

Hernando County Employee Focus Group

Real-Time Record



March 27, 2025

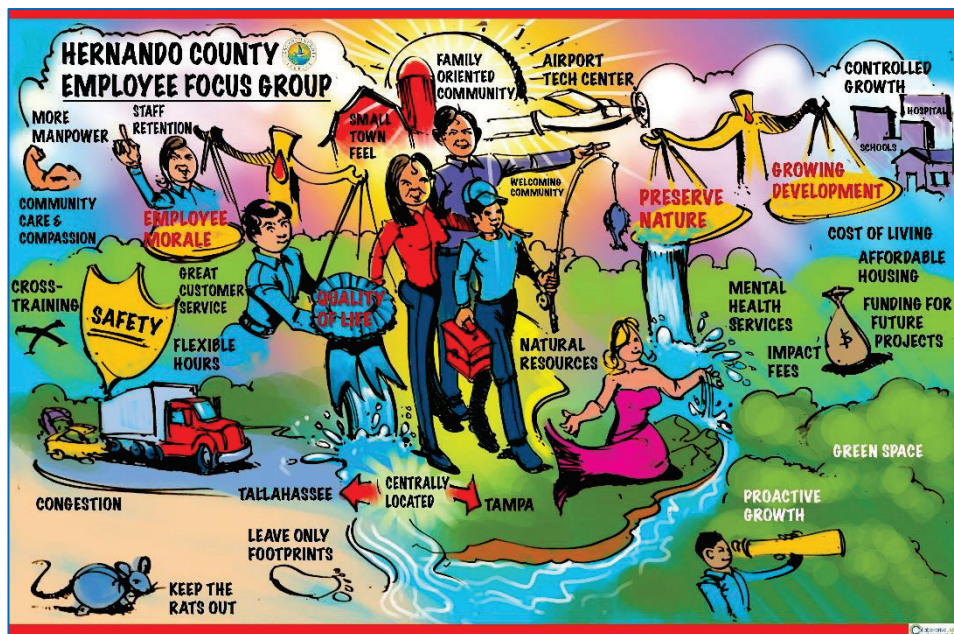


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Executive Summary

**What do we value most about Hernando County –
Our Greatest Strengths/Treasures?**

- **Natural Resources (i.e. waterways, springs, hiking trails, etc.) – 17%**
- **Rural Character and Agricultural Lifestyle – 12%**
- **Access to Gulf Waters for Recreation – 12%**
- **Small-Town Feel – 11%**
- Public Safety – 10%
- Friendly and Welcoming Community – 7%
- Limited Development – 7%
- Proximity to Major Urban Areas – 7%
- Undeveloped Beaches/Waterfront – 6%
- Airport – 6%
- Growing Community – 4%
- Other – TBD – 0%

What are the most important Opportunities to address in the future?

- **Preserving the Nature Coast – 15%**
- **Maintaining the Rural County Character – 12%**
- **Road Expansion – 12%**
- **Balancing Preservation of Natural Resources with Growth and Development – 11%**
- Protecting Greenspaces and the Tree Canopy – 9%
- Ensuring Adequate Water Quality and Supply – 9%
- Improving/Expanding Access to Medical and Mental Health Services – 7%
- Investing in Workforce Development – 6%
- Investing in the infrastructure needed to support the new developments – 7%
- Promoting Affordable Housing Growth (with Infrastructure Support) – 6%
- Promoting Affordable Housing Growth (with Infrastructure Support) – 2%
- Expanding Business Support Services – 4%
- Other – TBD – 0%

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What Visionary Goals are most important for Hernando County's ideal future?

- **Infrastructure to support sustainability, quality of life, and environment. – 19%**
- **Reduce homelessness within County urban areas – 17%**
- **Develop a strategy to address employee compensation and career growth concerns for enhanced retention efforts and succession planning – 16%**
- Complete land conservation vision (Florida wildlife corridor) – 14%
- Enforce current zoning laws with enhanced employment and training for code enforcement - use what we got! – 13%
- Alignment of the strategic plan with the comprehensive plan (land use)...appropriate funding for infrastructure... / Responsible Land use & following the 2040 Comp Plan/ Enforce and review the comprehensive plan according to exist – 10%
- Determine funding plan for strategic initiatives – 6%
- Create an on-going mechanism for gathering feedback from the community, stakeholders and residents – 4%
- Other – TBD – 1%

Top Strengths

- **Attractive Natural Resources and Amenities (i.e., parks, recreation) – 21%**
- **Close proximity to major urban areas (Tampa/St. Pete, Orlando) – 14%**
- **Assisting Veterans with their disabilities – 14%**
- Cost of Living is Affordable – 12%
- Great customer service – 12%
- Collaboration, we all work together for the same residents – 12%
- Family-oriented community (schools, government, parks, sports) – 10%
- As county employees, we are motivated by care/compassion for our community – 5%
- Sharing of information and transparency – 0%

Top Weaknesses

- **Congestion is growing - need updated infrastructure – 22%**
- **Finding funding for future projects – 22%**
- **Employment opportunities need improvement-needs variation – 19%**
- More manpower to accommodate the developmental growth of Hernando County – 16%
- Funding mechanisms to make enhancements and improvements per desired strategic plan – 13%
- Affordable housing and mental health services – 9%

Top Opportunities

- **Staff retention, salaries, hiring, staff development – 17%**
- **Flexible work schedule, in order to improve work/life balance – 17%**
- **Pass the whole cent sales tax next time, to make improvements – 17%**
- Lack of training/cross-training within department, but across departments. – 14%
- Limit access to developers – 14%
- More fiscal responsibility on developers – 14%
- Communication regarding personnel policies needs enhancement – 7%

Top Threats

- **Fear of rapid growth; overpopulation/congestion – 19%**
- **Fear of the loss of current natural/agricultural ambiance-hometown feel – 17%**
- **Damage to our natural resources – 17%**
- Funding (taxation reluctance) – 14%
- Wildlife displacement vs. development – 11%
- Population growth will hamper county infrastructure – 8%
- Increase police action with drugs – 8%
- Competition with neighboring counties for desirable/high paying employers – 6%

Agenda

**2:00pm –
2:15pm**

Welcome: Project Overview & Approach

Information Collected to Date & Engagement Highlights

- Angela Crist, The John Scott Dailey, Florida Institute of Government
engagehernando.com/strategicplan

**2:15pm –
4:15pm**

(including
15-minute
break)

pollev.com/colabs



Collaborative Activities:

Full Group Polling: Characteristics We Value Most & Top Future Opportunities

- Andrea Henning, Collaborative Labs at St. Petersburg College

Team Breakouts: SWOT: Priority Areas

- Andrea Henning, Collaborative Labs at St. Petersburg College
- Angela Crist, The John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government & John Daly, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Public Affairs, University of South Florida

**4:15pm –
4:30pm**

Wrap-Up & Next Steps for Success:
Anticipated Timeline

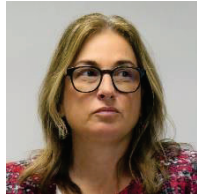
Questions & Next Steps

- Angela Crist, The John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government
-

Addendum: Previous Hernando Engagement Priorities

Hernando County Strengths/Treasures	Future Opportunities to Address
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resources (i.e. waterways, springs, hiking trails, etc.) • Rural Character and Agricultural Lifestyle • Small-Town Feel • Public Safety • Friendly and Welcoming Community • Access to Gulf Waters for Recreation • Undeveloped Beaches/Waterfront • Limited Development • Growing Community • Proximity to Major Urban Areas • Other - TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the Nature Coast • Maintaining the Rural County Character • Balancing Preservation of Natural Resources with Growth and Development • Expanding Business Support Services • Improving/Expanding Access to Medical and Mental Health Services • Investing in Workforce Development • Promoting Affordable Housing Growth (with Infrastructure Support) • Protecting Greenspaces and the Tree Canopy • Ensuring Adequate Water Quality and Supply • Other - TBD
<p style="text-align: center;">Top 2030 Visionary Goals</p> <ul 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! • Reduce homelessness within County urban areas • Other - TBD 	

Welcome: Project Overview & Approach

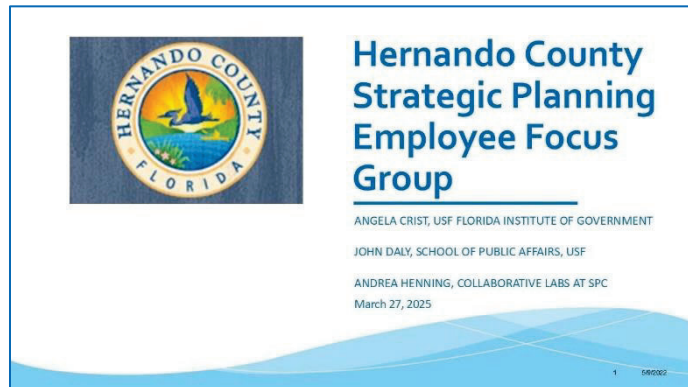


Angela Crist, USF Florida Institute of Government: Thank you for taking the time to be here today. I'm joined today by John Daly, Associate Professor at USF's School of Public Affairs, and Andrea with Collaborative Labs and her team. How many have been to engagehernando.com/strategicplan?

Several participants indicated they had.

Those who haven't, please go there to see our methodology and process, along with all of the Real-time Records (RTRs) that capture each session. The County engaged us and liked our participatory process that builds from one step to the next. At the end of Phase 1, we'll begin to see strategic themes from the data, some of which we're using tonight.

Phase 2 is where county commissioners come together with leadership to define the themes, goals and objectives, followed by a final draft report -- fluid and flexible. From there, the County may come up with five to seven priority goals you'll work on. Phase 3 is implementation, determining strategies and embedding them into the existing culture, not creating additional work. And the County will do quarterly updates with Andrea and the Collaborative Labs team. The final draft report is anticipated late fall. We've conducted a resident and an employee survey.



PROJECT PLAN & Information Collected to Date

What are we doing and why?

What is your role in the process?

What are those key dates for your engagement?



Phase One		
1.1	Kick Off and Work Plan Refinement	October 28, 2024
1.2	Commission: Strategic Alignment Workshop & Setting Expectations	November 21, 2024
1.3	Communications Outreach	Ongoing
1.4	Citizen Engagement Session	December 18, 2024
1.5	Individual/Group Stakeholder Interviews	January 2025
1.6	Resident Feedback Survey	January 2025
1.7	Community Focus Group Forum I (2 hours)	February 4, 2025
1.8	Employee Survey	February 2025
1.9	Employee Focus Group Forum (3 hours)	March 27, 2025
1.10	Community Focus Group Forum II (2 hours)	April 4, 2025
1.11	Commission Presentation: Review info-to-date and Next Steps	May 2025
Phase Two		
2.1	Leadership Forum I (4 hours) off-site	June 2025
2.2	County Administrator & Executive Leadership Planning Meeting	June 2025
2.3	Leadership Forum II (3 hours) off-site	July 2025
2.4	County Administrator & Executive Leadership Planning Meeting	August 2025
2.5	Final Report Internal Review	September 2025
2.6	Final Report to Commission Workshop	October 2025
Phase Three:		
3.1	Strategies for supporting the implementation plan	November 2025
3.2	Implementation plan facilitation	November 2026

I'll quickly share high level takeaways from each survey:

Resident Survey

- Around general satisfaction around quality of life in Hernando County, over 60% rated excellent or good. But interesting, 30% rated quality of life as fair or poor and want to see improvements for resident experiences and perceptions. So it may be a quality of life perception issue, not really fair or poor.
- Traffic was one of the highest when asked about raising concern/dissatisfaction.
- Roadways/infrastructure haven't caught up with growth.
- Public safety: Fire/EMS received high ratings. Almost 30% still indicated dissatisfaction with overall safety. We don't know the disconnect.
- Economic development: Only 1.2% rated the County as an excellent place to earn a wage. Definitely room for improvement.
- Growth management: 58% identified unregulated growth. That's very high.
- Community services: Very satisfied with parks, libraries, and preserves. But not so for affordable housing, healthcare, and some potential recreational facilities.
- Communications: Residents indicated a demand for improved transparency and having more information. We don't know if goes to elected officials or County government.

These are on engagehernando.com/strategicplan and we'll dive into this more today.

Employee Survey

- Morale is relatively high. But there are some opportunities for improvement; the biggest being around work-life balance and workplace culture.
- 94% of employees like their job; yet only 60% look forward to going to work most days.
- 95% agree they know what's expected in their role.
- 97% understand how their job contributes to the organization's mission. But only 48% strongly agree their personal values align with County's. That's lower than we'd like to see.
- Communication and transparency: 83% felt they receive regular feedback from their supervisor.
- 90% feel they're treated fairly by their supervisor.
- However: 31% of employees disagreed that County leaders act transparently. So there is opportunity for openness in decision-making.
- Big theme: Employees value public service but cite employee retention, growth management, and workplace challenges as areas needing improvement.
- 33% feel pay and benefits are a weakness.
- 22% mentioned retention and turnover.

Speaker: Percentages are relative. How many respondents were there to each survey?

Angela: The employee survey went to 861 and there were 180 responses with a 20.9% response rate.

Speaker: Do you have the occupation breakdown?

Angela: Yes, but I don't have that right now. 959 completed the community survey. Dr. Neely is our statistician in USF's School of Public Affairs. While his analysis is not final, he said respondents were diverse including a wide range of ages, genders, and income levels. Some groups were over- or underrepresented. The survey sample had a higher percentage of female respondents than the overall population; 72% were female, yet only 51% of the County is female. We work with Sarasota County too and our threshold is 1,500 responses, demographically and geographically weighted. For you to have 959 is very good.



John Daly, School of Public Affairs, USF: 20% means 80% have not responded so your voice is important. Please speak up.



Andrea Henning, Executive Director, Collaborative Labs: Thanks for getting us primed and ready. I echo those sentiments

and I'm grateful for your attendance today. Of the 800+ Hernando County employees, we have the A-team here today.



It's so good to be back in God's country.

We've had a good time with commissioners, leadership, and citizens who are passionate, engaged, and have high expectations for the future of this county. Employees are the heartbeat of any county. Let me introduce my team. Dina will capture what is done today in our RTR. PJ is our technologist who will help you with the technology in your breakouts. Jonathan listens with a lens of what Hernando County will look like in 2030, our north star, to render a full-color, digitized vision mural in the RTR.

We'll revisit some great goals and nuggets gathered in previous sessions to do some polling and SWOT analysis in small teams.

Now, we'll launch three polls. Please enter your name when you get into the polling software.

We'll start with the greatest treasures/strengths of Hernando County. The things you see here were rolled up from previous sessions. If you have one that's not there, click #12 and we'll ask you what that is. Pick all of the ones that speak to you.


AGENDA

- Polls: Characteristics We Value Most, Top Future Opportunities & Visionary Goals
- Breakout Teams: S.W.O.T.
- Wrap Up and Next Steps to Engage



Prioritize: Characteristics We Value Most, Top Future Opportunities & Visionary Goals

- What are our greatest strengths/treasures we can leverage as we create Hernando County's Strategic Plan for the future?
- What are our most important opportunities to address for the future of Hernando County?
- What are our Visionary Goals for Hernando County in 2030?



Characteristics We Value Most

What do we value most about Hernando County – Our Greatest Strengths/Treasures?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resources (i.e. waterways, springs, hiking trails, etc.) – 17% • Rural Character and Agricultural Lifestyle – 12% • Access to Gulf Waters for Recreation – 12% • Small-Town Feel – 11% • Public Safety – 10% • Friendly and Welcoming Community – 7% • Limited Development – 7% • Proximity to Major Urban Areas – 7% • Undeveloped Beaches/Waterfront – 6% • Airport – 6% • Growing Community – 4% • Other – TBD – 0%

Andrea: There's a lot of energy around natural resources. Does anyone want to comment on why it's so important?



Mike Steele, Code Enforcement: It's what brought people here. Built on rock mines. Other side: Beaches and waterways you want to maintain. Take only memories, leave only footprints.

Andrea: How about rural character?

Mike: You're seeing farmhouses and places with acres of land. It used to be one car going up the driveway, now it's 200 houses. It's disheartening.

Andrea: Small town feel. Who wants to comment on that?

Speaker: I think we're past that. That got blown out of the water 10 years ago.

Andrea: How about public safety and friendly and welcoming?

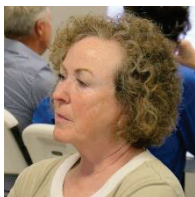


Art Grzyb, Planning: It's a nice community. Nice to be here. Like you said, it's God's country. Those here a while do feel it's getting pretty populated. But there are still a lot of nice people. Mostly Brooksville, not Spring Hill so much.

Mike: If you take care of the first two, they take care of everything else. Smaller feels safe and friendly and welcoming.

John Daly: This can also be influenced by whether you're a long-term resident or a transplant from somewhere else. Someone coming from a high crime area may feel differently.

Andrea: Friendly and welcoming. I feel that here each time. How about access to gulf waters?



Kim Poppke, Business Development: That's one of our assets. It's Florida, surrounded by water. Our area is unique because it's more estuary and not as built up.

Angela: Can I get clarification? In a lot of other communities that are coastal, we see just "access to gulf waters." You have "for recreation." Can you expand?

Kim: Hernando Beach is a nice boating community. And gulf access for recreation and fishing.

Angela: Are there more public opportunities for people?

Speaker: There's so much kayaking and recreational fishing. Not just waterways. It's access to gulf waters.



John: Weeki Wachee River used to be a great place to go. You could always get on that. Bay News 9 put it on the news and now we can't get on it ourselves anymore.

Andrea: Let's talk about limited development.

John: Our development is ridiculous now. We can't keep up and that goes hand in hand with roadways and safety.

Andrea: A growing community.

Angela: One thing I'm also seeing in stakeholder interviews is diversity of population that's happening. So we should have framed growing community differently. That may mean growth and development. But it's not what that means. It's more diverse population in terms of not just retirees, but maybe younger families. Are you seeing that?

Egle: Schools needs have increased.

Andrea: Proximity to major urban areas, who chose that?

Mike: Daytona, an FSU game, it's a day trip. I like that.

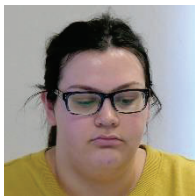


Amy: We can get to Tampa quickly to shop and eat. We like going to Tampa for those things, yet having it smaller here with options.

Andrea: Who wants to address airport?

Kim: It's the airport and technology center. The biggest employment/business center, it's 2,400 acres. We have a lot of our largest manufacturers in the County there that you don't see because it's so large. Just calling it the airport is sometimes off-putting for some people because we don't have commercial service. We're general aviation with a lot of student traffic and business jets. That's because we have a great asset near us, TIA. Brooksville Airport and Technological Center is only two stoplights to TIA on the Suncoast. Studies have been done about having commercial aviation here, and it just doesn't make sense.

Angela: So it's Airport & Technology Center.



Madison Brannon, Airport Operations: A lot of people don't agree with us not being commercial.

Andrea: No one chose other, so this must be a comprehensive list. That's great. Any other clarifications?

John Daly: Seems like quality of life is very important to a lot of you.

Top Future Opportunities

Andrea: Now we'll look at the top opportunities for Hernando County. Again, these came up in previous sessions. Choose all that stand out to you.

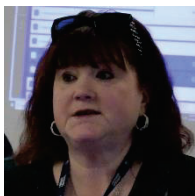
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Note: Affordable housing was inadvertently listed twice.

Andrea: Preserving the nature coast and maintaining the rural county character are critical opportunities. Who wants to address balancing preservation?

John: That's big. If you protect natural resources including food and farming, it will go hand in hand with maintaining the rural county character. They take care of each other.

Andrea: How about expanding mental health?



Colleen: I work for Library Services and there are a lot more homeless coming in now to our four branches. They need help with housing. We try to refer them to the resources available. We need more help with mental health. We have two mental health officers now and need more of that for a growing community like ours.

Andrea: Investing in workforce development?

Mike: Management training prepares people. You have great people in place that can train. I know guys in this room that are the only ones who know where pipes are, etc. We also need to make it a place they want to stay. To get people who thirst for that knowledge you need to make it contagious.

John Daly: How would you address succession planning?

Mike: Overlap. Unions have been in place in the past, which takes away from grooming because there must be equal opportunity. But you don't want it to become "that's the way we've always done it." Those are the challenges, but part of developing your own workforce. You can hire 100 people, but will they show up tomorrow or 10 years from now? That's what you want. You want good pay and good education. But life's the only thing that really educates you. Mix it up.

Andrea: Be always in the process of passing baton to someone else.

Mike: And they have to be in the habit of taking it.

John Daly: If you're in mid-level leadership and you're so good at what you do but have no one else to do it, your own opportunity for growth is stunted because you're too valuable in the position you're in.



Mike: Or you have great skills but no one has mentored to show you how to be a leader.

Andrea: How about affordable housing growth?

Art: It's a double edge sword. We want more affordable housing because everyone deserves that. But not too much because we don't want to overgrow.

Andrea: Protecting green spaces and the tree canopy.

Amy: I love all the animals. I live in Brooksville and our neighborhood used to have so many deer. There are less and less now. Everything is being mowed down.

Mike: Look at the coyotes. In Spring Hill, you see two of them walking across the street.

Amy: They're getting pushed out of their own area.

Andrea: Water quality. You have the best water.

John: We're constantly working on that. The flip side is we worry about sewer going out. Growth affects that and we have to keep upgrading. Infrastructure is a constant battle.

John Daly: How is it with aging?

John: It's aging. Before the ink dries, we're already in for another \$10 million upgrade. New subdevelopments means land must be donated to put more wells in.

Andrea: And there were no others noted, so this was another comprehensive list.

Visionary Goals

Andrea: These are for 2030. What do we need to address in our strategic plan in the next five years? Once again, please select all that apply.

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. – 19% • Reduce homelessness within County urban areas – 17% • Develop a strategy to address employee compensation and career growth concerns for enhanced retention efforts and succession planning – 16% • Complete land conservation vision (Florida wildlife corridor) – 14% • Enforce current zoning laws with enhanced employment and training for code enforcement - use what we got! – 13% • Alignment of the strategic plan with the comprehensive plan (land use)...appropriate funding for infrastructure... / Responsible Land use & following the 2040 Comp Plan/ Enforce and review the comprehensive plan according to exist – 10% • Determine funding plan for strategic initiatives – 6% • Create an on-going mechanism for gathering feedback from the community, stakeholders and residents – 4% • Other – TBD – 1%

Andrea: Who put other and would you like to share it?



Egle: Talking about expansion growth we should also address safety. Safety of living may be related to safety on the roads. In general observation, coming from other areas, our roads are narrow with no sidewalks. Taking care of some of those issues will create a safe place to live.

Angela: Question on ongoing mechanism for gathering feedback. There's a disconnect. Residents don't feel things are transparent. As employees, do you feel there is a mechanism?

Mike: In this environment, you also must remember people live here and there are employees. There may be reluctance. A huge variable goes into that. When you talk community, you get the same five noise makers. It becomes redundant and people turn hearing and listening off. It's unfortunate, but I see it in specific neighborhoods like Weeki Wachi and Mud River. You have a team effort, then there's two teams, then three because of disagreements. Everyone starts to corner the market on what's fun, festivals, river patrol, community watch. It all turns into an argument. Boards change hands. It accelerates more and more with growth. People get ostracized. It becomes hard to blend.



Mary Elwin, Transportation Div (MPO): I agree with Mike. Regarding the funding plan comment: Roads don't build themselves. If you don't have funding streams commensurate with what you're trying to accomplish in the strategic plan, it will not bear fruit. A funding plan is so important to develop and get everyone on board to get the initiatives moving forward with momentum. It got 6%, but if you don't have the money, you can't do things.

John Daly: That is significant. You mentioned roads and development. 80% of the roads funding comes from federal government, which is looking to reduce support for a lot of things. "What if" scenarios may be "what if we lose funding down the road, how do we continue to sustain them?"

Mary: A lot of people don't understand that local roads are paid by local funds.

John Daly: Excise taxes and gasoline.

Team Breakouts: SWOT: Priority Areas

Andrea: Ready to deploy and talk SWOT? We'll have four teams for this 100,000-foot view. You as employees have a focused perspective, but we want you to focus on the full array of the strategic view for your county.

Each team will elect a keyboarder to handle the intuitive software. Elect a spokesperson to share your team's top two ideas. You'll see each team's ideas flowing in. Then you'll pick two strengths that are mission critical, non-negotiable and drag the green sticky dots to them. You can choose another team's with your sticky dots. Alignment is important around these SWOTs. You'll do this for all elements of SWOT. Then we'll review together and further prioritize using your cell phones to pick your personal preferences to further elevate the group's consensus.

Teams brainstormed, then reconvened as a large group for report outs.

Andrea: Great work! You're accelerated overachievers. I'm impressed with how you dove right in and got to work. Exceptional. We have 16 of you representing Hernando County. No pressure, but a lot is weighing on you. Spread the word on what we're doing here. Share what we've been able to accomplish. Pull out your cell phones because we'll do team reports, plus prioritize individually in the midst of those. This time you won't select all that apply but narrow to your top five.

Hernando County S.W.O.T.

➤ Deploy to teams to brainstorm and prioritize our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats as a county (100,000 foot view)!

- Elect a team keyboarder & spokesperson
- Brainstorm & Prioritize your Team's Top 2 Strategic Priorities for each S.W.O.T. area.



Let's view the team software!



Strengths

So let's hear from your spokespeople about what strengths you chose.

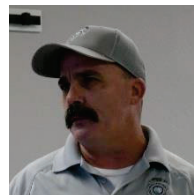
Team 1

Amy: We said great customer service, assisting veterans with disabilities, and sharing information/transparency as our top ones.



Team 2

Mike: Ours falls into customer service, but as county employees, we're motivated by care and compassion for our community. We're part of it and proud of it. We also said collaboration, we all work for the same residents. We all live here too.



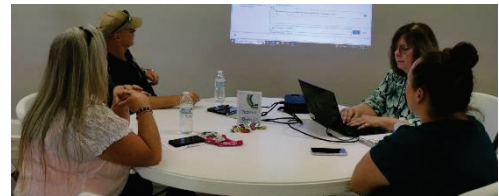
Team 3

John: We selected other teams' ideas.



Team 4

Art: Cost of living affordable. That's important for the area. And attractive natural resources and amenities like parks and recommendation and county functions.



Andrea: And some bonus strengths below. Family oriented community, close proximity to major urban areas. Overachievers. Any clarifications needed? Reflections?

John Daly: Looks like good cooperation across employees across the departments. That's a needed element for a good culture. And service oriented mentality is important component. Caring and compassion for your community.

Top Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive Natural Resources and Amenities (i.e., parks, recreation) – 21% • Close proximity to major urban areas (Tampa/St. Pete, Orlando) – 14% • Assisting Veterans with their disabilities – 14% • Cost of Living is Affordable – 12% • Great customer service – 12% • Collaboration, we all work together for the same residents – 12% • Family-oriented community (schools, government, parks, sports) – 10% • As county employees, we are motivated by care/compassion for our community – 5% • Sharing of information and transparency – 0%

These are the remaining strengths brainstormed by the teams:

- Growing community
- Natural resources
- Making sure the contractors are registered and licensed in Hernando County. =License contractors
- Access to all information available in the library
- Attractive hometown feel
- Engaging platform

Andrea: Well done. Let's go to the second bucket.

Weaknesses

Team 1

Amy: Affordable housing and mental health services was what we chose.

Andrea: Do you recall selecting any other teams' weaknesses? It looks like you may have. The reason this list is so concise is because several teams selected the same one, showing alignment. It's good.

Team 2

Mike: We said to increase the manpower internally as an organization to accommodate more residents expecting the same service. Second, better communication among all organizations externally: State, SWFWMD, federal. Understanding what they do so no one's time is wasted. And that happens internally with new-hires. They don't understand the moving parts of the big machine.

Team 3

John: We think the biggest weakness is finding funding for future projects. We talked about the growth coming in and the constant problem with keeping up with infrastructure including landfill, water, sewer, roads, and the fire department.

Team 4

Art: We had three: Congestion is growing. We need infrastructure to support the growth. There are 17-18 subdivisions going in and that doesn't include the couple thousand single builds. To match that, you need schools and hospitals. And that costs a lot. Also employment opportunities need improvement and more variation, more opportunities for people to stay employed. We just voted down a half-cent sales tax. That could've helped the road.

Mike: And that could come from visitors too.

Art: And funding mechanisms for enhancements/improvements for the desired strategic plan. Based on the results here, we still need funding.

Andrea: That mirrors finding funding for future projects chosen by Team 3.

John Daly: Pretty universal. Resources needed to fuel future services. Hernando County will be hurting without them.

Andrea: Great work.

Top Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion is growing - need updated infrastructure – 22% • Finding funding for future projects – 22% • Employment opportunities need improvement-needs variation – 19% • More manpower to accommodate the developmental growth of Hernando County – 16% • Funding mechanisms to make enhancements and improvements per desired strategic plan – 13% • Affordable housing and mental health services – 9%

These are the remaining weaknesses brainstormed by the teams:

- Over - Construction of Spring Hill
- More collaborative efforts with other county departments, better communication among departments
- We can improve upon communication with external agencies (State, Federal, SWFWMD etc.)
- Staff shortage
- Better incentives to keep the workforce local (attracting new people, plus retaining employees)
- Congestion all of Hernando County

Opportunities

Team 1

Amy: Limiting access to developers. And like you said before, the sales tax to make the improvements needed.

Angela: Limit developer access. Can you provide more context?

Amy: Not allowing so much growth to come in.

Angela: Residential? Commercial?

Many participants indicated it is both.

Angela: Limit access, is that not allowing them to do it?



Robert Werts, Veterans Services: Restriction on how many homes go in an area. If you go down Anderson Snow Road, you drive by a development and you can jump from house to house. It's turning into concrete jungle, which we want to avoid. No zero lot lines to developers. It falls back on infrastructure. Restricting developers and builders to lot sizes would help tremendously.

Angela: Is it outside of the comp plan? Or does that allow them to do that?

Robert: I think they're putting in for variances.

Mary: The comp plan establishes density. Developments are coming in, getting approved, they have to meet requirements.

Angela: I'm not getting the disconnect. If the comp plan allows it, the problem is the plan needs to be revisited.

Speaker: We're not writing it. Others with higher education write it.

Mike: There's a lot of interpretation by us. We don't understand how it fully manages the growth. We need better education on the comp plan for transparency.

Angela: I found it interesting that in your weaknesses, the way you worded them turned them into opportunities. And in opportunities, they're worded almost as weaknesses. I'm trying to understand from an opportunities perspective, because overdevelopment is the #1 issue from all of the data. We must figure out if the issue is the comp plan giving variances or they're able to do it outside of the parameters the County requires so we can address in strategic plan.

John: Impact fees. A new subdivision will stress our infrastructure. We have the lowest impact fees around. They need to pay for the infrastructure. That's our opportunity. We need to charge them more to help us build roads and wastewater treatment plants.

Angela: When the developments go in, is there a public benefit associated with the development?

Mike: Until they put the gate up. The pool.

John: To us? No. None.

Speaker: That could be an opportunity.

Angela: Again, we must figure out real issues to determine opportunities. If the opportunity is to streamline development, is that through the comp plan, decisions being made, or putting in new regulations that require a public benefit?

Mary: It's a bunch of those things. Growth management through the comp plan, then we must implement land development regulations. Those predicate what the developments look like.

Angela: I'll have to look at when the comp plan update is up.

Mary: It's due.

Team 2

Mike: We expanded on more fiscal responsibility for developers. That's not just their development. It's the turn lanes, etc. That may be a deterrent to growth, making them manage their own growth. And balancing quality of life, so maybe more flexible schedules like four 10-hour days. Some people prefer weekends because their spouse may be in the service industry. We can equalize and everyone can benefit. Not just employees, but those they're serving.

Team 3

John: Staff retention due to all the development coming in. That's huge. That must go with the internal passing of the baton. We have a good opportunity to do that. We'll have higher salaries, which will help.

Team 4

Art: Lack of training or cross training within departments and across departments. Everyone has their own niche, doing the same thing day after day. We just had 35 years of experience leave our little department. This happens in all departments. It's trying to keep up with changes, demands, people leaving and retiring, and people getting promoted. Also, communication regarding personnel policies needs to be enhanced.

Angela: Is someone here from HR?

Mike: No.



Angela: Dr. Daly and I were talking about your last comp study for the County.

Egle: This County seems like they're reacting to growth, rather than proactively looking at what growth will be. There was no discussion about personnel; hiring how many people we need to service all that growth. We're proud that we are bare minimal on employees, but we're not planning for the growth. It should be percentagewise in both places.

John Daly: Retention rate and turnover may influence things.

Mike: They're all casualties of the growth. People will go elsewhere to get paid more. It's an exponential problem.

John Daly: Training people to take on additional responsibilities.

Angela: You're not alone. We see it in a lot of small cities. People get training and leave to go somewhere else. Local government is really incenstual, especially in the last three to five years.

Andrea: I was just with Pinellas County, and they're building a succession planning program. They have 180 in DROP right now, so they're garnering that brain trust now.

Mike: 170 of them will say I wish you had someone standing behind me.

Andrea: We're working on that too.

Mike: I see people move into different neighborhoods, and succession of people who built the neighborhood. Now they're like this place is great, but they implement things from their previous neighborhood. You let one rat in the door, now there's five. Not the people, but the rules.

Top Opportunities

- **Staff retention, salaries, hiring, staff development – 17%**
- **Flexible work schedule, in order to improve work/life balance – 17%**
- **Pass the whole cent sales tax next time, to make improvements – 17%**
- Lack of training/cross-training within department, but across departments. – 14%
- Limit access to developers – 14%
- More fiscal responsibility on developers – 14%
- Communication regarding personnel policies needs enhancement – 7%

These are the remaining opportunities brainstormed by the teams:

- Increase of impact fees
- Focus on preserving our natural resources.

Threats

Andrea: We're on the home stretch with threats.

Team 1

Amy: Drugs. Increase police action. We must figure out what's going on with the drugs and stop all of that. Homelessness and mental health -- it all goes together.

Team 2

Mike: Be competitive with neighboring counties for desirable employees. Also development and management of the people, but if you have this much growth in such a rural area, you have to manage the wildlife displacement. That means increasing amenities like rescues. When I was in animal services, we would catch foxes because of rabies. That went away. We used to be proactive. We have more people pushing up on the nature.

Angela: This is a great example of public benefit. An external threat is new developments are coming in. You can't really control that. The public benefit would be what is the developer's strategy to mitigate displacement of wildlife.

Mike: It's tangible to a fiscal responsibility to it too.

Angela: The threat is new development is displacing wildlife and a mitigation strategy could be the public benefit.

Team 3

John: We mirror what others say. Population growth is the biggest damage to infrastructure. That goes to everything we've talked about all day. And damage to natural resources. We have to slow it down.

Team 4

Art: Funding. Taxation reluctance. If we rely on infrastructure with new people coming in, let's go with a half-cent sales tax for current residents. It's not that much. Hometown atmosphere is our other one. You can't have your cake and eat it too. We have to take more responsibility as a community to keep it that way. We fear loss of current natural resources, agriculturally and the hometown feeling.

Andrea: I'm seeing a lot of alignment among teams.

Angela: Also, it's interesting that on threats they have a lot of fear. Fear is an external threat. We saw that in the resident survey and the first community forum.



Top Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of rapid growth; overpopulation/congestion – 19% • Fear of the loss of current natural/agricultural ambiance-hometown feel – 17% • Damage to our natural resources – 17% • Funding (taxation reluctance) – 14% • Wildlife displacement vs. development – 11% • Population growth will hamper county infrastructure – 8% • Increase police action with drugs – 8% • Competition with neighboring counties for desirable/high paying employers – 6%

These are the remaining threats brainstormed by the teams:

- Imbalance of residential vs. corporate and commercial development
- Increasing homeless population
- Lack of communication with both the public and the employees

One Word to Describe Today

Andrea: This has been so helpful. We're in the final stretch here. One final poll. Please give us one word to describe today. The more a word is mentioned, the larger it will get.

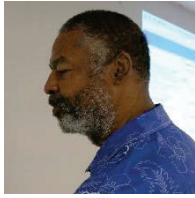


These are good. Brainstorm, responsiveness, engagement. That's a big one. Thought provoking. Any reflections on your time today?

Mary: I've enjoyed working for Hernando County a lot. Hard workers who produce, but the best time is when employees can collaborate together on a strategic plan, customer service strategies, and ways to deal with office issues. Collaboration cross section produces good things.

Visual Illustration

Andrea: Now I'd like to ask Jonathan to share what he's captured visually.



Jonathan: Keeping the rats out. I won't explain that. It's just here. You know if you were in the room. Not that we have a rat problem. *(laughter)*

The idea is the word balance. I have scales on both sides. Quality of life with family in the middle represents small town feel, family-oriented community, and welcoming. Maintaining that, we have scales that represent you, the employees, the people that take care of Hernando County. Employee morale. Balancing those things. The small categories around that are policy, salary, manpower, and cross training. Then we have the balance of preserving nature and resources with growing development. You must balance those to maintain quality of life and be attractive to future residents, while taking care of the residents already here.



Wrap-Up & Next Steps for Success

Andrea: When you go on the website, look for Jonathan's full-color image front and center on the RTR. We are so grateful for you today, helping us advance in our Phase 1 efforts.

Wrap-Up & Next Steps

➤ How will you stay engaged in the Strategic Planning Process?

engagehernando.com/strategicplan




PROJECT PLAN & Information Collected to Date

What are we doing and why?

What is your role in the process?

What are those key dates for your engagement?



Phase One		
1.1	Kick Off and Work Plan Refinement	October 28, 2024
1.2	Commission: Strategic Alignment Workshop & Setting Expectations	November 21, 2024
1.3	Communications Outreach	Ongoing
1.4	Citizen Engagement Session	December 18, 2024
1.5	Individual/Group Stakeholder Interviews	January 2025
1.6	Resident Feedback Survey	January 2025
1.7	Community Focus Group Forum I (2 hours)	February 4, 2025
1.8	Employee Survey	February 2025
1.9	Employee Focus Group Forum (3 hours)	March 27, 2025
1.10	Community Focus Group Forum II (2 hours)	April 4, 2025
1.11	Commission Presentation: Review info-to-date and Next Steps	May 2025
Phase Two		
2.1	Leadership Forum I (4 hours) off-site	June 2025
2.2	County Administrator & Executive Leadership Planning Meeting	June 2025
2.3	Leadership Forum II (3 hours) off-site	July 2025
2.4	County Administrator & Executive Leadership Planning Meeting	August 2025
2.5	Final Report Internal Review	September 2025
2.6	Final Report to Commission Workshop	October 2025
Phase Three:		
3.1	Strategies for supporting the implementation plan	November 2025
3.2	Implementation plan facilitation	November 2026

Attendees

Hernando County Employee Focus Group: March 27, 2025: Sign-In Sheet		
Full Name Last-First-Middle	Department Title	Signature
ANDERSEN BROWN, JANE N	BUILDING DIVISION	Jane Brown
BALDWIN, AMY B	OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION	Amy Baldwin
BRANNON, MADISON PAIGE	AIRPORT OPERATIONS	MPB
BROWN, LINDSEY PAIGE	PURCHASING AND CONTRACTS	Lindsey B
BROWN, SUSAN GAY	DPW-ADMINISTRATION	
BURRIS, VELVET DAWN	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
CAROLLO JR, SEBASTIAN	HC CONSOLIDATED EMS	
ELWIN, MARY R	TRANSPORTATION DIV (MPO)	Mary R Elwin
GRAHAM, MATTHEW	HC CONSOLIDATED EMS	
GROCHOLSKI, PENNY SUE	HCUD ADMINISTRATION	Penny Grocholski
GRZYB, ARTHUR R	PLANNING	Arthur Grzyb
HAGOPIAN, EGLE	LIBRARY SERVICES	Egle Hagopian
HAMILTON, MAEGAN ELIZABETH	WASTE MGMT LANDFILL OPER	
LATWINAS, MARK E	ROAD MAINTENANCE DIVISION	
LUDINGTON, COLLEEN T	LIBRARY SERVICES	Colleen Ludington
MONSEY, CLIFTON ROMAINE	FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	
NELSON, SCOTT E	COUNTY ENGINEER'S OFFICE	Scott E. Nelson
NORMAN, DUANE	HC CONSOLIDATED FIRE	
PEARSON, SHARON GAIL	OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION	Sharon Pearson
POPPKE, KIMBERLY	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	Kim Popke
RIEF, STEVEN W	PARKS & FACILITIES ADMIN	
RODRIGUEZ, DIANE	BUILDING DIVISION	Diane Rodriguez
ROLLINS, MICHAEL R	HCUD WASTEWATER OPERATION	
RUSSO, RONALD P	BUILDING DIVISION	
SAUER, MICHAEL WAYNE	AIRPORT OPERATIONS	
SCHANTL, JOHN DAVID	HCUD ENGINEERING	John Schantl
SCHWAN, LANCE	DPW-TRAFFIC DIVISION	
SHERMAN, PATRICK WAYNE	FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	
SMITH, ASHLEIGH NICOLE	HUMAN RESOURCES	
SMITH, DONNA L	BUILDING DIVISION	Donna Smith
STEELE, MICHAEL	CODE ENFORCEMENT	
SURETTE, MARTINA C	LIBRARY SERVICES	Martina Surette
THOMAS, ERIN LEIGH HAYS	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	
TUBOLINO III, SAMUEL F	PARKS & FACILITIES ADMIN	
WERTS III, ROBERT GEORGE	VETERAN SERVICES	Robert Werts
WRIGHT, ROBERT ANTHONY	ROAD MAINTENANCE DIVISION	Robert Wright