


Hernando County: Strategic Planning – Phase I – Executive Summary

Topic	Constitutional Officers Kick-Off Work Plan Refinement: Oct. 28, 2024	Board of County Commissioners Strategic Alignment: Nov. 21, 2024	Community Forum I: Dec. 18, 2024	Community Forum II: Feb. 24, 2025	Employee Focus Group Forum: March 27, 2025	Individual/Group Stakeholder Interviews	Resident Feedback Survey
Strengths to Leverage:	<p>County Strengths/Treasures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenspace/ Natural Resources • Location • Rural nature, open space • Historic downtown • Airport • Strategic location between Orlando and Tampa • Relatively low housing costs • Natural lands, parks, preserves • Employees • Great tasting water • Potential/possibility • Hometown feel 	<p>Current Success</p> <p><i>"I like the history of where we came from as one of the oldest counties out there, about when the state was created too. The rural character of the county"</i></p> <p><i>"The best thing about HC is her people. We have something special in HC when it comes to community"</i></p> <p><i>"The people, our natural beauty and low cost of living"</i></p> <p><i>"The commitment to quality community progress and resiliency of the people of Hernando County"</i></p>	<p>Strengths and Treasures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to enjoy the gulf waters in areas that aren't overdeveloped • Hernando's natural resources, waterways, parks, hiking trails...Healthcare facilities and employment opportunities • Our rural character and agricultural lifestyle • Small town feel • Bike and walking trails • Natural Resources • Not too overdeveloped, yet...We need a real defined land use strategy to ensure we don't look like every other community in Florida • Small town feel, great water, friendly people • Our springs and forests 	<p>Hernando's Greatest Treasures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resources (i.e. waterways, springs, hiking trails, etc.) • Rural Character and Agricultural Lifestyle • Small-Town Feel • Limited Development • Public Safety • Access to Gulf Waters for Recreation • Undeveloped Beaches/Waterfront 	<p>Our Greatest Strengths/Treasures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resources (i.e. waterways, springs, hiking trails, etc.) • Rural Character and Agricultural Lifestyle • Access to Gulf Waters for Recreation • Small-Town Feel 	 <p>Assets</p> <p>Community and Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Small Town Feel:</i> The county retains a hometown feel with a sense of safety and community. • <i>Leadership:</i> Effective leadership and application of tax dollars to improve government areas. • <i>Community Engagement:</i> Engaged community leaders and a vocal, kind, and loving community. <p>Natural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nature Coast:</i> Offers a lot with its natural beauty and biodiversity. • <i>Springs and Rivers:</i> Need protection and are valued by the community. • <i>Agricultural Land:</i> Large amounts of conservation and agricultural land support biodiversity. <p>Location and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proximity to Urban Areas:</i> Close to Orlando and Tampa, making it easier to attract new hires and businesses. • <i>Access to the Gulf:</i> Coastal areas like Hernando Beach and natural springs are significant assets. • <i>Transportation:</i> Good road network and airport facilities. <p>Economic Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tourism:</i> Tourism is a strong sector, with the county being safe from bad weather. • <i>Business Development:</i> Opportunities for businesses to partner and work together. <p>Affordable Living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Affordable Living:</i> Reasonable cost of living and availability of real estate. <p>Education and Workforce Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New College:</i> Helps retain people within the county. • <i>Job Creation:</i> Industrial park and manufacturing opportunities provide jobs that do not require a college degree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Satisfaction: The majority of residents reported a generally positive view of their quality of life in Hernando County, with 53% rating it as "Good" and 9.4% rating it as "Excellent." • Public Safety: Fire/EMS services received high ratings • Community Services and Amenities: Satisfaction with amenities such as parks, libraries, and nature preserves was relatively high.

Hernando County: Strategic Planning – Phase I – Executive Summary

Topic	Board of County Commissioner's Strategic Alignment: Nov. 21, 2024	Community Forum II: Feb. 24, 2025	Employee Focus Group Forum: March 27, 2025	Community Forum III: Apr. 4, 2025	Individual/Group Stakeholder Interviews	Resident Feedback Survey
Future Successes/Visionary Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What are we Most Excited About – for our Future?</i> <i>Issues to Address in Hernando County?</i> <i>Strategic Themes?</i> 	Future Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe, affordable community Top class education Low taxes, highly efficient government Economic development and industrial manufacturing growth Responsibly balanced and cost-efficient government 	Top 2030 Visionary Goals & Strategic Priorities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment of the strategic plan with the comprehensive plan (land use) and appropriate funding for infrastructure to support projected growth/Responsible Land use & following the 2040 Comp Plan/ Enforce and review the comprehensive plan according to existing county policy. Infrastructure to support sustainability, quality of life, and environment. Complete land conservation vision (Florida wildlife corridor) Enforce current zoning laws with enhanced employment and training for code enforcement - use what we got! Most Important Opportunities to Address in the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserving the Nature Coast Protecting Greenspaces and the Tree Canopy Maintaining the Rural County Character Balancing Preservation of Natural Resources with Growth and Dev. Ensuring Adequate Water Quality and Supply Reduce homelessness within County urban areas 	What are the most important Opportunities to address in the future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserving the Nature Coast Maintaining the Rural County Character Road Expansion Balancing Preservation of Natural Resources with Growth and Development What Visionary Goals are most important for Hernando County's ideal future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure to support sustainability, quality of life, and environment. Reduce homelessness within County urban areas Develop a strategy to address employee compensation and career growth concerns for enhanced retention efforts and succession planning Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congestion is growing - need updated infrastructure Finding funding for future projects Employment opportunities need improvement-needs variation Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff retention, salaries, hiring, staff development Flexible work schedule, to improve work/life balance Pass the whole cent sales tax next time, to make improvements Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of rapid growth; overpopulation/congestion Fear of the loss of current natural/agricultural ambiance-hometown feel Damage to our natural resources 	Top 5 Hernando County Visionary Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Stewardship: Preserve natural resources and habitats through conservation efforts Growth Management: Appropriate funding for infrastructure to support project growth, sustainability, quality of life, and the environment Transportation/Transit: Determine needed road improvements, better traffic management, and public transportation options Growth Management: Keep the county's unique identity while continuing to offer much-needed community services and amenities during the rapid growth progression (i.e. parks, libraries, healthcare, recreational facilities) Social/Wrap-Around: Identify and address the social needs of the community through the affordable housing gaps, reduction of homelessness, workforce opportunities and mental health services 	Liabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Issues Housing and Homelessness Mental Health Services Transportation Economic Development Community Engagement and Leadership Environmental Concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Satisfaction: 30% of respondents rated the quality of life as "Fair" or "Poor," indicating opportunities to improve residents' experience and perceptions of their quality of life in Hernando County. Traffic and Infrastructure: A significant concern raised by respondents was traffic congestion, with 46.2% of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with traffic flow. Many respondents indicated that the county's infrastructure, particularly roadways, has not kept pace with growth. The need for road improvements, public transportation, and better traffic management was consistently mentioned. Public Safety: Remains a concern, with 29.2% of respondents indicating dissatisfaction with the overall safety of the community. Issues related to crime, such as drug-related offenses and reckless driving, were frequently raised in the open-ended survey responses, alongside requests for increased law enforcement presence. Economic Development: The survey highlighted concerns about economic opportunities in the county, with only 1.2% of respondents rating the county as an "excellent" place to earn a good wage. Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of job opportunities and the county's approach to fostering business growth, emphasizing a need for economic development strategies that prioritize job creation. Growth Management: Overdevelopment was one of the top concerns for residents, with 57.8% identifying unregulated growth and housing as a major challenge. Many respondents expressed fear that the county's rapid development could lead to overcrowding and a loss of its rural charm. Preservation of green spaces and balancing growth with environmental conservation were also identified as critical priorities. Community Services and Amenities: Concerns about the availability of public services like healthcare, recreational facilities, and affordable housing. Residents called for expanded services, particularly in response to the county's growing population. Communication and Citizen Engagement: Respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the county's communication and engagement efforts. While some respondents felt informed about county services, there was a clear demand for improved transparency, better access to information, and more opportunities for citizen participation in government.

Hernando County: Strategic Planning – Phase I – Executive Summary

Topic	Constitutional Officers Kick-Off Work Plan Refinement: Oct. 28, 2024	Board of County Commissioners Strategic Alignment: Nov. 21, 2024	Community Forum I: Dec. 18, 2024	Previous Mission/Values Workshop
Values/Guiding Principles/Mission	Senior Leadership’s Role <ul style="list-style-type: none">Effectively integrating employee input with leadership directionCoordinating between organizational and community wide process componentsIntegrating the input received through different channelsTransparency and responsiveness	What behaviors and “non-negotiables” will we commit to, as we embark upon the Strategic Planning Journey for Hernando County? <ul style="list-style-type: none">IntegrityObjective Decision-makingSafetyFiscal Responsibility	Top Guiding Principles that are most important to our citizens to effectively engage in our Strategic Planning Process. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Public AttendanceCommunity OutreachMore user-friendly websitesCommunity Town Hall meetings by BOCC District	Our Mission Statement: Hernando County Government focuses on the needs of our community striving to create a great place to live and work for our residents. We effectively use available resources and provide exceptional service to Florida’s Adventure Coast. Core Values <ul style="list-style-type: none">Innovative: Continuously adapting to address the present and future needs of our community.Community Focused: Dedication to quality service and support to our community, doing our best to exceed expectations.Responsible Stewards: Serving Hernando County with integrity and accountability, as trusted stewards we work to exhibit fiscal responsibility.Collaborative: Engaging citizens and employees to lead our community with shared vision.