



# CITY OF LAKELAND, FLORIDA

# **Commissioner Retreat**

Monica Gould and Jenny Gallagher-Blom

[YOURSTRATEGICCONSULTANT.COM](http://YOURSTRATEGICCONSULTANT.COM)

8:00 – 8:15 AM

# **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

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Mayor Roberts McCarley &  
City Manager Shawn Sherrouse

8:15 – 8:30 AM

**Retreat Framing and  
Commissioner Feedback**

# Meet the SCP Team

## Monica Gould

President & Founder

Lead Facilitator & Strategist



## Jenny Gallagher-Blom

VP Community Benefit & Innovation

Certified Strategist



# Agenda

## Day 1

- 8:00 AM** Welcome and Opening Remarks | Mayor Roberts McCarley
- 8:15 AM** Retreat Framing and Commissioner Feedback
- 8:30 AM** Keynote Speaker | Peter Kageyama
- 9:30 AM** Community Survey Results
- 10:30 AM** Break
- 10:45 AM** Strategic Planning Terms
- 11:45 AM** Lunch
- 12:45 PM** Departmental Survey Findings
- 1:30 PM** Infrastructure
- 2:45 PM** Break
- 3:00 PM** Public Safety
- 4:30 PM** Day 1 Closing Reflection



## Day 2

- 8:00 AM** Day 1 Reflection and Day 2 Framing
- 8:30 AM** Economic Development
- 9:30 AM** Break
- 9:45 AM** Culture and Quality of Life
- 11:15 AM** Organizational Excellence & Modernization
- 12:15 PM** Lunch
- 12:45 PM** Strategic Plan Structure
- 1:30 PM** Wrap-Up, Closing Reflections, and Next Steps

# Retreat Goals

1. **Advance Strategic Visioning** — Fulfill the Commission's commitment to charting a bold, forward-looking direction for the City of Lakeland.
2. **Lead as One Team** — Commit to collaborative governance that represents the community's interests, needs, and hopes — taking a decisive step forward in sustaining and improving Lakeland's quality of life.
3. **Set Clear Policy Direction** — Provide staff with defined priorities, goals, and objectives that translate Commission intent into action.
4. **Establish a Strategic Planning Framework** — Define an enhanced planning structure that is future-focused, innovative, and equitable — aligned to our mission and vision.
5. **Define Strategic Priorities** — Align specific initiatives under each focus area to concentrate resources and drive measurable outcomes.
6. **Strengthen Operational Excellence** — Identify opportunities to elevate internal operations, organizational culture, and service delivery through realistic, cutting-edge practices

# Retreat Framing

## Retreat Format and Flow

- Agenda organized by topic areas shaped by **commissioner input** and workshop goals
- Each topic opens with data-driven stage setting to ground the dialogue
- Structured discussion guided by prompting questions

## Dialogue and Collaboration

- Commissioners engage with City staff: Ask questions, explore the data, and discuss implications
- Prompting questions will support opening discussion and focusing dialogue on key decision points
- Where feasible, commissioners work toward consensus on key topic areas
- Parking lot will be utilized to table unresolved or unrelated items

# Ground Rules



- This is your plan!
- Challenge ideas, not people.
- Listen for understanding; bring out hopes, concerns, and solutions.
- Collaborate and engage with each other.
- Respectful discourse, even when we don't agree. Thumb talk 👍

# Methodology | Data Gathered

- Kickoff with City Leadership to understand the services provided and garner context on planning efforts
- One-on-one interviews with City Commissioners to formulate agenda and needs for the retreat and to identify priorities for the City
- Meetings and interviews with City Management leadership to refine and gather information
- Survey deployed to department leaders to garner input on current and future priorities and identify challenges, barriers, and needs
- Community survey data utilized to support the SWOT analysis
- Synthesized data gathered to formulate draft SWOT analyses

# Interview Highlights

- Strong alignment and passion for the City of Lakeland
- Long-standing community ties and desire for long-term planning
- Current strategic focus areas resonate with commissioners
- Critical issues in organizational capacity, workforce development, and internal infrastructure are also priorities
- Want a current-state snapshot highlighting new information, emerging risks, and unresolved challenges

# Interview Highlights

- Desire to build a shared language and expectations around strategic planning that provide clear direction to staff.
  - Shared strategic planning lexicon
  - Clarification on commission vs. staff responsibilities
  - Overview of how ideas move from discussion to policy and implementation
- Expectation that the strategic plan functions as a living governance tool supported by regular reporting, measurable KSI/KPIs, and alignment with budget and policy.



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Commissioner Input

- Any feedback or input on the structure of the retreat?
- Are there any recommended adaptations or ground rules you'd like to set for our time together?



8:30 – 9:30 AM

# Keynote Address

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Peter Kageyama | *For the Love of Cities*

9:30 – 10:30 AM

# **Community Survey Results**

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Dr. Neely | Forward Analytics



# Commissioner Dialogue

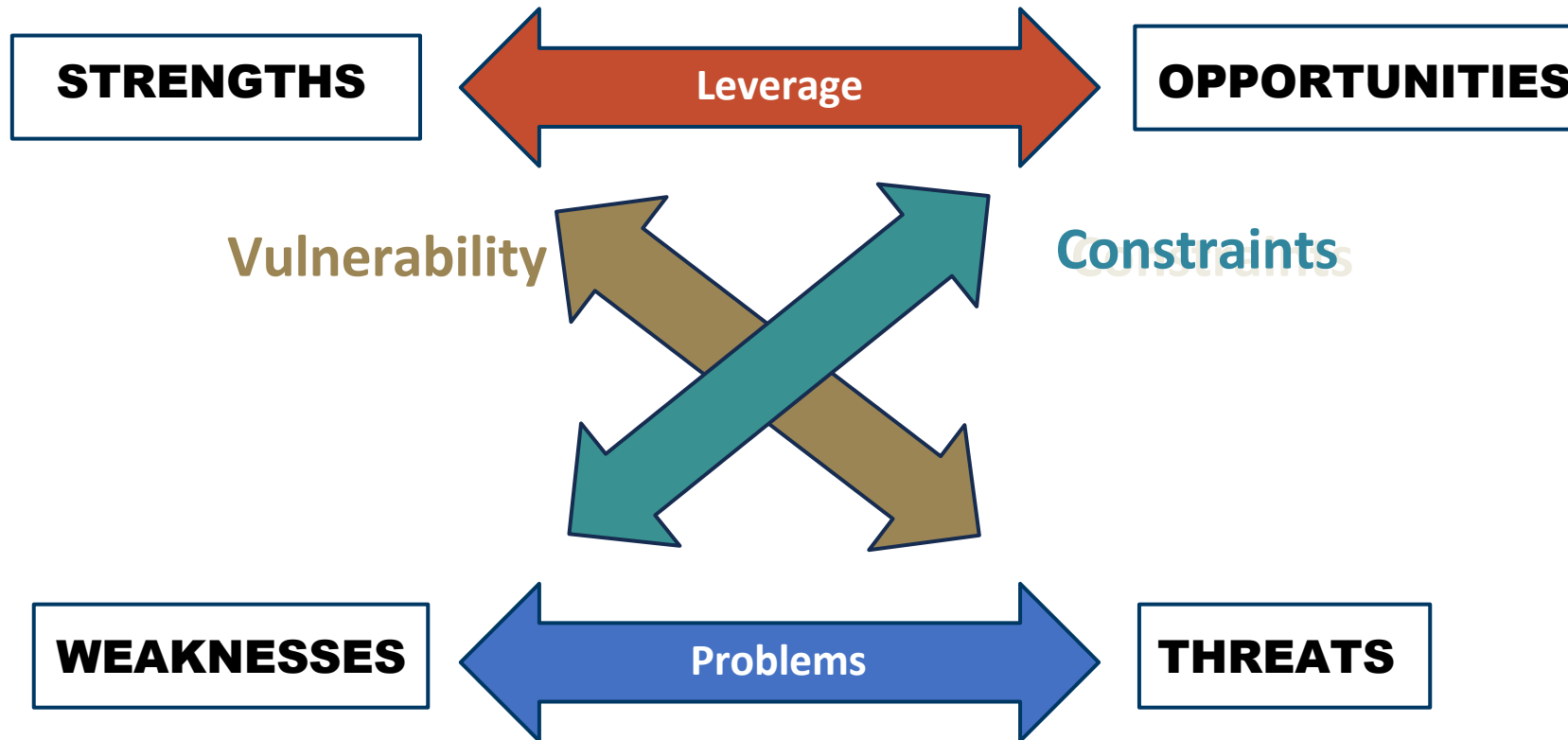
## Reflect on Community Survey Results



15 min.

- What questions do you have for Dr. Neely
- What stands out to you?
- What aligns with what you're hearing from residents?
- What concerns or surprises you?
- What does this mean for our priorities?

# Defining SWOT





# Community Input

## Strengths

- Overall quality of life is “good”
- Public safety highly rated and trusted
- Parks and Recreation is a flagship strength
- Libraries are a trusted, beloved institution
- Airport services are asset
- RP Funding Center is a community asset



# Community Input

## Weaknesses

- Aging infrastructure
- Workforce and capacity constraints
- Housing affordability is a severe pain point according to residents
- Code enforcement widely viewed as ineffective or inconsistent
- Business Development is unclear, inconsistent and underperforming

## Opportunities

- Convert “unsure” responses from community on Biz Development, Airport and RP Funding Center through **communications and visibility**
- **Leverage Parks and Libraries as anchors for broader Community Engagement** (disseminate information, host community conversations, build trust in weaker departments)
- **Housing reform is the single biggest opportunity for impact** (affordability, quality, zoning, neighborhood revitalization)
- **Modernize Code Enforcement with transparency and digital tools** (online dashboards, clearer standards, faster response systems, proactive education)
- **Strengthen Business Development through clarity and concierge-style support** (a clearer path for entrepreneurs, more visible support, simplified processes)
- **Invest in internal capacity and workforce development** to ensure long-term sustainability



## Community Input



# Community Input

## Threats

- Growth outpacing city systems and services
- Visible deterioration undermining trust
- Inconsistent or slow city response
- Affordability pressures
- Neighborhood decline and inequity concerns
- Stormwater and flooding vulnerabilities
- Low awareness and communication gaps
- Public safety concerns tied to infrastructure and blight
- Erosion of trust in city systems



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Community Feedback into SWOT Framework



15 min.

- How does community feedback on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats align with what you have heard from citizens?
- Is there anything notably missing from this high-level SWOT?



10:30 – 10:45 AM

**Break**

10:45 – 11:45 AM

# **Alignment on Strategic Planning**

- Best Practices in Strategic Planning
- Benchmarking Cities
- Aligning Terminology

# Best Practices in City Planning

- Provides long-term direction and short-term focus for efficient, effective governance
- Continuously aligned through periodic review and recalibration
  - Annual visioning and strategic review
  - Priorities and initiatives linked directly to budget allocation
  - Annual operating plan driven by strategic plan priorities

## Integrated Planning Architecture

- **Strategic Vision:** 20-year community outlook
- **Strategic Plan:** 3–5 year goals and measurable outcomes
- **Master Plan:** 10-year physical assets and land use foundation
  - **Capital Planning:** Infrastructure investment aligned to master plan priorities
- **Operational Plan:** Annual execution aligned to strategic priorities

# Transparent Reporting

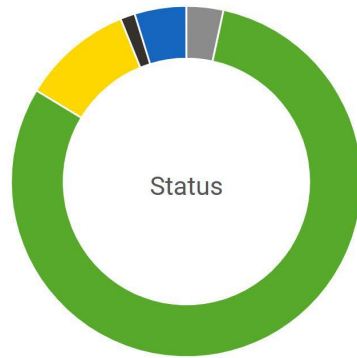


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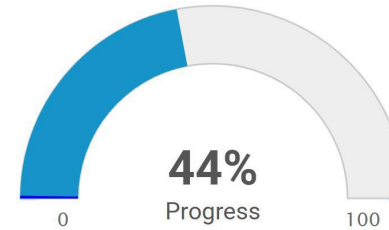
Q Search



## Broward County FY23-FY28 Strategic Plan



Status	%
● Status Pending	3
● On Track	80
● Some Disruption	10
● Discontinued	1
● Completed	5



# Planning Approach



# Planning Process & Data Collection

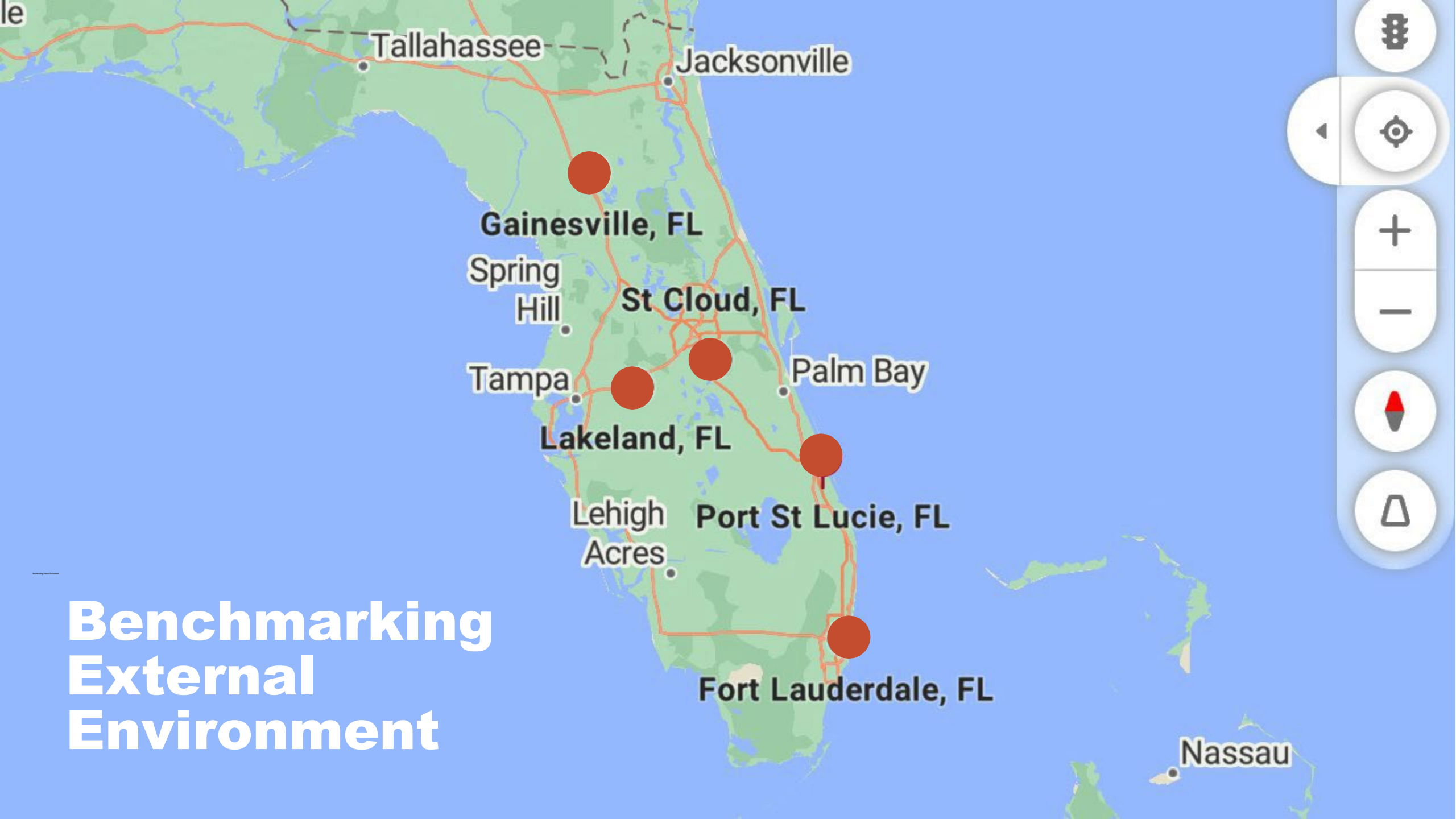


## Environmental Scan and Stakeholder Engagement

- **Internal assessment / organizational assessment**
  - Staff culture and engagement
  - Operational & technology assessment
  - Human resource/capacity assessment
  - Financial health
- **External assessment**
  - Community visioning
  - Community needs assessment
  - Community feedback
  - Housing
  - Workforce
  - Business growth
  - Economic development
- **Benchmarking**

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# **Brief Review of Strategic Plans in Other Mid-Size Florida Cities**



# Benchmarking External Environment

# Florida City Comparisons



City	Population (2024 Census Est.)	Square Miles	Governance Model	FY 2024 Budget (All Funds)	Per-Capita Spending	Major City Services	Major Attractions	Median Household Income
Lakeland	124,990	66.6	Commission-Manager (7 commissioners)	\$746,900,000	\$5,975.68	Police, Fire/EMS, Lakeland Electric (municipal utility), Water/Sewer, Stormwater, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Building/Planning/Zoning, Solid Waste	Frank Lloyd Wright architecture at Florida Southern College, Detroit Tigers spring training (Publix Field), Hollis Garden, Lake Mirror Promenade	\$63,859
St. Cloud	71,018	29.2	Council-Manager	\$273,000,000	\$3,844.10	Police, Fire/EMS, Water/Sewer, Stormwater, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Building/Planning/Zoning, Solid Waste	Lakefront Park on East Lake Tohopekaliga, proximity to Disney/Orlando attractions	\$95,990
Port St. Lucie	258,575	119.2	Council-Manager	\$851,000,000	\$3,291.11	Police, Fire/EMS, Water/Sewer, Stormwater, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Building/Planning/Zoning, Solid Waste	NY Mets spring training (Clover Park), PGA Village, Savannas Preserve State Park	\$86,241
Fort Lauderdale	190,641	34.6	Commission-Manager	\$1,000,000,000	\$5,245.46	Police, Fire Rescue, Water/Sewer, Central Regional Wastewater, Sanitation, Stormwater, Parking, Executive Airport, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Building/Planning/Zoning, CRA	Fort Lauderdale Beach, Las Olas Boulevard, Riverwalk Arts & Entertainment District, Bonnet House Museum, NSU Art Museum, Port Everglades cruise port	\$90,734
Gainesville	148,720	64.0	Council- Manager	\$455,000,000	\$3,059.44	Police, Fire/EMS, Water/Sewer, Stormwater, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Building/Planning/Zoning, Solid Waste, Housing & Community Development, Transportation	University of Florida, Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, Florida Museum of Natural History, Butterfly Rainforest, Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park	\$46,165
Wildwood	19,031	58.3	Council-Manager	\$258,500,000	\$13,583.10	Police, Fire/EMS, Water/Sewer, Stormwater, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Building/Planning/Zoning, Solid Waste	Gateway to The Villages (largest retirement community in US), proximity to Florida Turnpike/I-75 interchange	\$76,552

# St. Cloud



- 5-Year Robust Strategic Plan
- 5-Phase Process over six months to complete plan
- Included a 30 Year Community Visioning session
- City Council gave direction and vision on framework.
- Key Focus Areas and Strategic Goals:
  - Diverse, Innovative, and Magnetic Economic Development
  - Effective Community Safety
  - High-Performing Government
  - Reliable Transportation Network

# St. Cloud Strategic Focus 2024–2029

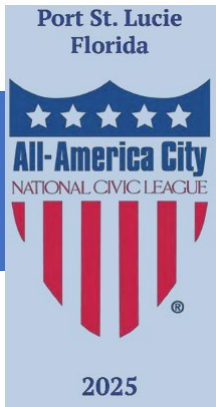
**Diverse, innovative economic development:** Grow commercial tax base, attract target industries, improve job-to-housing balance. [City of St. Cloud, Florida - Official Website stories.opengov.com](https://www.cityofstcloud.com/stories/opengov.com)

**Effective community safety:** Emergency readiness, modern public safety infrastructure, and strong community partnerships. [City of St. Cloud, Florida - Official Website Osceola News Gazette](https://www.cityofstcloud.com/osceola-news-gazette)

**High-performing government:** Continuity of core services, employer-of-choice positioning, and technology to improve processes and transparency. [City of St. Cloud, Florida - Official Website Osceola News Gazette](https://www.cityofstcloud.com/osceola-news-gazette)

**Reliable transportation network:** Traffic congestion, commute times, and funding/communication around transportation projects are front-burner issues. [City of St. Cloud, Florida - Official Website Osceola News Gazette](https://www.cityofstcloud.com/osceola-news-gazette)

# Port St. Lucie



**City of PORT ST. LUCIE** STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (FY 25/26)

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5	GOAL 6	GOAL 7
<p><b>Safe, Clean &amp; Beautiful</b>            Improve Safety and Plan for Future Needs            Beautify Landscaping of Roadways, Public Parks &amp; Gateways</p>	<p><b>Strategic Growth for a Resilient Future</b>            Advancing Community Design</p>	<p><b>Smart &amp; Connected City</b>            Advance Education &amp; Engagement            Advance Innovation &amp; Resiliency</p>	<p><b>Diverse Economy &amp; Employment Opportunities</b>            Expand Job Opportunities and Support Economic Development            Revitalize Eastern Port St. Lucie</p>	<p><b>High Quality Infrastructure &amp; Facilities</b>            Plan Roadways, Facilities and Fiber for Future Needs            Advance Mobility &amp; Improve Traffic Flow            Improve Water Quality</p>	<p><b>Culture, Nature &amp; Recreation</b>            The Port &amp; Pioneer Park            Expand Culture, the Arts &amp; Special Events            Implement the 10 Year Parks &amp; Recreation Master Plan</p>	<p><b>High-Performing Government Organization</b>            Improve Service Delivery while Reducing Millage            Enhance Customer Service            Organizational Development            Intergovernmental Priorities Advancement            Re-envisioning PSL</p>

[Home](#) | [City of Port St. Lucie, FL](#)

- One of the fastest growing cities in the nation
- Robust strategic planning process with focus on Quality of Life and Sustainability
- Culture of civic engagement:
  - Annual citizen summits
  - City University
  - Youth Council
  - Neighborhood based initiatives
- 2025 All-American City Award – National Civic League

# Port St. Lucie Strategic Focus FY 24/25

## **Strategic focus (FY 24/25 update and resident input):**

**Traffic and mobility:** Traffic, roads, and general mobility (sidewalks, transit, street lighting) are top resident priorities. [Port St. Lucie](#)

**Growth management and housing:** Controlling growth, community design, cost of living, and housing affordability. [Port St. Lucie dashboards.mysidewalk.com](#)

**Economic development and jobs:** Business support, economic diversification, and employment opportunities. [Port St. Lucie dashboards.mysidewalk.com](#)

**Environment and quality of life:** Environmental preservation, parks/cleanliness, and maintaining a “safe, clean & beautiful” city. [Port St. Lucie dashboards.mysidewalk.com](#)

# Fort Lauderdale

CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE Public Safety | Housing | Infrastructure & Resilience | Public Places | Business Growth & Support

Homepage > Public Safety >

## Public Safety

Goal 1: Be a safe community that is proactive and responsive to risks

Status Indicators: ■ Proceeding as Planned | ■ Monitoring Progress | ■ Reviewing for Improvement | ■ Information Unavailable

Measure and Description <small>Click on each performance measure for more information</small>	Annual Results	Annual Target
<b>Crime rate</b> <small>Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) reporting system and methodology on crime rate was changed in 2021 from Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) to National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Therefore, the measure is now NIBRS Group A crime rate per 10,000 population.</small>	649	783
<b>Fire rescue response times</b> <small>When measuring the effectiveness of fire departments, response times are traditionally a key indicator. A mere few minutes could save a life or reduce the impact of structural damage.</small>	8:20	6:00
<b>Police response time (all calls for service)</b> <small>Response time is when the officer is notified (dispatched) to arrival based on the priority level (1,2,3,4) assigned by the dispatcher and the number of officers in service at that time.</small>	4:40	4:38

- 10th largest city in Florida
- Vision Plans
- Strategic Plan
- City Commission Priorities
- Open Data and Transparency Portal
- Robust strategic plan reporting with the dashboard

[Fort Lauderdale Dashboard |](#)

# Ft. Lauderdale Strategic Priorities

**Strategic focus (Commission priorities and 2024 legislative program and mayor's remarks):**

**Public safety:** New facilities, technology, visible policing; continued investment in police and fire staffing. [City of Fort Lauderdale, FL citizenportal.ai](#)

**Homelessness response:** Stronger, sometimes “tougher” approach to encampments while funding supportive services and housing options. [Issuu City of Fort Lauderdale, FL WLRN](#)

**Infrastructure and resilience:** Massive stormwater and wastewater investments (e.g., Prospect Lake Clean Water Center) and flood-mitigation projects. [Issuu citizenportal.ai WLRN](#)

**Public spaces and thriving communities:** Implementation of a large parks bond, beautification, and neighborhood enhancement. [Issuu City of Fort Lauderdale, FL citizenportal.ai](#)

## Strategic Planning Model for the City of Gainesville

Value-based principles that describe  
the preferred  
future in 15 years

### VISION

Destination  
“You Have Arrived”

Strategic goals that focus outcome base  
objectives and potential actions for  
5 years

### PLAN

Map  
“The Right Route”

Focus for one year – a work program:  
policy agenda for Mayor and City  
Commission, management agenda for  
staff; major projects

### EXECUTION

Itinerary  
“The Right Direction”

Principles that define the responsibility  
of city government and frame the  
primary services – core service  
businesses

### MISSION

Vehicle  
“The Right Bus”

Personal values that define  
performance standards and  
expectations for employees

### CORE VALUES

Fuel  
“The Right People”

- Similar in geographic size and population to Lakeland
- Detailed Strategic Plan
- Long-range plan through 2035
- Annual update process

[Home Welcome to the City of Gainesville](#)

# Gainesville Strategic Focus FY 2025

## Strategic focus (FY 2025 strategic plan refresh):

**Downtown revitalization:** Create a vibrant, “alive” downtown with more residential, entertainment, and commercial activity. [ccemail.cityofgainesville.org](mailto:ccemail.cityofgainesville.org) [City of Gainesville](https://www.cityofgainesville.org)

**East Gainesville transformation:** Upgraded housing, infrastructure, and more neighborhood-serving businesses on the east side. [ccemail.cityofgainesville.org](mailto:ccemail.cityofgainesville.org)

**Affordable housing and homelessness:** Increase affordable housing options and eliminate chronic homelessness while reducing transitional homelessness. [ccemail.cityofgainesville.org](mailto:ccemail.cityofgainesville.org) [City of Gainesville](https://www.cityofgainesville.org)

**Equity and community health:** Implement an equity framework, expand access to health/mental-health services, and ensure inclusive access to city services. [ccemail.cityofgainesville.org](mailto:ccemail.cityofgainesville.org) [City of Gainesville](https://www.cityofgainesville.org)

**Mobility and sustainability:** Transportation, trails, climate goals (net-zero, zero waste), and reducing the carbon footprint of city facilities. [ccemail.cityofgainesville.org](mailto:ccemail.cityofgainesville.org) [City of Gainesville](https://www.cityofgainesville.org)



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Defining the Framework



15 min.

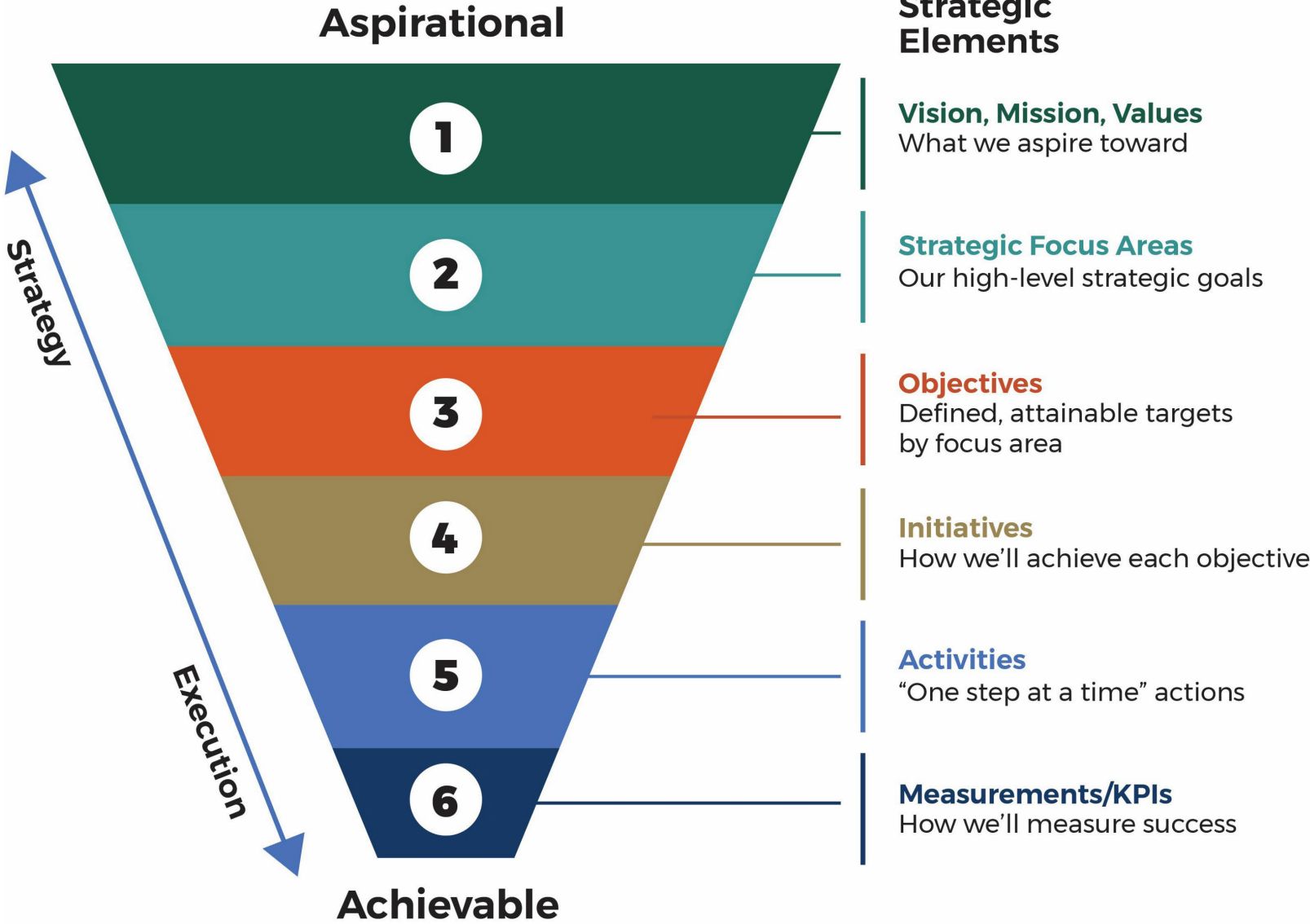
- What plans resonate with you?
- What elements of the planning process and approach should Lakeland consider?
- Is there a framework or methodology COL should adopt? If so, what does it look like for the City?
- How does this session inform the larger strategic plan for Lakeland?

# Aligning on Strategic Planning Language

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Establishing a shared vocabulary to guide our planning process

# Strategic Planning Framework



# Lakeland's Vision and Mission

## **Vision:**

- A vibrant, innovative, culturally-inclusive, world-class community.

## **Mission:**

- A community working together to achieve an exceptional quality of life.

**Q:** Do these statements still resonate with you?

**Q:** What does it mean to be a world-class community?

# Lakeland's Values

- Social Responsibility
- Leadership
- Integrity
- Commitment to Excellence
- Empowered Workforce
- Diversity

**Values are exhibited internally and externally.**

**Q:** Does the City exhibit these values in how they interface with the community?



# Focus Areas or Targets

1. Infrastructure
2. Economic Development
3. Public Safety
4. Culture

**Q:** What term(s) do we want to use?

**Q:** How do we define each of these areas?



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Defining the Terms



15 min.

- What terms will COL use?
  - Focus Area or Target or Goal?
  - Will we use Objectives to define Directional Priorities?
  - Will we use SMART principles for Objectives?
  - Will the Commissioners identify strategic Initiatives?
- How would the commission like to incorporate these terms in our work over the next two days?



11:45 – 12:45 PM

**Lunch**

12:45 – 1:30 PM

# **High-Level Department Survey Findings**

# Department Head Survey

- Total respondents: 45 (0 skipped).
- Broad representation across departments; largest participation from Public Works (8) and Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts (7).
- Tenure profile: 19 respondents have 20+ years; 12 have 10–20 years; 13 have <10 years (including 1 under 1 year).
- Strategic plan alignment (perceived): Average alignment score ~66.8/100 (36 responses).
- Misalignment signal: 8 of 37 respondents indicated significant priorities that do not align well with the four current focus areas.

# Priorities in 2025

## **A. Infrastructure maintenance, modernization, and asset management**

Maintaining and improving roads/transportation, stormwater/drainage, and facilities; addressing aging infrastructure and capacity needs.

## **B. Safety and risk reduction**

Public safety readiness and enforcement; roadway safety initiatives (e.g., Vision Zero); workforce safety programs and compliance.

## **C. Technology modernization, cybersecurity, and efficiency**

Cybersecurity and risk management; digital services/customer experience; analytics; reducing manual processes through modernization and integration.

## **D. Workforce capacity: recruitment, retention, training, and succession**

Recruitment/retention, staff development and cross-training, succession planning, and managing retirements.

## **E. Operational excellence, compliance, and financial stewardship**

Regulatory compliance, grant reporting, financial operations, inventory and purchasing controls, and audit/assurance.

# Priorities Carry Over Year to Year

Most departments indicated they will carry forward all or most of the prior year's priorities, reflecting the multi-year nature of the work and the ongoing character of key operational priorities.

# Barriers, Obstacles, and Needs

1. Funding constraints and rising costs
2. Staffing, recruitment/retention, and knowledge transfer
3. Technology limitations and modernization backlog
4. Process clarity, governance, and cross-department prioritization
5. External pressures: growth, regulation, legislation, and risk

**Staff identify growth outpacing infrastructure capacity, unfunded regulatory mandates**



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Reflect on Department Survey



30 min.

- What themes feel most urgent?
- What needs more clarity?
- What does this mean for the next 5–10 years?
- Where do you see alignment or misalignment with your priorities?



1:30 – 2:45 PM

# **Focus Area Deep Dive #1: Infrastructure**

# Department Priorities

- **Transportation corridor improvements**, congestion management, and roadway safety (including Vision Zero), multimodal network planning.
- **Stormwater and flooding:** stormwater system assessment and upgrades, storage/treatment improvements, and compliance-driven investment. Stormwater upgrades, flooding mitigation, and water quality improvements
- **Utilities capacity and rehabilitation:** sewer/wastewater replacement, trunk line capacity work, major rehabilitation and capacity expansions. Water/wastewater rehabilitation, replacement, and capacity expansion
- **Facility maintenance, asset replacement, and long-term capital planning.** Facility upkeep and long-term planning, sustained facility maintenance and CIP-style planning to address aging systems and growth-driven demand.
- **Enterprise infrastructure and cybersecurity modernization** - “technology infrastructure”: continuous security monitoring and modernization of legacy/end-of-life systems described as foundational to organizational resilience.
- **Emergency operations capability (including EOC-related needs)**

# Commissioner Interviews

Commissioners identified infrastructure as the defining issue for Lakeland's next decade. Growth, aging systems, and increasing service demands are placing sustained pressure on roads, utilities, and public safety capacity.

## **Key priorities include:**

- Road maintenance, traffic mitigation, and long-term transportation planning
- Wastewater, water, stormwater, and electric utility reliability
- Fire and police facilities, staffing, and service coverage aligned with growth
- Multi-year infrastructure forecasting and capital planning

Commissioners emphasized the need to move beyond reactive projects toward proactive, long-term infrastructure strategies supported by transparent funding discussions and clear tradeoff analysis.



# Infrastructure

## Strengths

The city's infrastructure strengths lie in reliable utility operations, high-performing public works teams, exceptional parks and airport facilities, strong planning foundations, and a culture of safety and modernization — all of which provide a solid platform for future investment.



# Infrastructure

## Strengths

- Strong utility operations (water, wastewater, electric)
- High-performing public works teams
- Well-maintained parks, trails, and recreation infrastructure
- Airport infrastructure as a regional asset
- Solid foundation of long-term planning
- Strong culture of safety and compliance in utilities
- Effective emergency response infrastructure
- Commitment to modernization



# Infrastructure

## Weakness

### Summary:

The city's infrastructure weaknesses center on aging systems, insufficient funding, slow project delivery, and capacity constraints — all intensified by rapid growth and rising community expectations.



# Infrastructure

## Weakness

- Aging, over-capacity systems
- Roads and transportation networks not keeping pace
- Stormwater and flooding vulnerabilities
- Facility maintenance backlogs
- Insufficient funding relative to need
- Slow project timelines and capacity constraints
- Digital infrastructure gaps
- Growth outpacing infrastructure planning

## Opportunities

The City's biggest opportunities lie in modernizing aging systems, improving mobility and stormwater resilience, upgrading digital tools, strengthening cross-department coordination, and communicating more transparently to build public trust.



## Infrastructure

## Opportunities

- Modernize aging systems with strategic, phased investment
- Improve road conditions, mobility, and traffic flow
- Strengthen stormwater capacity and resilience
- Expand digital infrastructure and modernize internal systems
- Enhance cross-department coordination
- Improve communication and transparency about projects
- Leverage high-performing assets (parks, airport) to support growth
- Align infrastructure planning with growth and development



# Infrastructure



# Infrastructure

## Threats

- **Rapid growth outpacing system capacity**  
Demand on roads, water, wastewater, and stormwater exceeds current infrastructure limits.
- **Rising construction and maintenance costs**  
Inflation, labor shortages, and material costs make projects harder to fund and deliver.
- **Increasing frequency and severity of weather events**  
Heavy rainfall, flooding, and storm impacts strain already-aging systems.
- **Aging infrastructure at risk of failure**  
Old pipes, pumps, roads, and facilities increase the likelihood of unexpected breakdowns.



# Infrastructure

## Threats

- **Workforce shortages in skilled trades and engineering**  
Limited staffing slows project delivery and increases vulnerability.
- **Public frustration and declining trust**  
Slow timelines and visible deterioration can erode confidence in the City's ability to keep up.
- **Technology and data system gaps**  
Outdated digital tools hinder modernization, efficiency, and proactive maintenance.
- **Interdependent system vulnerabilities**  
Failure in one area (stormwater, roads, utilities) can cascade across departments and services.



# Commissioner Dialogue



45 min.

## Priority Setting for Infrastructure

- What are the most urgent infrastructure needs?
- What long-term investments must we commit to?
- What funding strategies should we explore?
- What does success look like in 5, 10, 20 years?
- What policy direction do you want staff to take?
- What priorities emerge for the coming year(s)?



2:45 – 3:00 PM

**Break**



3:00 – 4:30 PM

# **Focus Area Deep Dive #2: Public Safety**

# Department Priorities

- **Emergency management planning and command/coordination capability;** comprehensive planning, EOC capability development/creation, and improved field/forward command capability for incidents and special events
- **Fire station construction, inspections, and operational readiness**
- **Police technology modernization,** records management, and compliance systems
- **Workforce:** Staffing, recruitment pipelines, and compensation competitiveness
- **Compliance systems:** CJIS-aligned record/document systems
- **Roadway safety initiatives** connected to Vision Zero

## Internal Operations

### Emergency Management Training

- Incident Command System (ICS)
- SB180 Training Requirements (TBD)
- Continuity of Operations
- Annual Exercises

### Special Event Activations

- Sun n' Fun
- Parades
- Community celebrations (e.g., Red, White, and Kaboom; Mayfaire-by-the Lake)

## Community Outreach and Partnerships

- Meeting and training space for departments and community emergency partners
- Emergency Management seminars for the public (community outreach)
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training
- Emergency Management planning meetings

# EOC Functions | Emergency Conditions

## Emergency Response Hub

- Life Safety Measures
  - Evacuations
  - Coordination and Planning of Tactical Operations
  - Local Disaster Declaration
- Prioritization of Response Efforts
- Resource Requests for all City Departments
  - Search and Rescue
  - EMS, Fire, Police Support
  - Lakeland Electric
  - Fuel, Feeding, Debris Removal, Roads, Water
- Facilities Management
  - Staging Areas, Field Hospitals, Shelters
- Community Lifelines
  - Safety, Food, Water, Shelter, Energy, Hazardous Material, Communications, Transportation

## Recovery Operations

- Multi-Agency Resource Center
- POD and Comfort Station Coordination
- Coordination of community resources
- Addressing Unmet Needs
- Volunteers and Donations Management
- Family Reunification Coordination

## Public Communications

- Joint Information Center
- Emergency Information Call Center
- Mass Communications (EverBridge)
- News Media Coordination

## Departmental and Partner Coordination

- Non-profit, Private, Faith-based partners
- County, State and Federal partners

# EOC Peer Comparisons

	Total Millage	
<b>Population Peers</b>		
West Palm Beach	✓	8.1888
Hollywood	✓	7.9606
Palm Bay	✓	7.6993
Miami Gardens	✓	7.3694
Miramar	✓	7.1172
Gainesville	✓	6.7297
Coral Springs	✓	6.1891
Clearwater	✓	5.8850
Davie	✓	5.7975
Pompano Beach	✓	5.6608
Lakeland		5.4323

	Total Millage	
<b>Electric Utilities</b>		
Jacksonville	✓	11.3169
Gainesville	✓	6.7297
Orlando	✓	6.6500
Tampa	✓	6.2076
Lakeland		5.4323
Kissimmee	Out to Bid	4.6253
Tallahassee	County/FDEM	4.4200

	Total Millage	
<b>I-4 Cities</b>		
Haines City	✓	7.5895
Sanford	✓	7.3250
Davenport	✓	7.2500
Deltona	✓	6.7000
Orlando	✓	6.6500
Winter Haven	✓	6.5900
St. Petersburg	✓	6.4525
Deland	✓	6.2841
Tampa	✓	6.2076
Daytona Beach	✓	5.9300
Plant City	✓	5.7157
Lakeland		5.4323
Kissimmee	Out to Bid	4.6253
Altamonte Springs	✓	4.0000

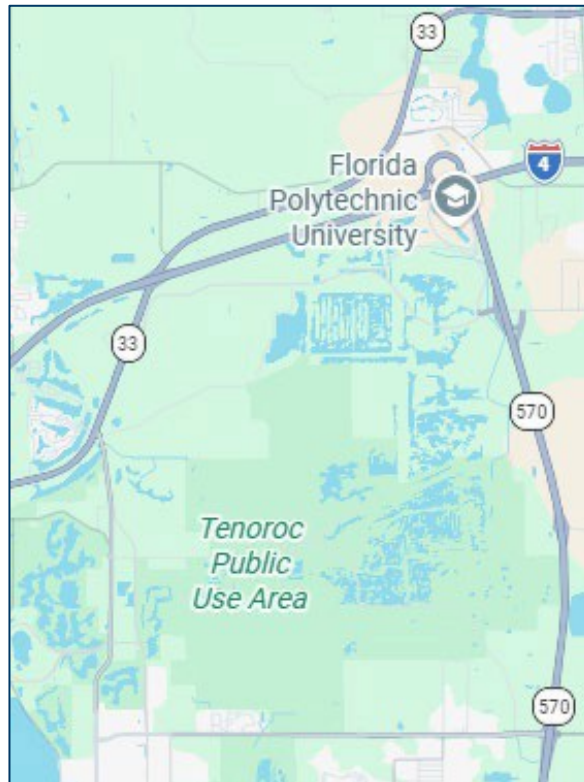
- ✓ Purpose-built EOC
- ✓ Ad-hoc/On-call EOC
- ✓ No EOC

# Lakeland Fire Station #8

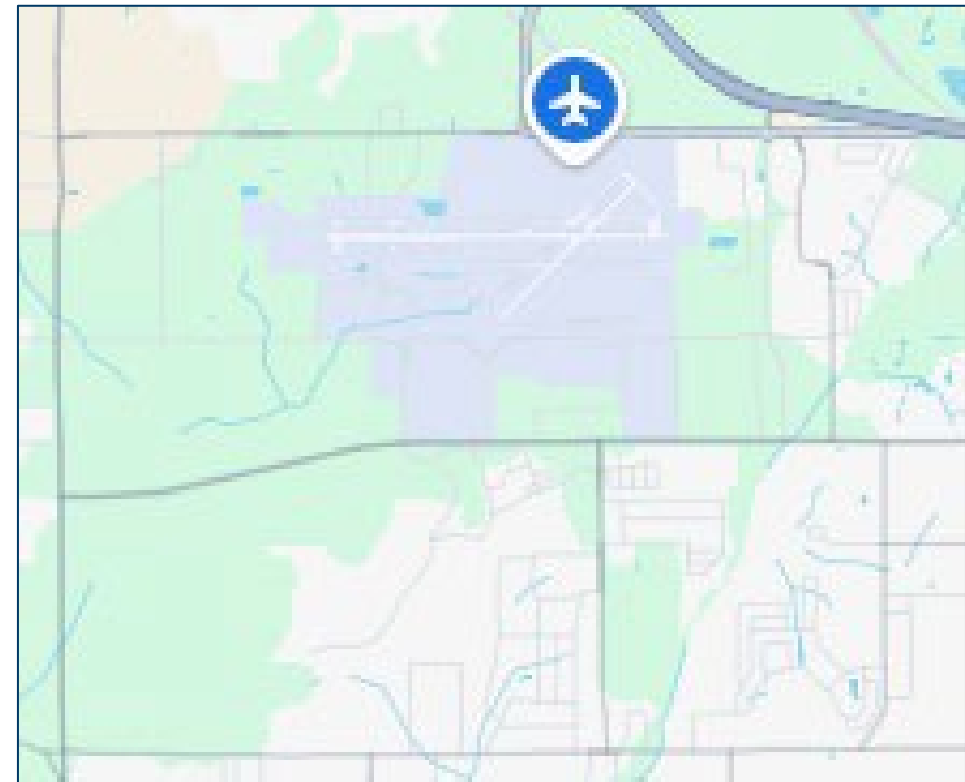


# Future Needs | Areas of Interest

## Florida Polytech 457 Calls



## South Lakeland 370 Calls



# Commissioner Interviews

## **Public Safety Capacity Is Under Pressure from Growth**

Commissioners emphasized that **rapid growth is straining police and fire services**

## **Fire and Police Facilities Need Upgrades and Expansion**

They highlighted the need for **modern, adequately located facilities** to keep pace with population and development patterns:

## **Staffing Levels Must Keep Up with Service Demands**

Commissioners pointed to **staffing as a critical issue**, especially as calls for service increase with growth. This includes both **police and fire personnel**.

## **Public Safety Must Be Integrated into Long-Term Infrastructure Planning**

They stressed the importance of **multi-year forecasting and capital planning** to ensure public safety infrastructure keeps pace:

## **Move from Reactive to Proactive Public Safety Strategy**

Commissioners want to shift from reactive fixes to proactive, long-term planning, including funding strategies and clear tradeoff analysis:



# Public Safety

## Strengths

- High trust and satisfaction with core emergency response services
- Positive perception of police visibility and community presence
- Strong satisfaction with public safety facilities and programs
- Code enforcement shows a stable core of satisfaction
- Public safety is viewed as a foundational priority
- Strong support for modernization efforts



# Public Safety

## Weaknesses

- Uneven service quality and inconsistency
- Communication gaps and lack of clarity
- Perceived slow or insufficient enforcement
- Quality-of-life concerns that spill into safety perceptions
- Limited trust and confidence in problem resolution
- Perception of inequity or uneven attention



# Public Safety

## Opportunities

- Strengthen Code Enforcement consistency  
Improve turnaround times, predictability, and visibility of enforcement actions.
- Increase communication and transparency  
Public-facing dashboards, clearer expectations, and more proactive updates on safety initiatives.
- Modernize technology, equipment and facilities  
Body-worn cameras, upgraded EOC, digital reporting tools, and improved fire/police infrastructure.



# Public Safety

## Opportunities

- Expand community policing and engagement  
More neighborhood presence, youth outreach, and follow-up communication after incidents.
- Coordinate quality-of-life efforts across departments  
Joint strategies between Police, Fire, Code Enforcement, Housing, and Public Works to address blight, nuisance properties, and corridor issues.
- Improve service equity and consistency  
Standardize response protocols and use data to ensure fair, predictable service across all neighborhoods.
- Enhance prevention and education programs  
Increase public awareness around emergency preparedness, fire safety, crime prevention, and available resources.



# Public Safety

## Threats (Community Identified)

- Neighborhood decline and blight increasing safety concerns  
Persistent nuisance properties, poor maintenance, and visible disorder make residents feel less safe.
- Growth outpacing public safety capacity  
Rapid development raises fears that police, fire, EMS, and code enforcement won't be able to keep up.
- Stormwater, flooding, and infrastructure failures impacting safety  
Residents link flooding, poor drainage, and deteriorating roads to emergency response challenges.
- Erosion of trust due to slow or inconsistent enforcement  
Delays in code enforcement, unclear follow-through, and uneven service create doubt about the City's ability to maintain order.



# Public Safety

## Threats (Community Identified)

- Communication gaps fueling uncertainty and fear  
High “Unsure” responses show residents don’t know what safety services exist, how issues are handled, or what progress is being made.
- Affordability pressures and housing instability  
Poor housing conditions and rising costs are seen as drivers of neighborhood decline and safety risks.
- Perceived inequities across neighborhoods  
Residents fear some areas receive more attention, enforcement, or investment than others, threatening community cohesion.
- Quality-of-life issues escalating into safety issues  
Homelessness intersections, business corridor decline, and inadequate lighting are viewed as emerging safety threats.



15 min.

Part 2

# Emerging Technologies in Law Enforcement

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PRESENTED BY

**Sammy L. Taylor**

*Chief of Police*

**Hans Lehman**

*Assistant Chief of Police*

- Overview of Emerging Technologies In Law Enforcement
- Operational benefits
- Cost considerations
- Implementation timeline



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Priority Setting for Public Safety



45 min.

- What does “world-class public safety” mean for Lakeland?
- What investments are non-negotiable?
- What staffing or resource gaps concern you most?
- What direction do you want to give staff regarding the Emergency Operations Center?
- What questions or concerns do you have about emerging or new police technologies and the utilization of AI in law enforcement?

4:30 – 5:00 PM

**Day 1 | Synthesis and  
Closing Reflection**

## Synthesis and Reflections



# Commissioner Dialogue

- What themes emerged today?
- What do we need to carry into Day 2?
- Open Commissioner reflections
  - “I like”
  - “I wish”
  - “I wonder”

8:00 – 2:00 PM

**Day 2**



8:00 – 8:30 AM

**Day 1 Reflection and  
Day 2 Framing**



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Recap and Reflections on Yesterday

- What we heard yesterday
- What reflections would you like to share?

# Agenda

## Day 1

- 8:00 AM** Welcome and Opening Remarks | Mayor Roberts McCarley
- 8:15 AM** Retreat Framing and Commissioner Feedback
- 8:30 AM** Keynote Speaker | Peter Kageyama
- 9:30 AM** Community Survey Results
- 10:30 AM** Break
- 10:45 AM** Strategic Planning Terms
- 11:45 AM** Lunch
- 12:45 PM** Departmental Survey Findings
- 1:30 PM** Infrastructure
- 2:45 PM** Break
- 3:00 PM** Public Safety
- 4:30 PM** Day 1 Closing Reflection



## Day 2

- 8:00 AM** Day 1 Reflection and Day 2 Framing
- 8:30 AM** Economic Development
- 9:30 AM** Break
- 9:45 AM** Culture and Quality of Life
- 11:15 AM** Organizational Excellence & Modernization
- 12:15 PM** Lunch
- 12:45 PM** Strategic Plan Structure
- 1:30 PM** Wrap-Up, Closing Reflections, and Next Steps



8:30 – 9:30 AM

# **Focus Area Deep Dive #3: Economic Development**

# Department Priorities

- **Airport growth platform:** terminal planning/expansion, air service development, tenant attraction (including MRO), and enabling infrastructure investment.
- **Tourism and recreation assets leveraged** as economic drivers
- **Streamlined permitting,** plan review, and development processes
- **Downtown improvements:** access, parking, and business support
- **Strategic use of City-owned land and redevelopment opportunities**
- **Business/community support and education** on City processes

# Commissioner Interviews

Economic development remains a priority, with a strong emphasis on job quality, alignment, and long-term competitiveness rather than growth alone. **Primary themes include:**

- Attracting higher-wage, higher-skill industries (advanced manufacturing, technology, R&D)
- Leveraging municipal utilities as a competitive asset
- Strengthening downtown, urban cores, and redevelopment areas
- Clarifying roles and coordination among City departments and partner organizations

**Commissioners voiced concern about fragmented efforts and the gap between planning studies and execution.** There is a clear desire for improved accountability, clearer outcomes, and stronger education-to-workforce pipelines.



# Economic Development

## Strengths

- Exceptional quality-of-life amenities (parks, libraries, recreation)
- Airport as a competitive regional asset
- Cultural venues that support tourism and vibrancy
- A community that is engaged and eager for improvement



# Economic Development

## Weakness

The City's economic development weaknesses center on regulatory friction, inconsistent service delivery, low visibility of business support, and communication gaps that undermine trust and confidence. Housing challenges and uneven quality-of-life assets further constrain competitiveness.



# Economic Development

## Weakness

- Regulatory processes are viewed as slow, confusing, and inconsistent
- Housing conditions and affordability are major pain points
- Code enforcement is viewed as ineffective or inconsistent
- Business development support feels unclear or underdeveloped
- Customer experience is inconsistent across departments
- Perception of bureaucracy and lack of modernization
- Uneven quality of life assets impact economic competitiveness
- High levels of “unsure” responses indicate communication gaps



# Economic Development

## Opportunities

- Modernize business-facing services (permitting, code enforcement, business development)
- Address housing as a workforce and economic development issue
- Strengthen business engagement and communication
- Leverage cultural and recreational assets for economic growth
- Improve regulatory predictability to support investment



# Economic Development

## Threats

### **Growth outpacing infrastructure and city systems**

Residents fear that strained roads, utilities, and stormwater systems will limit business attraction and expansion.

### **Slow, inconsistent, or confusing permitting and development processes**

Dissatisfaction with permitting, inspections, and code enforcement creates a perception that Lakeland is hard to do business with, threatening competitiveness.

### **Housing affordability pressures**

Rising costs and limited housing diversity threaten workforce stability and the ability to attract and retain talent.



# Economic Development

## Threats

### **Visible blight and uneven corridor conditions**

Nuisance properties, vacant buildings, and inconsistent code enforcement undermine business confidence and investment.

### **Concerns about uneven investment across neighborhoods**

Perceived disparities in attention and resources can discourage redevelopment and private-sector confidence.



# Commissioner Dialogue



45 min.

## Priorities for Economic Development

- What is Lakeland's economic identity?
- What industries should we target?
- How do we align with LEDC, Chamber, County?
- What role should the City play in workforce development?
- What policy direction is needed?
- What priorities emerge for the coming year(s)?



9:30 – 9:45 AM

**Break**



9:45 – 11:15 AM

**Focus Area Deep Dive #4:  
Culture and Quality of Life**

# Department Priorities

- Library reach and access expansion: expanded service reach, improved core services, facility improvements, and future expansion/branch concepts aligned with growth.
- Arts/public art programming: continued development of cultural programming and public art initiatives.
- Community engagement and quality-of-life programming: emphasis on community-facing programming as important to civic identity and resident connection.
- Workforce wellbeing and organizational culture.
- Improved citizen response and communication systems.

# Commissioner Interviews

## Top considerations include:

- Housing affordability and housing diversity
- Mobility, commute times, and transportation choice
- Access to parks, recreation, arts, culture, and beautification
- Equity, neighborhood investment, and community identity

Commissioners expressed caution about preserving Lakeland's character and inclusivity while accommodating rapid growth, emphasizing the importance of intentional rather than incidental quality-of-life outcomes.

# Community Sentiment

Lakeland's cultural and quality-of-life assets are its strongest community differentiator — beloved, trusted, and high-performing — and they offer a powerful platform to expand equity, strengthen identity, and address challenges in other focus areas.



# Culture and Quality of Life

## Strengths

- Exceptional satisfaction with cultural and quality-of-life assets
- A strong sense of community identity
- High-performing frontline services in culture and quality of life
- Cultural assets as a unifying force



# Culture and Quality of Life

## Weakness

- Housing affordability and housing quality concerns
- Neighborhood maintenance and blight issues
- Uneven investment across neighborhoods
- Limited mobility and transportation options
- Communication gaps and low awareness of services
- Aging facilities and slow improvements
- Quality-of-life issues intersecting with safety concerns
- Growth pressures threatening community character

## Weakness

### **Housing is a major community pain point**

The dominance of “Very Dissatisfied” indicates **deep frustration**, not mild annoyance.

This is the kind of pattern that shows up when:

- Housing costs rise faster than wages
- Availability is constrained
- Quality concerns (maintenance, code enforcement, aging stock) are widespread
- Neighborhood conditions vary dramatically

Residents feel the city lacks a coherent housing strategy

### **Satisfaction is not evenly distributed**

## Opportunity



# Culture and Quality of Life

- Expand access, reach, and equity in cultural amenities
- Leverage cultural strengths to improve other struggling areas
- Strengthen branding and storytelling around Lakeland's identity
- Expand partnerships with arts, culture, and recreation organizations
- Use cultural assets to drive quality-of-life innovation



15 min.

## Part 2

# Communications: The Path Forward

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**Presenter:** Communications Director Larry Little

- State of City communications
- One Voice Lakeland - (Branding and identity)
- Digital and Public Engagement Strategy
- Internal Communications - Opportunities for Innovation
- Communications is a Bridge to connect the community to the City of Lakeland for a better quality of life



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Priorities for Culture and Quality of Life



45 min.

- What defines Lakeland's identity and culture?
- How should we invest in parks, arts, and recreation?
- How do we address housing affordability?
- What does a "quality of life" focus area need to include?
- What role should communications play in the strategic plan?
- What priorities emerge for the coming year(s)?

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

**Proposed New Focus Area:**  
**Organizational Excellence and Modernization**

# Department Survey Data

Department leaders want Organizational Excellence and Modernization to capture the foundational, enterprise-wide capabilities—workforce, technology, financial systems, process governance, culture, and citizen responsiveness—that enable every other focus area to succeed.

# Department Survey Data

1. Workforce capacity, recruitment, and succession planning
2. Enterprise technology enablement and cybersecurity
3. Financial management, budgeting and resource stewardship
4. Process improvement, governance and organizational efficiency
5. Employee experience, wellbeing and organizational culture
6. Citizen responsiveness and internal service delivery enablement

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# Commissioner Interview

- It is a major gap in the current strategic framework
- Commissioners repeatedly noted that organizational health, culture, and internal capacity do not clearly “live” anywhere in the current plan.
- Workforce capacity and succession planning are top concerns
- Internal culture, communication, and process efficiency need attention
- Want clearer governance and decision-making structures
- Strong interest in elevating Organizational Excellence and Modernization as a formal focus area



# Commissioner Dialogue



45 min.

## Organizational Excellence and Modernization

- Should this be a new focus area? What should we call it?
- What should it include?
- How do we measure success?
- How do we ensure alignment across departments?
- What priorities emerge for the coming year(s)?



12:15 – 12:45 PM

**Lunch**

12:45 – 1:30 PM

**Strategic Plan Structure:  
KPIs, Reporting, and  
Alignment**



# Review

- Strategic Plan Structure
- KPI frameworks
- Reporting mechanisms
- Alignment with budget
- Examples from other cities

# Planning Approach



# Planning Process & Data Collection



## Environmental Scan & Stakeholder Engagement

- Internal assessment / organizational assessment
  - Staff culture and engagement
  - Operational & technology assessment
  - Human resource/capacity assessment
  - Financial health
- External assessment
  - Community visioning
  - Community needs assessment
  - Community feedback
  - Housing
  - Workforce
  - Business growth
  - Economic development
- Benchmarking

# Highlights from Yesterday



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Strategic Plan:



30 min.

- What process do you want to adopt?
- What do you want to measure?
- How often do you want updates?
- What format works best?
- How should the strategic plan and budget connect?

1:30 – 2:00 PM

**Wrap-Up, Closing  
Reflections and Next Steps**



# Review

- Wrap-up – summary of priorities identified
- Timeline for draft plan, KPIs, and reporting framework



# Commissioner Dialogue

## Commissioner Reflections

- Share your final reflections on the work we have done over the past two days.
- How would you like to receive communications related to our work together?

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**Thank you for  
your time.**