

LAKELAND CITY COMMISSION

Strategic Planning Retreat February 23, 2022

The Lakeland City Commission met for the first day of the Strategic Planning Retreat in the Lake Hollingsworth Ballroom at the RP Funding Center. Mayor Bill Mutz and Commissioners Chad McLeod, Bill Read, Stephanie Madden, Sara McCarley, Mike Musick, and Phillip Walker were present along with the facilitator Craig Collins, Ed.D. of Sterling Creative Consultants. City Manager Shawn Sherrouse, City Attorney Palmer Davis, Finance Director Mike Brossart, and City Clerk Kelly Koos were present along with department directors, assistants, and the media.

Welcome

Shawn Sherrouse called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m. and offered opening comments. The Commission was here to talk about 2023 and beyond. He welcomed the commission, the public, those viewing online, and city staff. He thanked city staff for the continued service to the public. This is not a scripted process. This is an opportunity for conversation and collaboration. He welcomed Dr. Collins.

Agenda, Processes, Data Sources, Anticipated Outcomes, and Ground Rules

Dr. Collins reviewed process and agenda, comments from Commission interviews, and focus groups.

LKLDView Survey Results and Ranking of City Goals -Stephanie Passey

Goal Ratings

1. Fiscal Management
2. Growth Management
3. Economic Opportunity
4. Governance
5. Quality of Life
6. Communication

Ms. Passey then reviewed the survey results.

The Commission discussed re-evaluating the survey.

- Do we give enough time for citizens to respond? We still lag in some group responses.
- The content of the survey changed in 2020 to focus on overall quality of life. Data was consistent for 7 years on services.
- Shawn Sherrouse has assigned a revamping of the survey process for next year to the newly formed office of Innovation & Strategy.

- Consider working with employers to allow time for employees to do the survey.
- There was a low response, 3% of the population.
- All zip codes were included, even outside the city limits.
- Need better marketing to motivate participation.

The Commission discussed the Focus Groups information.

- Dr. Collins will allow time to read the comments at the appropriate time.
- The Commission would like the material in advance of the retreat in the future.

Catalyst 2.0

Lakeland Economic Development Council – Steve Scruggs, President

Mr. Scruggs introduced the new LEDC Senior VP Katie Worthington Decker and the new Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Amy Wiggins.

Mr. Scruggs introduced team members of The Apiary, Maggie, Matt, and Will. They were located downtown next to Palace Pizza. They created the platform they were about to present to the Commission.

The Apiary web tool will let interested parties click on grid to see completed development, construction, and planning/design. The plan is to build the entire downtown out on the system. This was a tool that the Commission, LDDA, and the CRA can use every day. It has aerial and street level views.

Why Catalyst 2.0?

- Identifies all completed projects over the past 3 years
- Identifies all projects under construction
- Identifies all projects in the design and permitting stage
- Identifies all future sites for development
- Identifies infrastructure to support that development
- Identifies how we connect all our key amenities and destinations
- Gives Developers "certainty"
- Gives City Commissioners and staff a powerful tool to help make informed decisions about the future of downtown Lakeland
- Gives every Lakeland Citizen and beyond, access to this information for the first time

The Commission discussed:

- The Commission applauded the tool, the creators, and the effort to get it ready for today's meeting.
- There are so many surface lots downtown, it will take 20-30 years to develop all the available space. One example is the surface lot from Orange down to Lake Morton.
- LEDC was promoting this project to work with the City and help outside parties see their way into the city.

- LEDC was doing some of the lifting to accomplish smart growth in the downtown area.
- Leveraging City dollars, working with partners and private investment. The City was a strategic partner, not just a regulator.
- Looking forward to seeing the completed project in April.

Shawn Sherrouse explained GAI and Catalyst 2.0 don't work together. They crash each other. The GAI product is a planning tool that looks at infrastructure needs. Catalyst 2.0 is more style and vision.

Break 9:12 a.m. to 9:22 a.m.

Target Area 1 Infrastructure

Dr. Collins instructed the Commission to read questions 2 & 5 on the Commission Interviews Handout.

Chuck Barmby and Ryan Lazenby presented. A copy of their presentation is on file in the Agenda Packet.

The Commission discussed:

- Charging closer to 100% of impact fees as recommended by impact fee studies.
- Supporting level of service standards and connectivity requirements.
- Transportation and connectivity are a problem across the nation. We must change the mindset about transit.
- Lakeland needed traction at a regional level for regional transportation.
- Lakeland must have "skin in the game" and play nice with other government agencies.
- FDOT must have accountability for Lakeland, before Lakeland is surpassed in population numbers.
- Lakeland must be shovel ready when funding becomes available.
- A stakeholder group to offer up solutions (sales tax) and communicate back to the citizens.
- The group could study transportation solutions throughout the City.
- Budgets are difficult to plan when projects take 50 years to complete.
- Grants are easier to obtain when the Right-of-Way portion is complete.
- Implementing higher impact fees and allowing developers to earn a lower fee through mitigations that alleviate traffic.
- The City of Tallahassee implemented a sales tax (through Leon County) for transportation recently. They specifically said what projects the tax would support. The legislators who visit/work in Tallahassee did not see that effort in a successful light. The City did not agree.
- Lakeland would need to identify their projects and demonstrate that the current fees go to maintenance.
- Lakeland will have to provide some dollars towards resolving the traffic problem.

- My Roads/My Ride was unsuccessful in Polk County because of poor communication with the private sector.
- The City needed to educate the public on how the gas tax is barely covering maintenance. Get the public to help find the solution, which could be millage or a sales tax.
- The expensive studies for road/bridge development is necessary to ensure the infrastructure does not fail, such as a bridge collapsing or sinkholes.
- The City should establish their own priorities, a list of local needs, funding sources and shortfalls.

Dr. Collins referred Commission to the focus group information, #22 Ease of Parking Downtown and the Themes. He asked them to read the information and write out their initiatives.

TA 1 Initiatives:

Downtown Parking; mapping

1. **Create an app which shows spaces, signs to show available spaces in the garage. That will help people use what we already have available. The consensus was unanimous.**
2. **Compare downtown parking inventory vs projected parking needs in the future.**
3. **Work with LDDA and LEDC to review the parking audit and decide if we should keep surface lots or offer for development or parking garages.**

The Commission discussed:

- Predictability of knowing where to go to park. Move away from surface lots and instead have predictable parking garages.
- Parking downtown means having to walk a little. We've been saying this for 3 years.
- Downtown was gaining residents and employees.
- Create an RFP for unused surface parking lots.
- Consolidate parking to make it simple.
- Decide where to put garages and utilize the rest of downtown that would be supported by those garages.
- Decide if the City will extend sidewalks for cafes.
- Parking or no on-street parking around Munn Park.

Bonnet Springs Park; roundabouts

1. **Enhance safe bike/ped access to BSP with connectivity options.**

The Commission discussed:

- Access to BSP from Kathleen Rd. BSP considering a northern access.
- Bikes and pedestrians on Sloan under CSX. This was on BSP's radar.

Impact Fees

1. **Explore staff policy proposal for flexible use of impact fees as an enhanced growth management tool.**

The Commission discussed:

- Raising residential impact fees affects affordable housing.
- Residential density dedicated to workforce housing.
- Start at a higher level and allow developers to reduce impact fees through mitigation.
- Use a variable rate along different corridors based on development type. Guide development to where it would have the least impact on the overall system.
- No one wants to develop on failing roads.
- Flexibility would be passed on to the developer.
- Flexibility comes out of the traffic study, tying it back to the Commission's stated goals and policy, and incentivizing specific industry.
- The City can withhold zoning to get concurrency and mitigation that could reduce impact fees.
- The City cannot require the developer to pay more than their impacts on the infrastructure. The City had more flexibility if the zoning is not in place yet.

Recessed for lunch at 11:47 a.m. and reconvened at 12:30 p.m.

Bonding Opportunities

The Commission discussed:

- Impact fees and gas tax were eligible revenue sources for debt service on bonds.
- Bonds were a financing tool, another payment option.
- The City traditionally went to market (bonds) for projects that have been in the CIP for several years.
- A City cannot pass a sales tax by themselves. They can only impose Ad Valorem taxes.

Multimodal Transportation

1. **Develop strategies for promoting multimodal awareness and usage in the community.**

The Commission discussed:

- Broadband
- Long-range vision for the Innovation District.
- Electric vehicle charging stations.

- The need for a wholistic approach to Smart City technology.
- Educating the community about the importance of multimodal and the need to shift behavior.
- Most streets are not conducive to walking. The City needs to make roads more attractive to bike/pedestrians.
- People gravitate to what is comfortable. That is not transit. People need to know they are safe using transit.
- The City should look for multimodal grants.

Polk County Public Schools – Superintendent Frederick Heid

Mr. Heid briefly reviewed his education history. He is a parent of a Freshman at George Jenkins High School. Appreciated the sincerity of the investment commitment of the community stakeholders to ensure that Polk County Schools continue to thrive and improve. Spent his first 6 months listening.

How can the City of Lakeland continue to support education?

Continue to provide internships and externships. The school district will mirror that. Right now, they had longstanding vacancies to fill. They had roughly 7,800 teachers and 151 instructional vacancies each day, 80 bus driver vacancies each day. Expanding partnerships for early college. Polk County will now provide tuition reimbursement for those entering education in Polk County. They were launching apprenticeship programs in trades this summer. That will morph into early release during the school year.

Five schools continue with Ds inside Lakeland. Three of the five are slated to move up this year. In Lakeland, they had fewer Ds then last year. Two schools in Lakeland moved from D to C from last year.

What else can be done? Polk County schools need to be more aggressive with succession leadership. He was contracting for an efficiency audit. Graduation rates have improved to 88% over the last 10 years. Some subgroups have a lower graduation rate. His objective as superintendent was that every student who gets a diploma is ready to enter a competitive workforce, armed services, or secondary education. We cannot do "high school light."

Polk County public schools were slated to grow by 50,000 students in the next 15-18 years. He was sure that would happen much faster. He projected they would be at 116,000 students by next year. Growth is here and Polk County must keep pace. The struggle is to pay well and have a reserve to grow. 50,000 students would be 35 schools.

Rezoning: The district has not undergone rezoning. Some schools are at 110% capacity. One is below 50% capacity. Rezoning must be a conversation.

How can you partner? We need strong partners who are committed in service. Let me know if there is a need for an academy. Let me know if there is a chance to improve our academies. Some academies are under enrolled because of their physical location. We

need to replicate high interest programs so more students have access. He needs corporate support for up to date teachers in industry academies.

The Commission discussed:

- School sites and concurrency. Mr. Heid would ask for volunteers to serve on those zoning committees.
- Accountability. Mr. Heid needed to hear everything about what you're experiencing. Sugar coating will not help.
- Staffing: Polk School was working to grow teachers through tuition reimbursement and international teachers. The international teachers are often highly skilled in mathematics.
- Teacher Housing: Some districts are building affordable housing for teachers.
- Neighborhood Schools: Polk Schools must offer choice. We should have dual language in our school system. Mr. Heid was pro choice and pro charter. We need a regional structure to reduce commute time but we must retain choice. Florida is still a state that requires minimal hours for credit. Time in seat did not equate to mastery of subject.
- Polk Schools has modified the calendar for school choice application. Late comers to the community will still be able to apply if there are seats available.

Break at 2:25 PM and reconvened at 2:35 PM.

Dixieland Realignment

- 1. Ask FDOT for clarity on what happens next with the road diet test.**
- 2. Develop possible rezoning between Florida and New York/Missouri.**

The Commission discussed:

- Two one-way parallels as an alternative to a lane reduction along S. Florida Ave. Lake Alfred is now trying to find a way to remove the one-way parallels through their community.
- Options beyond lane reduction such as eliminate the middle turn lane, 4-lanes undivided, median down the middle, widen travel lanes and widen sidewalks.
- Dixieland is blighted. Customers cannot use front doors for safety reasons.
- That portion of S. Florida was once a 3-lane roadway.
- Florida Avenue was a State road.
- Bartow Rd and Wabash were supposed to provide relief for S. Florida Ave. Those projects need to move forward.
- By their own policy, FDOT cannot move forward with something that the city does not support.
- Rezoning the west side of S. Florida Ave.

Target Area 2

RP Funding Center

Tony Camarillo gave a presentation, a copy of which is on file in the Agenda Packet.

1. **Develop sales/expenses that reduce the General Fund subsidy in FY23 to \$1 Million and concurrently seek RFPs from management companies.**

The Commission discussed:

- RPFC as a multicultural center. Where else could we have art performances? The RPFC provided quality of life.
- Unbooked dates, Rates, No subsidy. RPFC needed to increase rates, find new business, and work around the Magic.
- Reducing the subsidy. Magic is as profitable as other business. Naming rights is most important. The circus is the highest revenue per day.
- The Magic cost RPFC money. Negotiation were coming for contract renewal.
- Look for management company to take RPFC to net zero. A management company will not remove the capital expenditures. They would remove staff but the City would pay for their staff. Management companies in large cities do not guarantee they can bring those big actors to Lakeland.
- RPFC books 12-18 months out.
- Sales people work on commission.
- Hire a sports/facilities consultant who will study the operation to help determine where RPFC can make changes or if they should consider a management company. It takes about 12 weeks for them to conduct a study. The consultant company would do an operational review, a benchmarking analysis, economic/fiscal impact analysis, provide operational scenario analysis and then come back as deliverables with recommendations.
- RPFC was similar to golf course and parks & recreation in the city budget.
- RPFC would qualify for ARPA funds because of lost revenue during COVID but not for debt payments.
- The operating transfer line is the one the City should focus on to reduce.
- RPFC as an art center vs other interests in the community.
- An RFP for a management company could serve as a free consultant review.
- Tony Camarillo took the subsidy down from \$5 Million to \$3 Million even during COVID. It was important to acknowledge that progress.

Smart City Initiatives

1. **Explore opportunities to optimize Williams and surrounding properties to preserve an innovation district, by rights development, and wildlife preserves where warranted.**
2. **Investigate opportunities for additional charging stations supporting electric vehicle for future transportation needs.**
3. **Direct Lakeland Electric to look at future automation with remote disconnect meters outside city limits.**

The Commission discussed:

- Automatic turn-ons and turn-offs. That would eliminate staff and save money. An obstacle to that is the water meters.
- LE did not have automatic disconnect/reconnect right now without rolling out a truck.

Target Area 6: Resiliency Plans

1. **Provide information from lessons learned from COVID and capture what lessons can be used in other emergencies.**

The Commission discussed:

- COVID Lessons Learned.
- Staff was flexible in the absence of an emergency manager.
- WebEOC will help formalize protocol documentation.
- The City had a framework for a comprehensive emergency management plan.

Target Area #3: Affordable Housing

Dr. Collins directed the Commission to look at #7 on their interview handout.

Teresa Maio gave a presentation, a copy of which is on file in the Agenda Packet. Her presentation provided an update on the Infill Land Bank Program, Rental Development Program, and leveraging General Fund and CRA funds for affordable housing purposes. It may be more efficient to offer the next round of vacant lots all to one developer rather than have various closings.

The Commission discussed:

- Lakeland's affordable housing efforts.
- A trust fund similar to the City of Winter Haven.
- Homeownership as part of affordable housing. Staff will release available lots to one developer in the next round to be more efficient.
- Staff wanted a mix of affordable housing.
- Allocation of affordable housing dollars lower income and the affects on the developers' proforma.

The Commission adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Strategic Planning Retreat February 24, 2022

The Lakeland City Commission met for the second day of the Strategic Planning Retreat in the Lake Hollingsworth Ballroom at the RP Funding Center. Mayor Bill Mutz and Commissioners Chad McLeod, Bill Read, Stephanie Madden, Sara McCarley, Mike Musick, and Phillip Walker were present along with the facilitator Craig Collins, Ed.D. of

Sterling Creative Consultants. City Manager Shawn Sherrouse, City Attorney Palmer Davis, Finance Director Mike Brossart, and City Clerk Kelly Koos were present along with department directors, assistants, and the media.

Shawn Sherrouse called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Dr. Collins welcomed everyone.

Target Area #3: Affordable Housing - Initiatives

Trust Fund - None

The Commission discussed:

- The City of Winter Haven's Trust Fund.
- Trust funds were helpful if outside parties were contributing to the fund.

Homelessness

1. **Examine everything we can do to communicate with citizens and make sure our ordinances are as strong as possible.**

The Commission discussed:

- Sleeping in the park would fall under the camping ordinance and would take 30 minutes to enforce. We have more success working with service providers and finding help for those we can help.
- The biggest challenge is the chronic homeless. They have been through the programs and it did not take. Some live that lifestyle by choice.
- There were several encampments in the City. Chronic homelessness seeks the path of least resistance and move away from law enforcement.
- Lakeland is hospitable and the weather is good.
- The Police have other issues to handle. It may be better for the government to support the providers rather than solve the matter themselves.
- The 2015 US Supreme Court ruled that panhandling was a protected form of speech. Ordinances like Lakeland's have been struck down. Cities must approach the matter as a response to conduct rather than panhandling.
- Citizens need to occupy spaces such as Munn park. We need people to not be feeding people in that area. Citizens do not want to be cornered and asked for funds. We should continue to try and help people into jobs who want to find a place.
- There have been bad court decisions on public feedings too. There are probably some things you can do by designating certain areas for that purpose. The city does not have a lot of control on that. You can address the conduct such as littering or battery.
- Staff was moving forward to implement some active uses in some areas that have become passive. There will be opportunities for the public weigh in on some of

those changes and events. Citizens need to reclaim those spaces and put active uses back in the parks.

- Munn Park needed something in that space that draws families downtown. Homelessness was larger than Munn Park.
- The public needed to stop giving money to panhandlers.
- The City had monitored cameras on Munn Park.

Lake Mirror Center

1. **Identify current events, attendees, price, space size and frequency of the Lake Mirror Center.**

The Commission discussed:

- The needed affordable meeting space for groups in the community.
- Questioned the best use of the property.
- The first step would be to move the Community Theatre. The City could not bear the cost of relocating the theatre.
- Moving the community theatre to the RPFC.
- Development at that location should include green space and public use.
- Selling the Lakeland Electric building.

Visual of existing housing maps/pricing index - None

The Commission discussed:

- Hard to build affordable housing when prices were so high.
- The City must not put all affordable housing in one zip code.
- The highest priority must be additional units because you cannot assist with rent if there are no units available.
- A map to identify city efforts. The city had a development tracker but it does not speak to price, except construction value. They could provide maps with the unit types but not pricing.
- The City cannot build their way out of homelessness and affordability.

Target Area 4: City Hall Communications

The Commission discussed:

- Municipalities are struggling with hiring and retaining employees. Lakeland was competing against Tampa and Orlando.
- Every county and city are looking at what to do next. We are finding the private sector pursuing public employees.
- Conducting a pay study.
- Benefits are considered in Risk Manager and insurance negotiations.
- The City hears from employees through exit interviews, the Employees' Association, and Ask Management on InSite.
- Conducting an employee survey to identify and spot trends.
- Leadership development opportunities.

- Savings such as newer employees coming in lower on the pay scale and efficiencies through technology.
- Extending DROP for succession planning.
- Recruiting new companies with higher paying jobs requires the city to pay competitive salaries.

Initiatives:

Survey: Report back to the Commission on the employee survey to determine how they feel about pay, culture, room for advancement and their wants & needs.

The Commission discussed:

- Alignment of T.O. to see if there are ways to align resources to work together more efficiently across departments. Start by looking at job descriptions.
- Any time a division or department wants to reclassify or add/remove staff we go through a process and look at job descriptions to see if duties or positions can be eliminated.
- Conducting the survey now vs after a return to normal after COVID.
- Authorize a pay study to ensure adequate compensation.

Break: 10:26 a.m. to 10:38 a.m.

Target Area 7 Public Safety**No Initiatives**

Fire - Chief Riley

Chief Riley recommended building a new station 8 rather than move station 3. He may like to include space to provide a northside substation for the police department. Station 7 has long response time because of navigating around the airport. The City has an interlocal agreement with the County to cover calls they cannot respond to quickly. The City could do the same thing to cover their area southwest of the airport. That would alleviate response time issues in southwest Lakeland.

Dr. Collins explained that Chief Riley's presentation was reporting back with information the Commission had requested. He asked the Commission to write down questions and initiatives at this time. He has asked fire and police to provide budget numbers just because they are big asks.

Police - Chief Ruben Garcia

Chief Garcia had an additional staffing request. The Police has had no new officers since 2017. Manpower is considered in a couple of ways, FDLE does it by per capita. Another method is Workload Assessment. His request for FY23 was 19 officers 1 Sergeant and 1 Lieutenant. He also offered alternative options.

The Commission discussed:

- The need for a new station in southwest Lakeland. Calls were not increasing yet.
- FAA prohibited emergency vehicles crossing the airport.
- Funding options for additional law enforcement.
- A new fire station was needed north of I-4. They could build and provide a substation for Police.
- Interlocal agreements to provide fire coverage. There was a countywide mutual aid agreement. The County had two new stations on Kathleen and Galloway. They are not close enough to Lakeland's zones.
- A new fire station would need two acres of land. The Commission discussed finding that land in north Lakeland and south west Lakeland.
- Hiring environment in law enforcement. Political decisions throughout the country are making it easier to hire in Lakeland. The most recent bargaining agreement also helped.

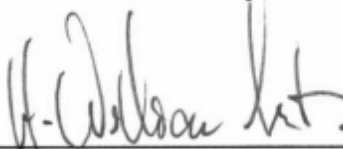
Target Area 5 Parks & Recreation**No Initiatives****The Commission discussed:**

- The biggest pressures in the next 18-24 months; maintenance, a master plan for the southwest park, and a plan for Munn Park in downtown.
- The needed transfer of knowledge as the directors exit DROP.
- Lake Mirror usage. Staff will bring a report.
- Cook Park was donated land and it heavily programed as a park.
- Freedom Park: It could improve the Downtown West connection. It was donated from the Department of Interior. It can only be a park. It is a contaminated/monitored site and the groundwater is not usable.

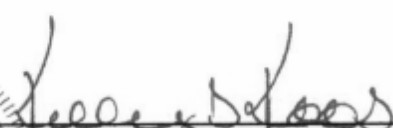
Dr. Collins thanked the Commission for their efforts. The initiatives should come back to Commission for approval. He suggested the Commission plan for 2 full days in the future. They agreed.

Shawn Sherrouse thanked Dr. Collins for all his assistance in the changes we made last year and the evolution this year. There is a lot of work for staff follow up. They will provide a midcycle report. He also thanked Emily Colon for all her work. He thanked staff for their support and the Commission for their leadership.

The Commission adjourned 11:52 a.m.


H. William Mutz, Mayor




Kelly S. Koos, City Clerk

LAKELAND CITY COMMISSION

**Strategic Planning Retreat
February 23-24, 2022**

RETREAT INITIATIVES

Target Area 1: Infrastructure

Downtown Parking; mapping

1. Create an app to find parking and add signage to show available parking in garages.
2. Analyze existing parking vs projected needs.
3. Investigate feasibility of converting surface lots to predictable parking or development.

Bonnet Springs Park (BSP): roundabouts, pedestrian tunnel and bike path

1. Enhance safe bike/ped access to BSP with connectivity options.

Impact Fees

1. Explore staff policy proposal for flexible use of impact fees as an enhanced growth management tool.

Bonding Opportunities - none

Multimodal Transportation

1. Develop strategies for promoting multimodal awareness and usage in the community

Dixieland Realignment

1. Ask FDOT for clarity on what happens next.
2. Develop possible rezoning between Florida and New York/Missouri.

Target Area 2: Economic Development

RP Funding Center

1. Develop sales/expenses that reduce the General Fund Subsidy in FY23 to \$1 Million and concurrently seek RFPs from management companies.

Smart City Initiatives

1. Explore opportunities to optimize Williams and surrounding properties to preserve an Innovation District, by rights development, and wildlife preserves where warranted.
2. Investigate opportunities for additional charging stations supporting electric vehicles for future transportation needs.

3. Direct Lakeland Electric to look at future automation with remote disconnect meters outside city limits.

Target Area 3: Affordable Housing

Trust Fund-none

Homelessness

1. Examine everything we can do to communicate with citizens and make sure our ordinances are as strong as possible.

Lake Mirror Center

1. Identify current events, attendees, price, space size and frequency of the Lake Mirror Center.

Target Area 4: City Hall Communications

Survey

1. Report back to the Commission on the employee survey to determine how employees feel about pay, culture, room for advancement and their wants/needs.

Pay Study-none

Target Area 5: Parks and Recreation - None

Target Area 6:Resiliency Plans

1. Provide information from lessons learned from COVID and capture lessons for other emergencies.

Target Area 7: Public Safety - None