore opportunities for passive ecology-based recreation. Explore other proximate opportunities for parks, trails and conservation lands. Connected natural lands are a priority.
- vii. Explore needs to bring additional community services (community center?) to the new western neighborhoods to establish a growing presence of NSB community service as the region develops.



# 3. **GROWTH MANAGEMENT** (BEACH, TOWN & WEST AREAS)

**a. Mission:** New Smyrna Beach will accommodate new growth and investment while maintaining its' distinct community character, quality of life and environmental resiliency.

#### Discussion and Intent:

- i. New Smyrna Beach has a long history of concern regarding growth, from both a character & design point of view, as well regarding community impacts (traffic, environmental impacts, access to open space & water).
- ii. It is important to recognize that areas of New Smyrna Beach have gone through 'cycles' of investment and disinvestment over decades, and past developments have included areas that

today could be viewed as both 'contributing' or 'not-contributing' to community character. Valuing the physical, economic and social qualities of development have always been a discussion with many shades of grey.

- iii. Today, New Smyrna Beach is an attractive and popular location along the Beach, in the traditional Town and along SR 44 and western properties for market-based real estate investment. Many of the western properties have long-vested development rights that are now becoming actionable by the land owners due to regional growth market forces.
- iv. That said, there are some areas of New Smyrna Beach that could be viewed as 'underperforming assets', such as portions of the US1 Corridor.
- v. The activity in the real estate market and general construction industry has resulted in a challenge for 'attainable' workforce housing in the city. It is difficult for new construction to offer products that are attainable to the middle class. This situation is not confined to New Smyrna Beach.
- vi. There is a perception that the City regulatory structure & codes may be out of date and out of step with the emerging trends and activity.
- vii. Therefore, the community, staff and leaders recognize that growth is an area that requires thoughtful discussion and proactive efforts to achieve the beneficial outcomes that manage growth, create economic opportunity and services while maintaining character and sense of place for future generations.

#### b. Starter Ideas / Actions:

- i. Update the land development / zoning code (LDC), particularly examining several issues:
  - 1. Residential and neighborhood design standards, especially for new western development
  - 2. Required open space and community service elements.
  - 3. Building Form (including height) as opposed to Density measures
  - 4. Commercial design, site planning and buffers
  - 5. Parking requirements
- ii. Consider a SR 44 Corridor Plan to address commercial development and character along the corridor.
  - 1. US1 to Wallace Road is one 'place type'
  - 2. Wallace Road to I-95 is a different 'place type', and west of I-95 may be a 3rd 'place-type'.
- iii. Develop a working group on Attainable Housing. This may be done in conjunction with the LDC work.
- iv. Get 'in front' of Western Growth, particularly regarding development standards (LDC) and Community Infrastructure. Possible sector plan?
  - 1. Community Infrastructure may include: Environmental Open Space, parks and recreation, community services, police / fire, transportation circulation, utility service, etc.
  - 2. Design Standards may include revised LDC, as well as more detailed visual and written descriptions from the developers regarding their master plans, architectural and landscape features and community character including early phase implication for community elements.
- v. Incorporate Utility Commission representation in strategic planning initiatives in order to better link the *City Future Land Use vision with the UC delivery strategy.*





### 4. ENVIRONMENT & RESILIENCY

a. Mission: New Smyrna Beach will be resilient to Climate Change, Sea Level Rise and other Environmental factors to protect both urban lands and natural ecosystems.

#### Discussion and Intent:

- i. The issues include tidal impacts, storm surge, floodplain protection and stormwater management and water quality as well as native ecosystems and species habitat.
- ii. The solutions must 'work with nature' in the sense that natural systems both buffer impacts and also process environmental impacts (such as storm water percolation, aquifer recharge, water quality, erosion, etc.).
- iii. The strategy must consider both existing and future development.
- iv. The strategy must consider emergency preparedness.
- v. While all strategies will require funding, lending rates today are very low.

#### b. Starter Ideas / Actions:

- i. Re-examine resiliency strategy for Coastal flood areas.
  - 1. Examine current base flood elevation projection data and consider what appropriate standards should be for new construction elevation.
  - 2. Identify opportunities for stormwater storage as well as stormwater flow so that potentially flood prone areas have less risk of long-term inundation.
  - 3. Focus work efforts on inboard areas with highest probability for flooding and prolonged inundation.
- ii. Examine opportunities for enhanced stormwater treatment and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water quality prior to outfall, particularly to any rivers or streams.
- iii. Develop BMP programs for low impact development, rain gardens, native plants and other techniques to address water quality and stormwater impacts across the City to limit point source impacts. Enhance the visual 'presence' of environmental BMPs to the community.
- iv. Potential Stormwater Master Plan (?) to examine opportunities for regional stormwater management facilities that can substantially hold and treat stormwater for large areas, while also functioning as environmental park assets as well as economic development assets (multiple community benefits out of stormwater investments).
- v. Connect Quality of Life Strategies with Environmental Resiliency ideas via protection and enhancement of natural features and environmental edges.
- vi. Adopt a culture of environmental sustainability as part of the ethos of New Smyrna Beach.



### 5. TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

**a. Mission:** New Smyrna Beach will move toward a more balanced, livable and multi-modal solutions to transportation and circulation that is safer and friendlier for pedestrians.

#### Discussion and Intent:

i. Local and Visitor Traffic continues to be a challenge. Large roads tend to move too fast to pedestrian and bicycle comfort, and smaller streets, particularly on the Beach side tend to be highly congested.



- ii. Biking and Walking / Jogging are very popular exercise and recreation, yet local facilities are not fully connected, and some intersections clearly prioritize automobile needs.
- iii. Parking is considered a concern, particularly on the Flagler Avenue retail street where space is limited.
- iv. There is a perception by some that if one cannot park in front of their destination, there is a 'parking problem'.
- v. Because of geography, there are only a few roads that provide regional access (US1 and SR 44) and only two bridge access points across the intracoastal waterway. Limited network concentrates traffic along these 'collector roads' as frustrating congestion points. In addition, these are FDOT roads and designated evacuation routes, so significant modifications are difficult.
- vi. Society may be approaching a 'tipping point' with transportation technology where local alternatives may available that would improve conditions (such as rideshare, independent mobility (scooters, bikes), autonomous vehicles, etc.).
- vii. There are clearly tradeoffs that New Smyrna Beach must evaluate. Larger, faster roads will serve regional traffic and regional access. Smaller roads will preserve opportunities for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian activity and maintain the scale and character of the existing historic patterns. However, smaller roads will require a community acceptance of slower moving traffic and increase automobile delay in order to preserve safety, pedestrian access and community scale.

#### b. Starter Ideas / Actions:

- i. Enhance Roadway Character, slow driving behavior, increase pedestrian safety:
  - 1. Implement pedestrian, bicycle and character enhancements to its large regional roads, including partnership (LAP funded) dollars with FDOT. This will enhance safety and beautify these large roads.
  - 2. Identify opportunities for new local street sidewalk and bicycle enhancements, as well as opportunities to enhance / reconnect local street network (to distribute traffic).
  - 3. Examine opportunities for Traffic Calming techniques to slow speeds and increase awareness of local character and pedestrian activity. Protect neighborhood safety with traffic calming.
  - 4. Accept a measure of congestion and slow speeds in exchange for safety, beauty and walkability.
- ii. Develop comprehensive solutions to Parking
  - 1. Examine opportunities for 'park once' districts that allow for efficient parking and access to multiple locations.
  - 2. Create designated loading zones for the historic retail main streets.
  - 3. Explore partnerships for shared use parking facilities.
- iii. Develop pilot projects for multi-modal mobility.
  - 1. Ride Share Assisted Pedal-Bike Share and Scooter Share opportunities.
  - 2. Local Shuttle / Circulators (with partnered funding?) to serve Main Street and Beach areas from targeted public parking.

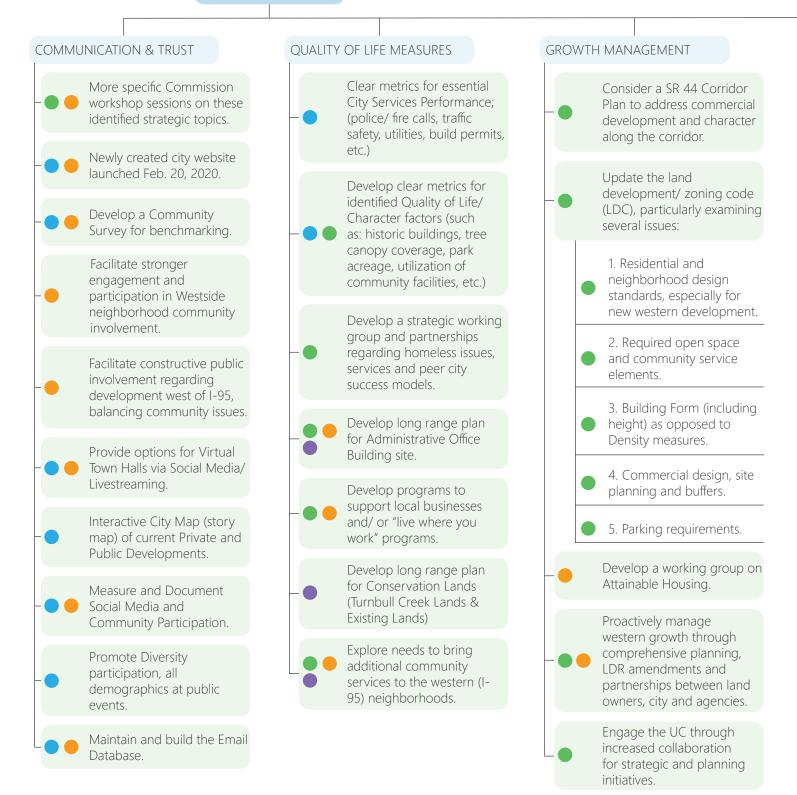
Following the Drafting of the above Commission Discussion Notes, City Staff worked with the Facilitator to develop a refined Strategic Actions Framework tracker that could be managed as an on-line tool to manage progress against top actions. The Strategic Framework Tracker is also meant to be a 'living document' that can allow for new initiatives to be added to the Strategic Plan and managed towards action. This final Strategic Framework is on the following pages.



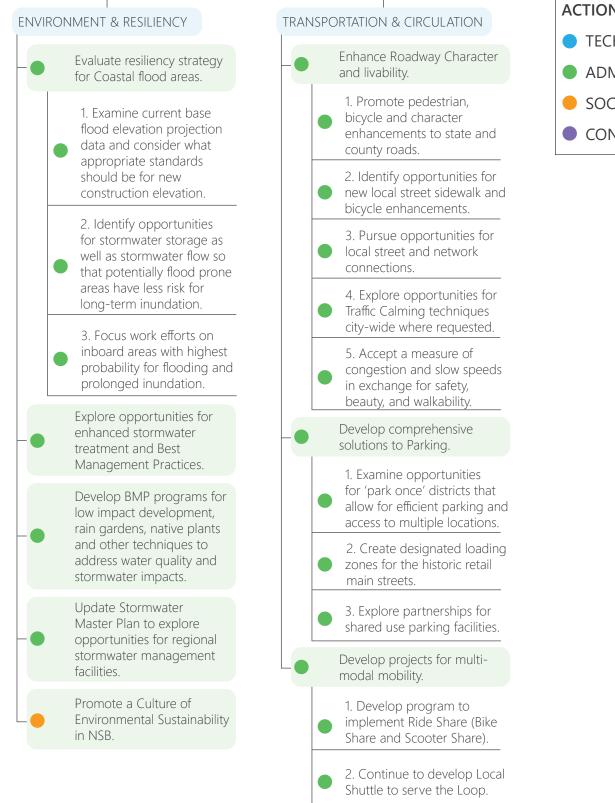


## CITY OF NEW SMYRNA BEACH 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

#### 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN



### DRAFT





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