

City Commission Strategic Planning Workshop – December 15, 2022
Video of the meeting and agenda can be found [here](#)

Commissioners Valerie Perrine, Lisa Martin, Jason McGuirk, Vice-mayor Randy Hartman, and Mayor Fred Cleveland were present.

City Manager Kahlid Reishasdt opened with the meeting by stating that workshops allow the Commissioners an opportunity to discuss issues. There is no voting on the issues. Staff can update the Commission on past accomplishments and seeks guidance and prioritization to implement projects identified in the Strategic Plan.

Public Participation

- Representatives from the Flagler Ave. Business Association, SEVCC, and the Canal Street Historic District Merchants and Businesses voiced concerns that our parking problems and traffic on Canal St. and Flagler Ave. are worsening. They hope that solutions can be found and that they will be included in finding them.
- Nine residents also commented on parking issues on both streets and noted traffic flow and egresses as problems. There was a Parking Task Force in 2014 and a study done three years ago where good, creative solutions were made. There has been no action and they hope this Commission will look into it. One resident stated having better bike lanes and pedestrian walkways would help especially for employees but nixed any ideas for meters.
- One resident stated he was an expert on flooding and would be available to work with the city on this issue.

Presentation of SE Volusia Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Economic development strategic plan was created in 2018. Economic Development Summits were held in February 2021 and February 2022. The focus of the plan is to have value added higher paying jobs to encourage a more resilient economic future and quality of life. The plan encourages a collaborative geographical/regional area focusing on diversification of clean business and industry which will protect our environment and natural resources. In addition, it strives to position the region to compete for state and federal grant funding for infrastructure improvements and job training.

Mr. Williams explained that the plan includes a framework, narrative and an outline that is a working one where progress can be tracked. It is an interesting mix of who we are in the region and who are our top employers.

The Economic Strategic Plan centered around these five objectives:

- Regional infrastructure planning.
- Re-envision geographic corridors and zoning and land uses to look for innovative mixed uses like light industrial/office/residential.
- Education and workforce development opportunities.
- Action plans for ongoing collaboration.
- Initiatives to elevate the region's resilience and recovery from different economic events.

Next steps will be centered around current Future Land Use (FLU) as establishing where our future high paying jobs will be located. The County just approved the Williamson Blvd. Extension that will provide a key N-S corridor.

Some of the Commissioners' comments follow:

- Commissioner McGuirk agreed that we don't have the space for high paying manufacturing jobs like Oak Hill and Edgewater and requested that he meet with SEVMTC as they understand their areas.
- Commissioner Perrine appreciated the efforts of both Tony Otte and Chris Edwards for moving this project forward and knows that we need to support a FLU that will get us high paying jobs. She also listed the ten items residents requested from the October meeting.
- Vice-mayor Hartman feels that the Williamson extension is a vital part of the plan and requested staff follow it closely.
- Mayor Cleveland added the time is right to grow the business tax base with diversification plans and hopes we can begin a dialogue with the Chamber and business owners here to come up with viable plans that can be attained at six-month intervals.

The City Manager added having a five-star business/industrial park where infrastructure and pad ready lots are available would-be a plus as it would save time in getting businesses up and running. He wants to make investigating what it would take to make this happen a priority.

Parking Issues on Flagler Avenue and Canal Street

The City Manager gave the opening remarks on this subject stating that it has been discussed many times previously, and that depending on whom is asked, parking is a major problem, a minor one or not a problem at all.

Assistant City Manager, Ron Niebert, gave a presentation on possible parking solutions which primarily focused on parking garages in each of the downtown districts:

Mainland (Canal Street) - Regulatory requirements for the existing businesses call for 1,108 spaces but has been allowing 50% reduction in these requirements. Current availability:

- 365 spaces on private property
- 179 spaces on public property
- 159 on-street parking spaces
- 703 total spaces (-405 required/+149 with reductions)

Beachside (Flagler Avenue) - No regulatory information was found for beachside.

Current availability:

- 715 spaces on private property
- 453 spaces on public property
- 1,168 total spaces

A 2011 study showed there was an overall surplus of parking in this district, however no study has addressed parking demands including parking to go to the beach, which is part of the demand.

Parking Garages

- Approximate cost is \$9M

- Paid for as statutory business improvement districts or done as public/private joint initiatives with the approximate \$672,000 annual debt servicing cost split between the city and the business community.

- A public/private partnership could involve selling or leasing land to a private entity to operate a garage.
- Possible locations for Canal Street:
 1. Current lot west of the Chamber of Commerce (1.24 acres)
 2. Behind the Utilities Commission building (.71 acre)
- Possible Flagler Avenue location would be behind and to the west of the Shuffleboard Courts

Ancillary Support Programs

1. Shuttle/valet services
2. Parking placard system with parking restrictions
3. Street parking kiosks

The Commissioners asked about revenue from the current beach parking program, which was reported to be \$1-1.5 million/yr. Feedback from business owners and from residents will be sought, and though consensus is unlikely, the Commission will have to make decisions on what is best for the community.

Parking Supervisor Jack Dwyer gave a presentation on the Commercial Loading zone on Flagler Avenue and made recommendations on changes to the locations of some of the loading zones, additional signage and time restrictions for the zones:

- Some zones will be relocated to better positions.
- Some zones will be expanded to allow trucks to use unloading ramps to unload more quickly.
- Spaces and curbs for the zones will be painted for easier identification and better compliance.
- Loading windows would start and end earlier (by 10 am)
- Towing the vehicles is currently not an option, so the citations are a minimal deterrent and don't open the zones for trucks to use. He would like the city to consider allowing towing violators.

Capital Improvement Projects

City Manager Khalid Reishasdt gave an overview of the Strategic Plan. It was developed in 2020 by the community with the help of a consultant and centered around five components, some of which were to be incorporated into the city budget. He further commented that all five components of the plan are challenging with various staff members meeting weekly to assess progress and planning. It is his goal to get as many items completed by the end of next year.

Mayor Cleveland urged the Commission and staff to use its two-year window to meet every three-to-six months to review what has been done and continue with the timeline which will also indirectly fix some of the day-to-day challenges that the Commissioners face.

Todd Alexander, Capital Projects Manager, presented the Capital Improvements update from The Strategic Plan is an interactive presentation from a website and cannot be downloaded, but attached to the agenda was a [list of the projects and their status](#). Three major projects include:

- Washington Street between US 1 and Riverside Drive – This project involves the reconstruction of the entire street including all utilities. There have been delays regarding the underground electric utilities due to the need for easements to connect to several of the properties. Project funding of \$3.4 million is to be split between FDOT, Transportation Impact Fees, UCNSB, ARPA and a possible city loan. Project length is approximately two years once everything is in place to start construction.
- Home Elevations – After repeated flooding the city embarked on a plan to elevate homes 8-10 feet that were flooded two or more times to eliminate the threat of future flooding. This program was coordinated with FEMA and included a 25% local share, which is usually paid by the property owner. The city approved payments of one half of the 25% up to \$35,000 for participating properties. The city manager explained that he does not know of any other city that contributes to these projects the way New Smyrna Beach does. He stressed that this is a long process to get approved by FEMA but to date 30 property owners have said they want to participate.
- Corbin Park and Historical Westside Stormwater Projects – Corbin Park was annexed from the county and there were not many stormwater systems in place. The permitting process with the St Johns Water Management System is for water quality as well as quantity so it is a detailed and slow process. Both projects are close to getting a design cost which will undoubtedly be higher than the current budget, causing them to be done in phases. The design cost for each project of \$250,000 was budgeted in the Stormwater Fund in 2019-20.

There was a discussion about how to prioritize the long list of projects and the city manager explained that they are all priorities however there are many requirements for grants, FDOT, FEMA, SJRWMD, etc. that are out of the City's control and can cause delays. All projects are managed by a city staff member, but staffing is an ongoing challenge. Since the city applies for and receives many grants the city manager and commission agreed that it is extremely important to hire a grant coordinator to oversee all the components of each grant and provide an up-to-date comprehensive list to them.

Mr. Alexander presented an update on the five components of the Strategic Plan:

1. Communication and Trust

- Discussions on timeframe and topics for specific Commission workshop sessions on strategic topics are ongoing.
- Staff will encourage Westside community involvement and ongoing dialogue with community leaders like Pastor Pete.
- Staff continues to promote community events to promote diversity participation. The next event is the 2023 Q2 Heart of the Community Event.
- Staff is working to schedule a Town Hall meeting to discuss opportunities for public involvement for development west of I-95.
- Staff is working to develop an online interactive city map.

The mayor commented that the City communicates with active social media users and website savvy users very well. He would like to form a Citizens Advisory group to meet with Phil Veski , Public Information Officer, on ways to communicate and build trust with

those not online or social media. Each Commissioner can submit names to represent our demographics. The City Manager stated that he hopes to acquire free software from the state to get out texts for more than just emergency situations. Lisa Martin asked what the cost would be to have a Spectrum cable channel like other communities such as Ponce Inlet have.

2. Quality of Life Measures

- Staff developed an annual Performance Measures Report in June. This report is available for review.
- The new Homeless Outreach Officer is working on an updated map of homeless camps and meeting with Homeless and Disadvantaged Grant working group.
- Staff is working to identify new Economic Development Task Force members.
- Staff is working to acquire Turnbull Conservation Lands through the acquisition of conservation easements.

3. Growth Management

- Staff will meet with the Utilities Commission in Jan/Feb to discuss city projects.
- To update the land development/zoning code (LDC), staff is looking at residential and neighborhood design standards, open space and community service elements, Building Form (height vs. density), Commercial design and parking requirements.
- Staff is researching past efforts and will develop an outline for the SR 44 Corridor Plan to proactively manage western growth.
- A working group on Attainable Housing is in progress.

4. Environment and Resiliency

- A preliminary report to enhance stormwater treatment and management provided by consultant Parker Mychenberg is under review.
- A Regional Storm Water Master Plan for the Historic Westside and Corbin Park is being completed along with a proposal request for a citywide master plan.
- The city is partnering with the Marine Discovery center to develop a sustainability plan and green building requirements/initiatives. A \$250,000 grant has been procured to assist with this effort.

Mayor Cleveland commented that information provided by Chip Weston and his Resiliency and Sustainability volunteer group has been extremely helpful.

5. Transportation & Circulation

- A pilot program was implemented working with delivery companies and businesses to optimize designated loading zones for the historic main street areas. The Parking Ambassador is working to find additional loading and unloading zones.
- Staff is working with FDOT on a new alignment for a bike trail between Myrtle and US 1.
- Efforts to explore partnerships for shared use parking facilities are underway with local businesses and stakeholders.

City Manager Khalid stated that updates on the Strategic Plan will be provided to the Commission at every second meeting of the month. He is also looking to have a Town Hall meeting with Randy Hartman and Zone 4 community members on growth.

Commissioners' Comments

- Commissioner Hartman wanted to clarify the facts on the communication issue of the termination of the Classic Car Show on Canal Street. This was not a city decision. It was the decision of the classic car organization. He also noted that the city needs to reduce the amount of bank charges (credit card fees) that the city currently pays. He is a rep on the PPO and stated that since communities can now bundle together, those sources may start drying up.
- Commissioner Perrine requested that the Commission work closer with Boards and assign tasks to members of the Boards. Tie tasks and funding back to the priorities of the Boards. Ms. Perrine would like to spend more time working with staff, especially in finance. She urged staff to use her financial expertise for the next 4 years. Ms. Perrine also stated that the Commission should make sure they can pay for expenditures before projects and purchases are approved.
- The mayor thanked the City Manager and asked him to convey thanks to the City staff. He also reiterated that he wants bite sized pieces reported out as to how we're proceeding with goals.