

VISION PINELLAS



**BCC Strategic Plan &
Strategic Business Plans
2007-2012**

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	
Introduction.....	1
Executive Summary.....	3
Balanced Scorecard Handout.....	5
2. Organizational Analysis.....	OA-1
3. Effective Government	
Strategic Plan.....	EG-1
Business Plan.....	EG-25
4. Economic Development, Redevelopment & Housing	
Strategic Plan.....	EDRH-1
Business Plan.....	EDRH-30
5. Environment Open Space Recreation & Culture	
Strategic Plan.....	EOSRC-1
Business Plan.....	EOSRC-19
6. Health & Human Services	
Strategic Plan.....	HHS-1
Business Plan.....	HHS-17
7. Public Safety	
Strategic Plan.....	PS-1
Business Plan.....	PS-13
8. Transportation, Utilities, & Stormwater	
Strategic Plan.....	TUS-1
Business Plan.....	TUS-21
9. Appendix	
Performance Measure Details.....	A-1



Executive Summary

In 2005, the County contracted with the firm of Arrington-Marlowe, LLC to develop a formal strategic plan for the organization. The result of that effort was the Board of County Commissioner's Strategic Plan which was adopted by the Board on February 14, 2006.

The Strategic Plan is a high-level document that provides overall Board direction on a number of priority issues. The Strategic Plan is organized into six strategic focus areas (SFA): Effective Government; Economic Development, Redevelopment, & Housing; Environment, Open Space, Recreation & Culture; Health & Human Services; Public Safety; and Transportation, Utilities, & Stormwater.

Over the last eight months staff has worked to develop business plans for each SFA that provide detail and specificity regarding implementation of the goals and strategies in the Strategic Plan. This detail includes identifying the department(s) tasked with the strategy, a time frame for implementation, deliverable(s) if any, and related performance measures.

To facilitate development of the SFA business plans, six teams were established. Team leads were named for each team and team members were selected. Each SFA team has representation from related departments. For example, the Economic Development, Redevelopment, & Housing team features members from Economic Development, Community Development, Building, Development Review Services, and Planning, as well as ad-hoc participation from Human Services, Communications, Convention & Visitors Bureau, Airport, Public Works, and STAR Center.

The Effective Government SFA team has been established to serve as the coordinating body for the ongoing work of all of the Strategic Focus Area Teams. This team is also charged with guiding the County's over arching strategies that affect all of the strategic focus areas and the county's services overall. The composition of this team includes the team leads from the Strategic Focus Area teams, each of the Assistant County Administrators, and other key leaders such as the Communications and Information Systems directors.

Each of the SFA teams met five times as a whole and multiple times individually as they worked to develop their business plans. This team concept has become a cornerstone to our strategic planning approach and has already produced several benefits such as enhancing collaboration and networking, better understanding of other people's roles and responsibilities, and a big picture perspective towards meeting challenges.

Pinellas County Government is enhancing the use of performance measurement by applying a strategic framework called the Balanced Scorecard to its performance measurement efforts. The primary benefit of the Balanced Scorecard is that it helps an organization clarify its strategy and translate it into action by enhancing the ability of each employee to understand how his/her activity and performance relate to the priorities of the organization. Each performance measure is linked to a corresponding Balanced Scorecard Perspective, Strategic Focus Area, and a Strategic Goal/Strategy. The County's Balanced Scorecard has been updated to reflect the new strategic goals and strategies in the Strategic Plan and performance measures will be tracked at both the SFA and department levels.

The next step in the strategic planning process includes an annual update with the Board of County Commissioners in the Spring to make any necessary edits or changes to the Strategic Plan. The updated Strategic Plan will then help form the basis for the upcoming FY08 budget process.

Other next steps include the development of internal strategic planning training to reinforce these ideas and concepts to the entire organization, an internal and external communications rollout of the Strategic Plan and Business Plans to facilitate understanding and implementation of the plans, the creation of a one-stop strategic management website, and quarterly reporting of performance measures related to implementation of the plans.

Introduction

This document is a compilation of the initial Strategic Planning process consultation work results that were produced by the firm of Arrington-Marlowe, LLC with the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (adopted February 14, 2006) and the county-wide, collaborative efforts of the newly established **six Strategic Focus Area** teams over the past eight months, as follows:

- Effective Government,
- Economic Development, Redevelopment and Housing,
- **Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation and Culture,**
- Health and Human Services,
- Public Safety, and
- Transportation, Utilities and Stormwater

A graphic showing the composition of the Strategic Focus Area teams is on the following page.

The Organizational Assessment portion of this document and each of the leading Strategic Plan documents within the various sections of this document that follow were produced by Arrington-Marlowe and adopted by the Board.

The remaining portions of this Strategic Planning document have been developed by the county's six Strategic Focus Area teams, as follows:

- Strategic Business Plans, to specify the next steps involved in accomplishing the county's strategic goals (the second documents in each section of the book),

Each of the Strategic Business Plans is organized by the following:

- Overview of the Strategic Focus Area
 - Summary of Situational Analysis
 - Strategic Plan Goals
 - Strategy Execution and Proposed Deliverables
 - Organizational Capacity Requirements
- Strategy Maps, to show the alignment between the levels of work involved (the third and final document in each section of the book, ledger sized), and
 - Balanced Scorecards, to show how we are planning to measure the county's success in achieving our Strategic Plan (Appendix).

SFA Planning Teams – Staff Assignments

Effective Government Team							
Gay Lancaster	Mark Woodard	Keith Wicks	Jake Stowers/Liz Warren	Pick Talley	Elithia Stanfield		
Marcia Crawley	Dick Williams	Mike Meidel	Pete Yauch	Paul Cozzie	Steve Carroll	Evelyn Bethell	James Garoutsos
Facilitator: Chris Staubus, Utilities							
Transportation, Utilities & Stormwater	Environment, Open Space, Recreation & Culture	Health & Human Services	Economic Development, Redevelopment & Housing	Public Safety			
<p>Pete Yauch, Chair, Public Works Frank Aiello, Airport Laura Berkowitz, Economic Dev. Paul Cassel, DRS Craig Dye, Environmental Mgmt. Joe Lauro, Purchasing Mike Marshall, Comm. Development Warren Smith, Utilities SWO David Talhouk, Public Works Sarah Ward, Planning</p> <p><u>Ad Hoc</u> George Grazier, Human Services Mike Maroney, Public Works Stanfield/Everett, Intergovernmental (only for legislative matters)</p>	<p>Paul Cozzie, Chair, CBL Will Davis, DEM Dave Delmonte, General Services Liz Freeman, Planning John Giantonio, CVB Teresa Hasbrouck, Economic Dev. Jim Meloy, Public Works Judith Powers-Jones, Arts Council Dave Slonena, Utilities Engineering Cliff Still, DRS Nanette Wiser, Communications</p> <p><u>Ad Hoc</u> Frank Bowman, Community Develop David Talhouk, Public Works Larry Thomas, AIRCO Stanfield/Everett, Intergovernmental (only for legislative matters)</p>	<p>Evelyn Bethell, Chair, Human Services Gordon Beardslee, Planning W. Hays, Veterans Services Cynthia Johnson, Economic Develop. Larry Lara, DEM/Code Enforcement Dr. Kenny Mitchell, Animal Services Andrew Pupke, General Services</p> <p><u>Ad Hoc</u> Nancy Page, Mosquito Control Fran Pheeny, Comm. Development Stanfield/Everett, Intergovernmental (only for legislative matters)</p>	<p>Mike Meidel, Chair, Economic Dev. Libby Bolling, Communications Lee Daniel, CVB Mark Ely, Planning Bob Humberstone, Airport Anthony Jones, Community Dev. Cindy Merciano, Economic Dev. Rob Nagin, Building Al Navaroli, DRS Charlie Norwood, Public Works Cliff Smith, Human Services</p> <p><u>Ad Hoc</u> Cheryl Reed, Comm. Development Paul Sacco STAR Center Stanfield/Everett, Intergovernmental (only for legislative matters)</p>	<p>Dick Williams, Chair, Emergency Communications Dr. Welch Agnew, Animal Services Tim Burns, Justice & Consumer Services Mario Ferfoggia, Public Works Tom Iovino, Communications Chuck Kearns, EMS/Fire Brian Landry, General Services Todd Myers, DEM/Code Enforcement Brian Smith, Planning Gary Vickers, Emergency Mgt. Beth Wininger, Risk Management</p> <p><u>Ad Hoc</u> Jean Vleming, Human Services Stanfield/Everett, Intergovernmental (only for legislative matters)</p>			
<p><u>Ad Hoc – Utilities</u> (Depending on specific Teams Needs) Jim Rolston, Operations/Water Quality Tom Crandall, GMD Bob Powell, Lab Mike Sweet, Engineering</p>	<p><u>Ad Hoc – Utilities</u> (Depending on specific Teams Needs) Jim Rolston, Operations/Water Quality Tom Crandall, GMD Bob Powell, Lab Mike Sweet, Engineering</p>	<p><u>Ad Hoc – Utilities</u> (Depending on specific Teams Needs) Jim Rolston, Operations/Water Quality Tom Crandall, GMD Bob Powell, Lab Mike Sweet, Engineering</p>	<p><u>Ad Hoc – Utilities</u> (Depending on specific Teams Needs) Jim Rolston, Operations/Water Quality Tom Crandall, GMD Bob Powell, Lab Mike Sweet, Engineering</p>	<p><u>Ad Hoc – Utilities</u> (Depending on specific Teams Needs) Jim Rolston, Operations/Water Quality Tom Crandall, GMD Bob Powell, Lab Mike Sweet, Engineering</p>			
<p><u>Facilitator:</u> Jan Magdziasz, Utilities</p> <p><u>Admin. Support for Team:</u> Karen Isak</p>	<p><u>Facilitator:</u> Andy Squires, Environmental Mgmt.</p> <p><u>Admin. Support for Team:</u> Sally Cirillo</p>	<p><u>Facilitator:</u> Peggy Rowe, Personnel</p> <p><u>Admin. Support for Team:</u> Human Services Secretary</p>	<p><u>Facilitator:</u> John Woodruff, OMB</p> <p><u>Admin. Support for Team:</u> Economic Development Staff</p>	<p><u>Facilitator:</u> James Dates, Justice & Consumer Serv.</p> <p><u>Admin. Support for Team:</u> Emergency Communications Dept.</p>			

Pinellas County - BCC Strategic Plan

Strategic Focus Areas

Strategic Goals and Strategies

Effective Government	Enhance community engagement	Improve strategic planning	Develop workforce of the future	High quality customer service	Improve productivity	Competitive programs & services	Maximize best practices & technology
Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation & Culture	Preserve green space	Expand active recreation		Improve public access to water		Promote sustainability ethic	
	Improve parks & protect preserves		Promote arts, culture, & historic preservation			Enhance pedestrian & bicycle access to parks	
Public Safety	Reduce crime & jail population	Enhance law enforcement services		Improve emergency preparedness	Enhance EMS & fire services		Expand and improve emergency shelters
Transportation & Utilities	Properly maintain roads & bridges	Increase airport utilization		Improve traffic flow & safety	Enhance public transit services & availability		Beautify roadway corridors
	Form regional transportation partnerships	Enhance solid waste mgmt.		Expand sanitary sewer systems	Improve stormwater drainage systems		Provide high quality drinking water
Economic Development, Redevelopment, & Housing	Attract & retain high quality jobs		Ensure adequate sites for business & industry		Maximize investment from state, federal, and private sources		Preserve & revitalize neighborhoods
	Preserve & enhance tourism industry		Match redevelopment to community priorities		Ensure adequate housing supply for ownership & rental at all income levels		Promote home ownership opportunities & education
Health & Human Services	Increase access to services		Leverage existing resources		Better coordination of services		Match services with needs



A Framework for **Progressive Pinellas**

VISION

We are working to be the standard for public service in America by placing the highest importance on:

- The Quality of Our Service
- Having Our Customers Think Highly of Us, and
- A Sense of Commitment and Pride Among Us

MISSION

Pinellas County Government is committed to progressive public policy, superior public service, courteous public contact, judicious exercise of authority and sound management of public resources, to meet the needs and concerns of our citizens today and tomorrow.

VALUES

- We will be sensitive to the needs of individuals while recognizing our responsibility to the community as a whole.
- We believe, as employees and citizens of the community, that we share the responsibility to contribute toward the community's vitality.
- We believe it is our responsibility to improve the overall quality of life through the sound management and preservation of the environmental resources entrusted to us.
- We will treat every employee with dignity recognizing the value of each individual's work.
- All shall be provided equal opportunity, a safe workplace and the opportunity for professional and personal growth.

These, our values, will guide the development and implementation of Pinellas County policy for a better community.

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Organizational Analysis



Preliminary organizational assessment and environmental scan

Pinellas County Strategic Plan

Deliverable #1

Arrington-Marlowe, LLC

May 13, 2005

Section One

Summary of process

The process in the initial phase of the project involved the following activities that occurred from November 2004 through January 2005:

- Interviews of County Commissioners
- Interviews of Senior staff (County Administrator, Assistant County Administrators)
- Interviews with other county staff
- Review of prior strategic planning retreats and vision reports
- Planning for, and formation of, Strategic Leadership Team
- Development and delivery of orientation for Strategic Leadership Team
- Design and facilitation of BoCC strategic leadership workshop 1 – strategic framework
- Design and facilitation of BoCC strategic leadership workshop 2 – strategic choices
- Revision of project work plan

Section Two

Challenges facing Pinellas County

Pinellas County is a distinctive county in Florida: it is the state's first truly urban county and the first, along with Broward, to reach a "built-out" status. As such, it faces a distinctive set of challenges regarding redevelopment, the transformation of its tourism industry, the challenges of density and public transportation along with the normal challenges of any urbanized county with respect to cultural diversification, housing affordability, pressures on social service systems and the need for economic diversification.

Pinellas County is distinguished, along with Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach in having more than twenty (24 in Pinellas' case) municipalities within its borders. The County is struggling with the challenge of sorting out roles and relationships among its local governments in a highly complex, and often contentious, political environment. Pinellas County also is a major partner in the Tampa Bay area, which is often viewed by those outside the region as a single entity. The county anchors one end of the I-4 corridor, an area generally regarded as rapidly growing in national economic and political significance.

Within this general context, the county faces a number of challenges. These include:

- The accommodation of approximately 200,000 more persons during the next twenty years as residents. This represents the mid-range BEBR estimate. We would note that a number of coastal counties are experiencing growth rates that exceed the mid-range estimate. They of course do not face the redevelopment challenges that Pinellas faces.
- Maintenance of its tourism industry. The current trend of converting hotel space to condominiums may present significant challenges to the future vitality of beach-oriented tourism; and potentially a significant loss of jobs and tourism related income.

- Maintenance or development of high wage jobs and “import” industries. The current redevelopment study has identified the need to add wage importing jobs over the next twenty plus years if the County is to remain economically viable.
- Increasing ethnic and cultural diversification. Based on the 2000 Census 85.9% of county residents are Caucasian. This percentage is significantly higher than the other large urban Florida counties as shown in table 1. Given national trends, that proportion is likely to decrease in the future.

Table 1: Percentage of population that is Caucasian

Unit	% Caucasian
Broward	70.6
Hillsborough	75.2
Miami-Dade	69.7
Orange	68.6
Palm Beach	79.1
Pinellas	85.9
Florida	78.0
USA	75.1

- Housing costs. As with other urban and coastal areas, the cost of housing has risen significantly. This creates issues both for workforce housing and housing options for persons facing various life challenges. This issue has wide impact on economic development and redevelopment efforts as well as social service programs.
- Aging Housing, Commercial, and Industrial Inventory. A significant percentage (as much as a third) of single family housing is more than 40 years old. Creation of new housing stock at higher densities through redevelopment is needed. Aging commercial, industrial, and retail uses also are problematic. Articulation of the need for redevelopment is politically complex because the public perceives that redevelopment means higher

densities and higher density leads to higher population growth rates, more congestion, etc.

- The need for significant transportation and infrastructure investments. The county has clearly made significant investments and will need to continue to do so. These improvements will require challenging public policy decisions with respect to taxation, and redevelopment policies that create incentives for public use of alternative forms of transportation while reducing demand for additional roadways.
- The challenge of rationalizing local government service delivery in a jurisdictionally fragmented county. The county's multiple municipalities and special taxing districts create a highly complex and fragmented approach to service delivery. The challenge is creating more cost efficient and effective service delivery systems suited to a highly urbanized and built out county struggling with issues vastly different and much more complex than those it faced when the present governmental arrangements were put in place.
- Fragmentation of planning and growth management also presents significant challenges. The roles and relationships of the multiple local planning and growth management regulatory agencies must be rationalized to enable a coherent redevelopment and economic development strategy, and concurrency of major public service and infrastructure needs with the demands of new and redevelopment.
- Equally as challenging are the changing roles and relationships between state and local levels of government. Within Florida, state government continues to shift costs and responsibilities to local governments. As state government continues to sort out its priorities and approaches to critical service areas like transportation and Medicaid, it is likely that local governments will be asked to share more of the burden. Revenue options available to local governments are limited and largely controlled by State leaders reluctant to authorize new sources. Gaining public support for local option revenues and continuing to work with state leaders on revenue sources and service responsibilities will continue as major challenges in the immediate years ahead. The good news

in this regard is that Pinellas County Government has a strong tax base, a history of success with the use of the local option sales tax, unused gas tax and transportation surtax options, and strong bonding capacities.

- The maintenance of strong corporate leadership in the community. The wave of corporate mergers in the last ten to fifteen years, coupled with the emergence of Tampa as the regional corporate center, has created a shift in corporate leadership. There clearly exists a strong corporate community in Pinellas County. That leadership is not as visible as it historically has been in the past. Many in the community believe that significant community progress requires strong public-private partnerships. Maintaining significant corporate leadership is therefore an important concern.

Section Three

Specific external and internal challenges and uncertainties facing Pinellas County Government

Obviously, the challenges to the County as a whole are challenges for the culture, organization and operations of Pinellas County Government. However, there are additional external and internal challenges and uncertainties specifically facing Pinellas County Government. These include:

The organizational impact of annexations.

Over time the service delivery roles and relationships of cities and counties shift with the degree of urban development. As the process unfolds, a sense of “competition” often develops among local service providers. This is rooted in the tax base and revenue generating capacity gains and losses resulting from annexations. Unhealthy conflict between cities and the county (and often among cities) is one result. Another result of annexation pressures is the need for county government to adjust its role as a provider of municipal services to unincorporated areas that become annexed or are considered candidates for future annexations. To complicate matters, cities often provide certain municipal services to adjacent unincorporated residents; and counties sometimes provide contracted municipal services to residents of municipalities. To further confuse the picture, special districts (some independent of the county, some dependent) will be in the business of providing specialized municipal services to residents or contract with municipalities for such services in unincorporated places. Pinellas has all these configurations with their attendant problems and uncertainties.

From the county’s perspective there are two overriding concerns; the impact of annexations and the assignment of service delivery responsibility generally. The first is service rationalization so that unincorporated “pockets” are not created in which the cost of service delivery becomes excessive. The second is that the process is planned and orderly so that the county can plan for the

revenue shifts as well as ensure that the desires of the citizenry are respected.

It is of note that in the employee focus groups that annexation was identified as one of the two most critical issues the county needed to address. From the staff perspective annexations may have significant impact on their work in terms of new roles and/or new expectations.

Operational impacts of continued mandates and cost shifts.

Florida counties continue to face unfunded mandates and cost shifts in a variety of ways. As one example, shifts in approaches to Medicaid funding could increase the costs of indigent health care. These cost shifts bring on-going financial pressures to the counties as the place where real people with real needs that must be addressed live.

Transition in structure and leadership

Recently (from the perspective of an organization's life) county government has undergone significant changes in structure and leadership. At the policy level it has moved from five to seven members and just as significantly has moved from county wide elections to district elections for four of those members. These shifts have subtle impacts on organizational practice, requiring difficult adjustments in culture over time.

At the same time there was a shift at the county administrator level where a long term administrator departed and a new administrator from outside the county replaced him. Any administrative shift brings changes in management style and philosophy, in questions that are asked, in expectations. A new set of working relationships must be developed. Just as with the shift in Commission structure discussed above, the impacts of a new administrator take some time to evolve.

Perception of county government is determined by a number of factors. One key one is the working relationship between the board and the administrator.

Another key is the working relationships of board members. How these relationships work out in the everyday activities of meetings, presentations and other public venues shape public perception.

Both of these shifts are creating change in the operations and culture of county government. We examine those themes in our next two topics.

Organizational culture and employee attitudes

Conclusions here were reached on the basis of three data sources. Conversations with senior staff and SLT members, focus groups conducted with randomly selected staff and the independently conducted staff survey. Based on these data sources we would draw the following conclusions.

- There is a cultural transformation underway. We are not yet conversant enough with the organization to be able to describe that shift with precision. Based on our experience with other counties that have: a) shifted both Commission structure and appointed leadership in the same time period; b) instituted stronger performance management systems; c) faced increasing resource constraints; and d) are engaged in questions of future role, we would hypothesize the following factors are at work:
 1. The creation of single member districts creates a more “retail” oriented Commission that is often concerned with district-specific problems, and a level of operational detail that Commissions elected under a county-wide model are not. This is a very natural consequence of single member districts that always occurs in our experience. From the elected officials perspective they are simply doing constituent service. From a staff member’s perspective they experience this as the Commission focusing on small-scale segmented political issues, and interfering in the administration of programs and policies that heretofore have been countywide in character.
 2. New administrators have their own approaches which will elicit varied reactions from employees and board members. Each administrator brings his or her own experiences, philosophy, leadership style, values and priorities to the job. No two administrators are alike and the worse mistake a administrator can make is to seek to replicate the approach and

style of his or her predecessor. While we all may agree with this statement, it can still be very difficult to adjust to a new administrator, particularly one who succeeds a long-term incumbent. With a long-term incumbent staff have learned what to expect from the administrator, what he or she will ask, what the administrator's "hot buttons" will be, etc. A new administrator means all this knowledge has to be learned anew. This process can be demanding, frustrating and confusing, all of which emphasize the need for additional communication among the stakeholders.

3. The emphasis on performance management is fully proper and correct, but it can create unintended consequences. If performance management is implemented in a way that creates more formulaic work while reducing an employee's options for doing their work, we know from the research literature that a higher level of workplace stress will occur.
4. Increasing service demands coupled with restricted resources create more work pressures. For a number of years, local governments have been asked to do more with less. This trend shows no sign of abating, with departments having fewer and fewer flexible resources to address new issues or emergent topics. The unfortunate possibility (based on self-reports from many governments) is that for many long term employees public sector work is not as much fun as it used to be. As service demands increase, there is less opportunity to interact on a personal level with customers, less room to make choices about how to best solve an issue and there is simply more to get done in a day. These dynamics create frustrations and stress on the part of staff.
5. A lack of clarity about role and goal can create immobility. When employees are no longer sure of what role county government should assume, what the goals of the activity are, the tendency is to adopt a "wait and see" attitude. This is particularly true if attempts to clarify roles and goals have not gone well.
6. This cultural transformation is most difficult for the longer term employees. The logic of this is obvious. It does not mean that longer term employees cannot effectively provide the leadership to facilitate this culture change. Nor should it be read to assume that longevity equates to resistance. It simply means they have a greater history, have played a

stronger role in creating the current culture and are challenged and may become frustrated by the demands of providing leadership under changed circumstances.. Frustrations notwithstanding, longer term employees possess the institutional knowledge successful cultural change demands. Successful change must reappropriate the best of an organization's past into its present and future. Longer term employees are the fount of knowledge needed for this to occur. As frustrating as change can be for longer term employees, their leadership is desperately needed to make way for the future.

- Employees understand that important changes are coming to the county. For example, annexation was seen in the focus groups as a major challenge for the County. As the persons who actually deliver service every day, they experience the disconnections in service delivery; the illogical forms of service delivery that occur, the problems that exist when there are multiple layers of government overlapping. What those changes will be, and the possibility that they may negatively impact county employment, are the unknowns employees are struggling with understanding. In particular, employees understand that to be effective in the future, county government must:
 1. Communicate more effectively with the public;
 2. Be able to work in a cooperative manner with the municipalities
 3. Continue to maintain a position of technological competitiveness.
 4. Address and resolve the annexation and other intergovernmental and governance issues
 5. Invest in its workforce. For those county governments where a significant number of high level retirements are looming, these investments, particularly those in succession planning and career development will need to be made in the near future, to meet the challenge of continued quality public services.

- The ever present challenge of communication is alive and well in Pinellas County. Every employee survey we have ever seen puts "communication gaps" at or near the top of the list of employee concerns. The data here suggests the same priority is being expressed by county employees. We would offer the following perspectives on this issue drawn from our experiences of county governments statewide:

1. There is a paradox at work here. On the one hand people see lack of communication as a critical issue. On the other hand, everyone complains about information overload. Too many emails, too much paper, too many meetings.
 2. This suggests that the issue is not the amount of communication per se. The reality is that everyone suffers not from information underload but from information overload. More precisely, we have more data than we can process effectively, but we don't have the information we need to feel we know what is going on.
 3. We conclude that the challenge is not to communicate more facts but to communicate values, rationales and desired end results. As we have probed into this "communication problem" in other entities, employee frustration most often centers on "why". They ask or state: "why are we doing this?, this doesn't make sense to us! what are we trying to achieve here?" This suggests to us that the critical disconnect here is one of meaning and purpose. This includes communications across departments as well as intra-department.
- The good news is that there are long term employees. The bad news is that there are long term employees. The benefits of a stable workforce are obvious. The downside from an employee's perspective is that promotional opportunities may be few and far between. There is clearly a level of frustration among employees about this situation. Given current pressures to flatten organizations and increase spans of control, this particular situation in most governments may not easily resolve itself in the future. However, the projected number of retirements over the next 5 to 8 years in Pinellas County Government is likely to create a number of promotional opportunities.

County operations

Pinellas County government is a large, complex organization performing a wide range of tasks every day. Within that context, there are two key challenges we believe it faces. These are discussed below.

Work Silos.

This is an on-going challenge for any large organization. There is so much to do, there is such diversity of work, that it very easy to become fully focused on one's area of responsibility and lose sight of how that work may impact other county efforts. The siloing of work has been identified as a key organizational challenge by many parties to date in this project. Addressing this issue will require both structural and attitudinal approaches.

Managing the largest city in Pinellas County

As table 2 indicates, the unincorporated area consists of more persons than any city within the county. Since county government is in the municipal services business, it in effect is managing the largest functional city in the county. The management of this "city" creates a distinctive set of pressures on the county.

Table 2: 2004 Population estimates¹

UNINCORPORATED	284,306
Belleair	4,107
Belleair Beach	1,632
Belleair Bluffs	2,240
Belleair Shore	72
Clearwater	110,325
Dunedin	37,217
Gulfport	12,860
Indian Rocks Beach	5,288
Indian Shores	1,796
Kenneth City	4,539
Largo	72,817
Madeira Beach	4,504
North Redington Beach	1,543
Oldsmar	13,737
Pinellas Park	47,572
Redington Beach	1,592
Redington Shores	2,341
Safety Harbor	17,800
St. Petersburg	253,010

¹ Office of Economic and Demographic Research, the Florida Legislature

St. Pete Beach	10,004
Seminole	17,799
South Pasadena	5,837
Tarpon Springs	23,170
Treasure Island	7,532
PINELLAS	943,640

Communication with the public.

The ability to effectively engage the public to inform them of county activities and develop public consensus on solutions has been identified by Commissioners and staff as a key issue. Finding approaches that are effective and reliable will be an ongoing challenge.

Charter.

The Charter Review Commission will provide the opportunity to address some of the structural and functional issues facing the County. The issue facing County Government is to identify those issues it would request the Commission review. In future years, completing a strategic plan prior to Charter Review could be of benefit.

The role of County Government.

The overarching question facing county government is what role it takes in addressing the many issues facing Pinellas County. While its role is clearly defined in many cases, on other issues there are choices to be made. Many of the specific choices facing the county are discussed in section four. It is these choices that will determine the future direction of county government.

Section Four

Strategic framework: Strategic focus areas

Strategic frameworks and strategic focus areas: Definitions

Strategic planning in a county government, particularly one of the size of Pinellas County Government, has to address a wide variety of subject areas. County government works in several distinctively different businesses ranging from airport management to homeless services. This wide range of business makes a county government closer in complexity of organizational form and knowledge range to a corporate conglomerate than to any other organizational form.

This complexity of function requires that a framework for strategic planning be developed which recognizes the business diversity of county government. This framework must encompass all activities of the government while also organizing these businesses into units that represent the major businesses of the county. One purpose of a strategic framework is to organize the work of the organization into logically inter-related types of businesses. The strategic framework provides a summary of the types of business in which the county is engaged.

There is a second equally significant purpose of the strategic framework. It is to integrate strategic planning with execution of the plan. To do so the framework consists of four types of strategies that must be managed toward end results and goals. More often than not, all four types of strategies are needed for the results and goals of a strategic plan to be achieved. Creating a system that manages strategies is the second purpose of a strategic framework. These four types are shown as a quadrant as illustrated in figure 1.

- Service and Infrastructure Strategies. These are strategies that directly provide services or infrastructure needed for service delivery. It is these services that achieve the desired results of the plan.

- Governance and Stakeholder Relations Strategies. The successful execution of a strategic plan is first dependent upon managing relationships internally and externally. These relationships occur in formalized means such as governance structures and in working relationships. Successful management of relationship's requires attention to the details of the process through which the plan is both developed and executed. Developing and executing the strategic plan in ways that both maintain and build trust and confidence in the intended results, in the process and in the organization are key requirements to achieve the intended results.
- Resource Optimization Strategies. Executing the plan requires that resources (financial, capital and human) be properly allocated and managed. Failure to control costs, failure to energize and engage staff, failure to maintain or utilize capital equipment or facilities will lead to poor execution.
- Future planning strategies. In turbulent, dynamic environments the half-life of a strategic plan is rather short. In reality, the strategic plan is under constant adjustment and adaptation. It offers a roadmap, not a fixed scientific procedure. Therefore the strategic planning process, and the following strategy management system, should encourage and foster a culture of learning and change. Successful execution requires continuous environmental scanning and strategic thinking. The plan provides the intellectual platform, not the daily to do list. Successful execution requires that change be managed in a strategic context of desired goals and results, recognizing that strategies, pathways and specific actions come and go as appropriate. This requires an organization with the appropriate values and culture to flexibly meet the intent of the strategies, not the letter of the plan.

Figure 1: Strategic Planning and Execution Framework

<p><i>Governance & Relationship</i> Strategies: Managing relationships and process</p>	<p><i>Services & Infrastructure</i> Strategies: Delivering results in business areas (Strategic results by Focus area)</p>
<p>Resource Optimization Strategies: Managing resources</p>	<p>Planning for the Future Strategies: Creating a culture of learning and change</p>

Figure 2 describes the overall relationship of the strategic plan to its execution. Execution occurs through a strategy management system.

The strategy management system is

1. The processes through which strategies are turned into business plans with budgets, staff resources, timelines and assigned leaders along with measurable deliverables.
2. The process through which progress on deliverables is tracked.
3. The process through which the strategic plan is updated.
4. The process through which on-going decisions are tested against the intent of the strategic plan.
5. The process through which the work of individual employees is linked to the intent of the strategic plan.

Figure 2: Strategy Management System

<p style="text-align: center;">Governance & Relationship Strategies:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Business Plans Tracking systems Updating systems Decision review systems Line of sight systems</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Services & Infrastructure Strategies:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Business Plans Tracking systems Updating systems Decision review systems Line of sight systems</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Resource Optimization Strategies:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Business Plans Tracking systems Updating systems Decision review systems Line of sight systems</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Planning for the Future Strategies:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Business Plans Tracking systems Updating systems Decision review systems Line of sight systems</p>

Strategic Focus Areas for Pinellas County

The interviews and document reviews conducted in this stage yielded a strategic framework model that was then presented and discussed with the BCC in workshop 1. The BCC agreed that this framework was both logical and comprehensive. It represents the organizing framework for the remainder of the project. This framework is summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Strategic Framework	
Strategic Focus Area	Distinguishing Characteristics
Transportation and Utilities	Physical infrastructure and public programs that are concerned with the movement of people, goods and services, and the provision of water, sewer, solid waste and stormwater disposal.
Economic Development, Redevelopment and Housing	Programs and services that focus on the economic vitality of the community.
Public Safety	Programs and services concerned with the protection and safety of persons and property.
Environment, Open Space and Recreation and Culture	Programs, services and properties that provide passive and active recreation for people while protecting habitat, green space or sensitive lands.
Health and Human Services	Programs and services that promote public health and provide a social safety net.
Effective Government	External and internal support processes through which the other strategic focus areas are accomplished or relationships with other bodies (such as municipalities, etc) which lead to accomplishments in the other strategic focus areas and optimize delivery of services to citizens.

Section Five

Strategic Choices: Key role and strategy decisions facing the County

Strategic choices set the direction. The direction in turn determines the strategic results that we seek. The strategic choices that have been identified in this preliminary scan, organized by strategic focus area, include the following questions or statements.

Strategic Focus Area: Transportation and Utilities

- Do we want to see a more integrated approach to transportation? If so, what role do we wish to play in achieving that integration?
- What investments do we wish to make for enhanced potable water quality? Is the county prepared to invest significant capital \$ to maintain a standard of potable water quality? Are we comfortable with varying levels of potable water quality in the county?
- What role do we want to take (more proactive/authoritative role) in implementing alternative (to roads) transportation solutions? (has BoCC relied on other entities to “handle”?; Should that change?). Should we take role of leader in this arena?
- Do we want to try and take a lead on trying to integrate the many efforts ongoing regarding transportation?
- What role do we want in regional transportation issues
- To what type of transportation improvements do we wish to allocate our resources?
- Should we be the County water provider?
- Do we want to develop a Countywide stormwater entity – regional facilities vs. series of small retention basins?
- What will be the County’s role in meeting TMDL requirements?
- Do we want a countywide approach to septic system replacement and pollution concerns?
- Should we review our role in water distribution?

- Should we regulate trash service? Do we want to confirm MSBU franchise approach to trash collection for the future?

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Development, Redevelopment and Housing

- Does the County wish to take a different role in redevelopment? What is the role of the county in redevelopment? In planning; in managing?
- Does the County wish to develop a new approach to growth management?
- Does the County wish to actively promote attainable housing in the County?
- What role do we want in affordable housing?
- What role, if any, do we have with respect to mobile home conversions?
- What role do we want to take in growth management?
- What role is appropriate in the hotel/condo conversion issue?
- What role can we take in redevelopment? What role do we want? What role do we take in funding of redevelopment?
- What is the BoCC role if communities are in disagreement over housing strategies?
- What active role in “workforce” housing for police, teachers, etc. (as opposed to strict affordable housing view) do we want to play?
- What do we really want to see occur through redevelopment?
- Do we define economic development to include retention, recruitment, business development?

Strategic Focus Area: Effective Government

- What is the role of the county in the provision of municipal services in the future? How should responsibilities for the delivery of services in PC be changed among all public entities? What service mechanisms best meet public need?
- What does the county see as its role in Fire and EMS services administration and regulation?
- Should governance and administrative responsibility for mass transit be changed?
- What does effectiveness look like in county government?

- Is the focus of the organization on efficiency, effectiveness or value?

Strategic Focus Area: Health and Human Services

- What role does the County wish to take with respect to health and human services?
- To what degree are we willing to supplant federal and state funding? What level of commitment are we willing to make?

Strategic Focus Area: Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture

- What is the role of county government in recreation and culture?
- What uses do we want for county acquired open space?
- Do we want to ensure public access to waterways?
- Should County have role in historic preservation?
- Should historic preservation role of County be limited to unincorporated areas, or within municipalities as well?

Strategic Focus Area: Public Safety

- Are there overarching functions that should be provided by the sheriff? What law enforcement functions are best carried out by the Sheriff?
- Is this community willing to consider alternatives to incarceration as we plan for new correction facilities? Should we complement jail expansion with appropriate front end prevention and treatment programs?
- Do we want a strategic direction that ensures we have a highly capable and responsive disaster response and recovery system?
- Is there more of a role for County in early preparation and evacuation before a disaster, e.g. possible partnership with Churches?

Pinellas County Government Strategic Planning Project
6 December 2004
Employee Focus Groups Report

Introduction

Information from five focus groups is organized by each question topic and presented in response tables with the consensus/majority items shaded for each group. Following each table presentation for the question, key notes are presented as a summary. The final Infrastructure focus group information is presented separately. General impressions, comments, and focus group participant lists are presented at the conclusion of the report.

<i>1. If Pinellas County government (PCG) is to be effective in the future, what two issues does it need to address today?</i>					
Consensus/Majority Response Categories	Directors/Administrators 2 Groups n=24		Line Staff 3 Groups n=39		
	Group #1=10	Group #3=14	Group #2=14	Group #4=14	Group #5=11
a. Annexation Issues	X	1	X	1	X
b. Cooperation among municipalities	1	X			
c. Better long-term planning	X	X			
d. Improving Internal/external communications	2	X	1	X	2
e. Transportation		2			
f. Using 21 st century technology	X	X			
g. Employee Issues/Relations, Hiring, Communications	X	X	2	2	1
h. Increasing revenue/increasing taxes	X				

KEY: 1 = TOP RANKED ITEM, 2 = SECOND RANKED ITEM, X = ITEM IDENTIFIED BY GROUP

- The most important issue identified by the two **Director/Administrator groups** was actually a combination of a, b, and c above: effective strategic planning that encompasses annexation issues and produces a proactive plan for improving cooperation among municipalities in areas of duplication, redundancy, and resource leveraging.
- There was not agreement by Directors/Administrators on the other important issue. One group strongly perceived the internal/external communications area had to be a priority, while the other group perceived transportation issues should be the priority.
- Among the Line Staff, the highest priorities are given to employee relations and management issues—hiring practices, improving diversity, training, advancement pace, benefits and to internal/external communications with an emphasis in two areas:
 - i. Internal communications: clear policies; communicating management decisions; technology use; closure on previous changes (what happened with the last set of changes); and other employee communications.
 - ii. External communications: better education of the public; better preparation to response to diverse population in Pinellas County (e.g., Spanish language); and elimination/modification of Commissioners having direct communications/management of employees to override policy or handle situations brought to the Commissioners by County residents with grievances about personal treatment, County procedures, policies or laws.

2. How would the average employee describe working for Pinellas County Government?

Consensus/Majority Response Categories	Director/Administrator 2 Groups n=24		Line Staff 3 Groups n=39		
	Group #1=10	Group #3=14	Group #2=14	Group #4=14	Group #5=11
a. That it is a stable and rewarding environment and the best place to work (especially for employees <5 years)	X	X	X	X	
b. Many longer term employees (>five years) are eager to leave and do not like the changes		X	X		
c. There have been many changes in the past three years with employee benefits that are perceived to have negatively affected employee morale			X	X	X
d. There is a strong "silo" culture that hampers productivity and limits workplace improvements	X				X
e. There have been many changes in management practices that are perceived to have produced a significant erosion of job satisfaction, especially among longer term employees (>5 years)	X				X
f. Stagnation, slow advancement, with vertical advancement almost impossible and very little in lateral movement.	X	X		X	X
g. Resentful of Commissioners' pressures and increasing micromanagement	X			X	X
h. Have fears of uncertainty and privatization trends		X			

3. <i>If an employee has an idea for improving something, what happens?</i>					
Consensus/Majority Response Categories	Director/Administrator 2 Groups n=24		Line Staff 3 Groups n=39		
	Group #1=10	Group #3=14	Group #2=14	Group #4=14	Group #5=11
a. A universal formal process exists for submitting cost-saving improvements	X		X	X	X
b. There is no uniform informal management standard for employee ideas. Some departments are highly encouraging, while others are completely discouraging. It is a mixed bag throughout the County.	X	X	X	X	X

- This question did not evoke much interest or discussion in any of the focus groups.
- If these focus groups are representational, It does not appear that employee innovation is a strong element of the organizational culture, nor is it an area of priority employee interest.

4. How would the average citizen describe Pinellas County Government?					
Consensus/Majority Response Categories	Director/Administrator 2 Groups n=24		Line Staff 3 Groups n=39		
	Group #1=10	Group #3=14	Group #2=14	Group #4=14	Group #5=11
a. Couldn't describe it because they are confused.	X	X	X	X	X
b. Much more public education, public relations is needed for the public to be able to understand because of the complexity of municipalities and the role of the County.	X	X	X	X	X
c. When citizens attend outreach events that explain what the County actually does, they express amazement and appreciation.		X			X

- The overall feeling is that much more public education and outreach is needed.

5. For the citizen who interacts with county government, what is the experience like?					
Consensus/Majority Response Categories	Director/Administrator 2 Groups n=24		Line Staff 3 Groups n=39		
	Group #1=10	Group #3=14	Group #2=14	Group #4=14	Group #5=11
a. The experience is very positive because employees have been trained to try their best to help the public.	X	X	X		
b. Employees view themselves as public servants who are committed to helping.	X	X			
c. Sometimes a person calling in will get ping-ponged from one department to another in a "telephone hell" and that is a very negative experience.			X	X	X
d. Citizens, often very problematic individuals, have learned they can complain directly to the Commissioners or act out at public meetings causing so much trouble that they will get their way on something, even if it is a violation of County policy or procedure. These incidents often impact employees very negatively when they must handle the practical end of these interactions. However the citizen experiences them very positively, but from adversarial position.	X	X	X	X	X
e. Citizens have learned to use email and send copies to everyone to bring significant attention to their personal issue or problem that is out of proportion and creates many problems for employees and administrators.	X	X			
f. The public experiences certain enforcing departments very negatively; other departments such as Human Services may also be a negative experience if they do not meet criteria to be helped.			X	X	

g. Disaster assistance is experience very positively as is any interaction in which the response time is very fast.	X	X		X	

6. *As we think about planning for the future of Pinellas County Government, are there other key points you would want to make?*

Consensus/Majority Response Categories	Director/Administrator 2 Groups n=24		Line Staff 3 Groups n=39		
	Group #1=10	Group #3=14	Group #2=14	Group #4=14	Group #5=11
a. Increasing revenues, taxes, resources	X	X			X
b. Centralization versus consolidation of a metropolitan government—what will Pinellas County Government be?	X	X			X
c. Technology use in the 21 st century	X	X	X		
d. “Brain drain” of the retirement of long tenured employees that will happen		X			
e. Changing the silo culture			X		X
f. Effective outreach to the public	X	X			
g. Affordable housing	X	X			
h. Departmental consolidation – doing more with less	X	X			
i. Redevelopment	X	X			
j. Transportation	X	X	X		
k. Privatization trends—how is that going to impact PCG					X
l. What kind of employee training is needed				X	X

The reader should note the differing response patterns between the Director/Administrator groups and the Line Staff groups in terms of issues. As might be expected, there are a broader range of concerns among the director/administrator groups.

General Comments and Observations

- The older, longer-term employees in the focus groups show some resentment of changes in the organizational culture.
- Some departments perceive a much greater need of more training to manage the public:
 - Enforcing or regulating departments
 - Departments offering services for which criteria must be met to receive
 - Departments dealing with minority populations, non-English speaking, etc.
- The management of change within the organization is perceived by focus group participants to be capricious, flavor-of-the-month, or trying to imitate some other County—none of which are viewed as legitimate rationale for change in Pinellas. There is also a lack of closure on previous changes within the organization—What happened to the balanced scorecard? What were the results? Are we there yet? Are we still doing it? Too much change without closure, feedback, or a perceived credible rationale, creates an increased resistance to further change and cynicism or resentment.

Strategic Focus Area:

**Environment,
Open Spaces,
Recreation & Culture**



Strategic Plan:

Pinellas County Government

Strategic Focus Area:

Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation &
Culture

Preliminary approval given by the BCC on October 25, 2005

Final adoption by BCC on February 14, 2006

Distinguishing characteristics of this focus area:

This focus area includes those functions, activities and physical infrastructure of County Government that support environmental, recreation & cultural resources in Pinellas County. Pinellas County has invested substantial resources to acquire and protect environmentally important lands, as preserves and community parks. The Penny for Pinellas was a primary funding tool to acquire many of these sites, as well as develop extensive passive recreational and educational facilities.

A highlighted feature of the Penny for Pinellas has been the creation of substantial trails networks, including the Pinellas Trail. The land and recreational infrastructure developed over the past two decades has clearly become a hallmark of the community. The environmental sustainability culture embraced in Planning to Stay bases a substantial portion of its foundation on the preservation of quality open spaces and recreational options for residents and visitors. The County has identified that its ecological resources, including outstanding waterways and beaches, should remain a focal point for community identity.

In preparation of the next twenty years of environmental stewardship and community recreational asset management, Pinellas retained a team of consultants to study community needs and assets. The team, lead by the firm of Glatting Jackson, recently presented its final plan, entitled the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan. The Plan calls for seven major initiatives to “make Pinellas County a more livable and sustainable place to live, work and raise a family...” The County Commissioners have reviewed its findings, and accepted the plan and its conclusions.

Concurrent with Glatting Jackson’s efforts, the Pinellas Arts Council championed a companion document focusing on the cultural resources and goals of the community. Its key conclusions were also reviewed and embraced by the County Commissioners. Among its key goals is to increase the financial investments into existing cultural programs.

This strategic element focuses on those actions and roles that pertain to supporting these two major planning initiatives, in an effort to ensure that implementation is timely and successful. The implementation phase will involve cooperation, and at times partnerships, with other local governments, non-profit entities and private sector businesses.

Implementation also contemplates the renewal of the Penny for Pinellas for an additional decade, as identifies this revenue as the major funding source for much of the recreational components of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan. With a successful renewal of the Penny for Pinellas, the County will transition from a role of providing mainly passive and preserve facilities, into the development of limited active recreational facilities for all County residents. The Plans \$339 Million 15-year capital improvement plan can be funded at fundamentally the same level as historically invested from Penny allocations into environmental and recreation facilities.

Environmental scan

- Public concerns and priorities:
 - High levels of approval ratings for trail and parks/preserve facilities in citizen and business surveys.
 - High indicators of support for continuation of Penny for Pinellas for recreational purposes, and environmental programs.
 - General municipal support for MSTU approach for recreational subsidies for unincorporated residents and grant program.
 - High levels of support for Pinellas trail.
 - Concern over loss of water access points – beach and boat ramp/marinas.
 - Slow increases in user visits to preserve facilities.

- **Building and Social developments:**
 - Trails, parks and playgrounds among top 5 most important amenities for new homebuyers. (2002 survey by National Assoc. of Homebuilders and National Assoc. of Realtors)
 - Communities proximity to parks and greenways correlated directly to increased property values, tax revenues, attraction to business.
 - Trend toward “Mega-Recreation Centers” with one stop shopping with indoor and outdoor facilities, aquatics, and senior components.
 - **In 2004, 75% of conservation or parks referendums nationally approved by voters. Livable communities as local Pinellas emphasis.**

- Environmental and Planning trends:
 - Bird populations (Osprey) are up, as are fish populations, due to improving water quality.
 - Land use policies shifting toward linkages between neighborhoods, with trails and pedestrian walkways.
 - Continued emphasis of roadway trails as an extension of greenways system, with streetscape enhancements, bicycle trail enhancements and similar improvements.
 - Nexus between recreational goals and planning incentives through Livable Communities effort.

Part One:

The Vision – The economy we need for a quality community.

1. Community Expectations: What the Community desires in environment, open space, recreation and culture system policy and programs. (See Figure 1.)

Community expectations express what the general citizen desires with respect to the environmental resources, recreational amenities, and cultural resources in the County. Citizen expectations have been perhaps more closely studied in this strategic focus area than any of the other topics. The Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan scope included an extensive community engagement piece done in the form of a survey. The effort reached over 1200 citizens, who returned a detailed mail survey. The outreach yielded information on the met and unmet needs of the community in terms of recreational and cultural facilities. Its wide range included municipal as well as county assets, yielding detailed information that helped create the foundation of the Plan's major initiatives and specific plans.

In this survey, as in previous citizen opinion efforts, the majority of citizens cite a strong support for the County's past environmental lands acquisitions, and trails improvement efforts. However, a key new finding is the need for additional "active" recreational facilities. Active recreational needs of County residents have been primarily served by municipalities, and private for and not-for-profit facilities. The reimbursement of MSTU funds to cities has been one significant financial contribution

method by the County. However, the needs assessment suggests that two major sports complexes should be constructed in the northern and southern reaches of the County. The County is identified as the coordinating agency best suited to lead the development of these centers.

Unlike other areas where citizen desires and wants are often not supported by an equivalent enthusiasm for tax support by voters, 63% of this survey respondents expressed direct support for renewal of the Penny for Pinellas as a principle funding source for their recreational, environmental and cultural desires.

Other needs and priorities cited by community residents include:

- Additional art and cultural facilities and programs.
- Aquatic centers and water parks.
- Additional beach access, and on/off beach parking areas.
- An additional deep water boat ramp in north county, and facility improvements at other boating ramps.
- Improved canoe/kayak launches and rentals.
- Enhanced and extended hiking/walking/bicycling paths.
- **Protection of natural resources and preserves.**

In the area of business and economic development, business owners have consistently linked the County's quality of life as a business attribute. In the most recent bi-annual survey (2004), 86% of the respondents agreed that improving recreation assets increases new business attractiveness to the County, 95% rate recreational areas, parks and beaches as excellent or good, and 80% rates arts and entertainment as excellent or good. Thus, recreational facilities and natural resources, such as the water and beaches, also fill a role in economic development. Based on the extensive public sentiments collected, certain key public perceptions can be culled. These include:

- **Strong value placed on natural resources and the environment.** The community's hallmark theme, "Planning to Stay," envisions a Pinellas County where generations can remain in a community with the values and attributes that reflect high qualities of life. Protection of existing

natural areas, and passive access for residents to open natural areas through non-motorized methods, is one expression of retention of a quality community. The citizens at large appear to agree that the County government should avoid inappropriate encroachments into these areas.

- **Access to active recreational facilities.** Both older and younger residents of Pinellas are involved in many recreational sports and activities. As a consequence, residents have expressed clearly that additional facilities, small and large, should be provided by the County to help meet a growing demand of users.
- **Value arts and culture.** This reflects the value residents place on strong cultural activities in the County. A near unanimous majority polled link arts, cultural and heritage programs with improved quality of life. Similar perspectives are found in the business community, where many cite cultural programs as one important measure new businesses apply in their decision-making process.
- **Wise investments.** This is the expectation that public funds will be legitimately and efficiently used and that investments will be maintained. The citizens seem to support and approve of the past investments made by the County for environmental and recreational facilities through sources such as the Penny for Pinellas.

2. Results: What Pinellas County Government will deliver to meet community expectations.

Results are impacts that a particular entity, such as Pinellas County Government, is striving to make. Within the context of general community expectations, results are the contributions a specific entity, such as Pinellas County Government, can make toward the community expectations. As shown in Figure 1, when results are achieved, community expectations are met in part or whole.

Within a strategic focus area, the results express the “bottom line” impacts sought by the policy board.

Within the Strategic Focus Area of Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation & Culture, Pinellas County Government seeks five results. These are:

1. Protection of remaining environmentally significant resources. Substantially all remaining natural areas of environmental significance should be preserved and protected. This result includes those lands already owned by public entities such as the County, as well as the acquisition of remaining pockets of properties that possess environmental values.

2. A strong network of trails is available for walking, biking and hiking. Pinellas County has a premier trail system, featuring the Pinellas Trail that extends from north to south throughout the County. This trail, in combination with connector trails, will be available for citizens who wish to travel the County for work or leisure. Trails and pedestrian walkways will also be available at the neighborhood level so that outdoor experiences are accessible to as many citizens as possible.

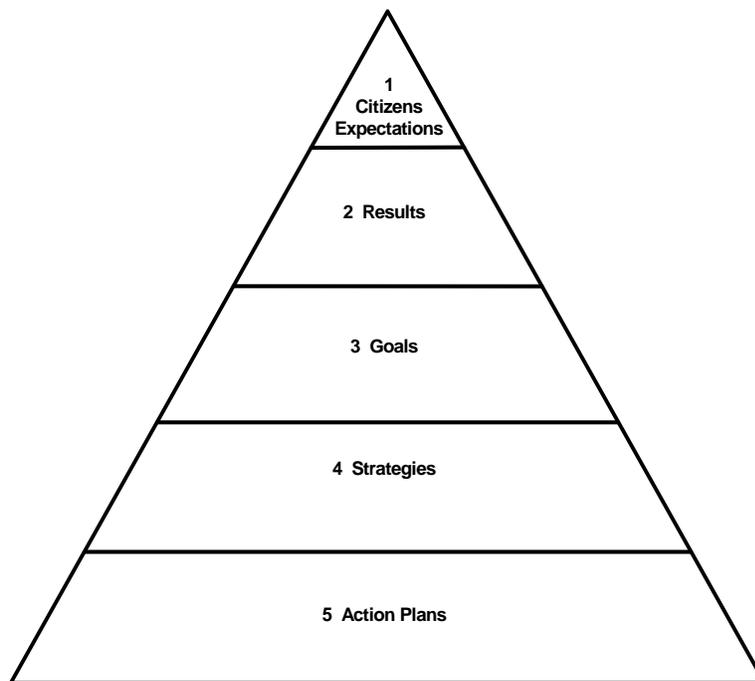
3. Pinellas County is a community of lively cultural events and opportunities. Art, music and cultural assets of wide variety add to the rich experiences available in Pinellas County. Cultural experiences can affect a wide range of age and economic strata, beginning in primary school and extending through a lifetime. Arts, cultural and heritage programs are one of the assets that make the quality of life in Pinellas County so rich.

4. Systems of regional, community and neighborhood parks and recreational centers offer a full scope of recreational options for citizens. Parks provide both passive and active recreational options, depending upon their capacity, location and purpose. Each

facility fills a need that may be unique to its site. Some preserves contain important environmental resources, and offer only passive human use managed in a way to protect natural areas, allowing limited human exposure with minimal impacts. Other parks are designed and improved with a multitude of activity areas, ranging from ball fields, aquatic centers, golf courses, ball courts and other sport facilities.

5. Preserved and protected investments. The County's Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation and Cultural facilities and sites are well managed and maintained.

Figure 1: Developing the Strategic Plan



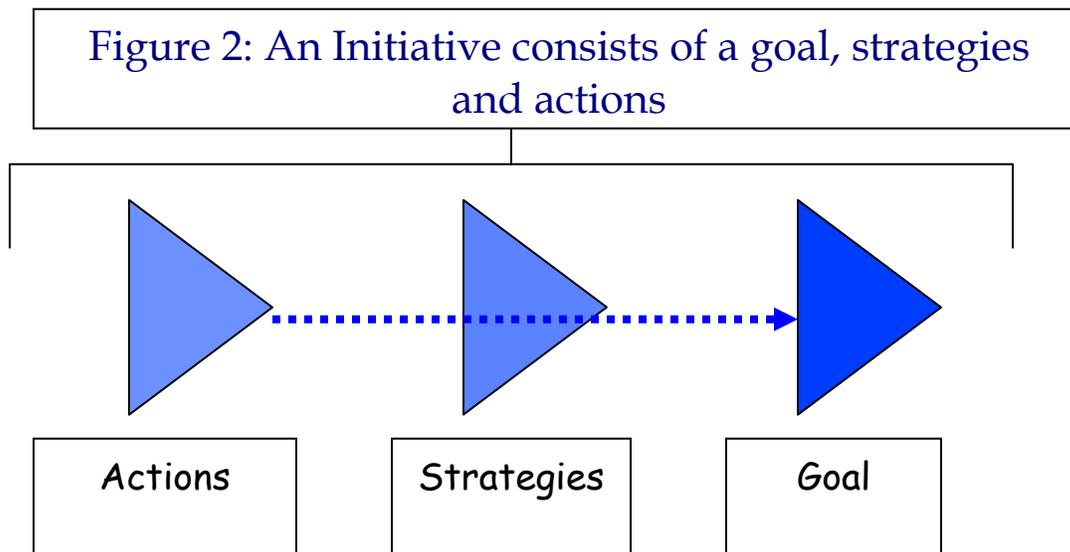
Part Two:

Developing the envisioned services through seven initiatives.

Goals, Strategies and Actions to create Results

What is an Initiative?

An initiative is a program of work intended to lead to one or more of the results. It is comprised of a goal; a set of strategies or pathways, which should lead to the goal, and a set of specific actions that will take place that will lead to the goal. To achieve these results, PINELLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT will engage in seven initiatives. As stated, each initiative is built around a goal (and named after the goal) and uses appropriate strategies and actions (tactics) that will achieve that goal as shown in Figure 2.



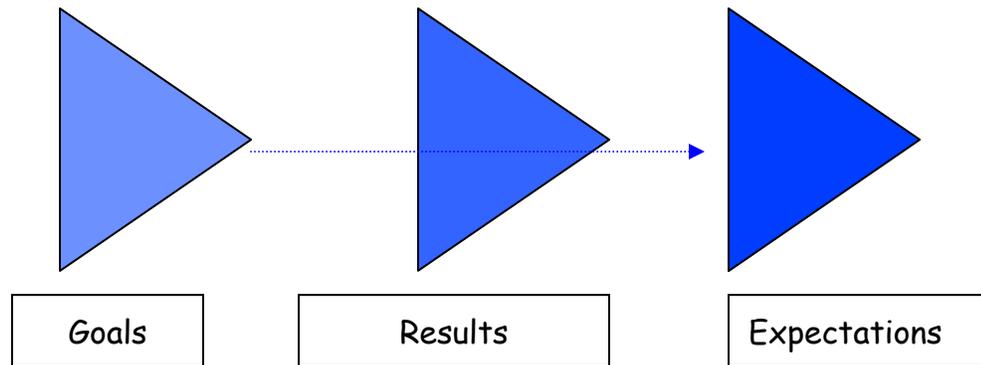
3. Goals

Achieving the following goals will create in Pinellas County the desired Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation & Culture outcomes described in Part 1, Figure 1 of this plan. Achieving these goals will produce the results the County is seeking and thereby meet community expectations as shown in Figure 3. In the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan these goals were referred to as “the Big Ideas” and listed as Major Initiatives.

- **Promote a Sustainability Ethic in Pinellas County.** The foundation of this goal is to ensure that ecological limits and environmental impacts are considered during all aspects of community design, from energy efficiency in buildings to transportation system solutions. Sustainability principles, practices and indicators will be brought into policy debate and decision-making on a broad basis.
- **Strengthen Connections to Water.** Outstanding water bodies uniquely surround Pinellas County. For many residents, the water was a main reason for coming and staying in Pinellas. The County will promote and expand recreational access to the surrounding waters, and utilize this natural asset as a keystone community attribute.
- **Lead the development of outstanding countywide systems.** The County’s preserves, historical and cultural sites, regional passive parks, greenways and blueways, and bicycle/pedestrian trails form a system of recreational and environmental systems that span nearly every corner of Pinellas County. This goal seeks to ensure that the system is updated and improved as the County transforms into its final built-out state. Trail, roadway and sign design standards are among the first components of upgraded features sought in this goal.

- Provide urban levels of active recreation facilities in unincorporated areas. In an effort to meet the needs and expectation of residents in unincorporated areas, the County will expand its efforts to develop community centers, community parks and sports complexes to serve the entire County. Concurrently, the County will seek partnerships with municipalities, the School Board and non-profit agencies for ongoing operations and maintenance.
- Inject life, color and energy into regional parks and preserves. The County's regional parks and preserves is a classic system of passive parks. Without compromising the environmental integrity of these facilities, the County will explore ways to build a broader base of compatible activities that will draw in users and be relevant to today's "lifestyles." Examples might include outdoor classrooms, educational exhibits and kiosks, canoe and kayak rentals, public art, gardens and other amenities.
- Increase protection of regional parks and preserves. The long-term protection of the County's preserves and passive parks is fundamental. The County will ensure that the natural resources of our preserves are guided by pro-active plans that set clear policies for management of these assets. In addition, plans will exam surrounding management zones to minimize off-site influences.
- Promote the Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation. Promote Arts and Culture and Historic Resources through investments and raised awareness for the existing non-profit facilities and programs. Art through design, both in public and private building and infrastructure, can add to the vitality of the County and community.

Figure 3: Accomplishing goals leads to results which meet expectations



What is strategy?

Strategy is figuring out how to optimize your assets and minimize your weaknesses in order to reach your goal. Like in other focus areas, PINELLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT has four fundamental types of assets it can use to achieve its Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation & Culture goals. Based on these four types of assets there are four corresponding categories of strategy:

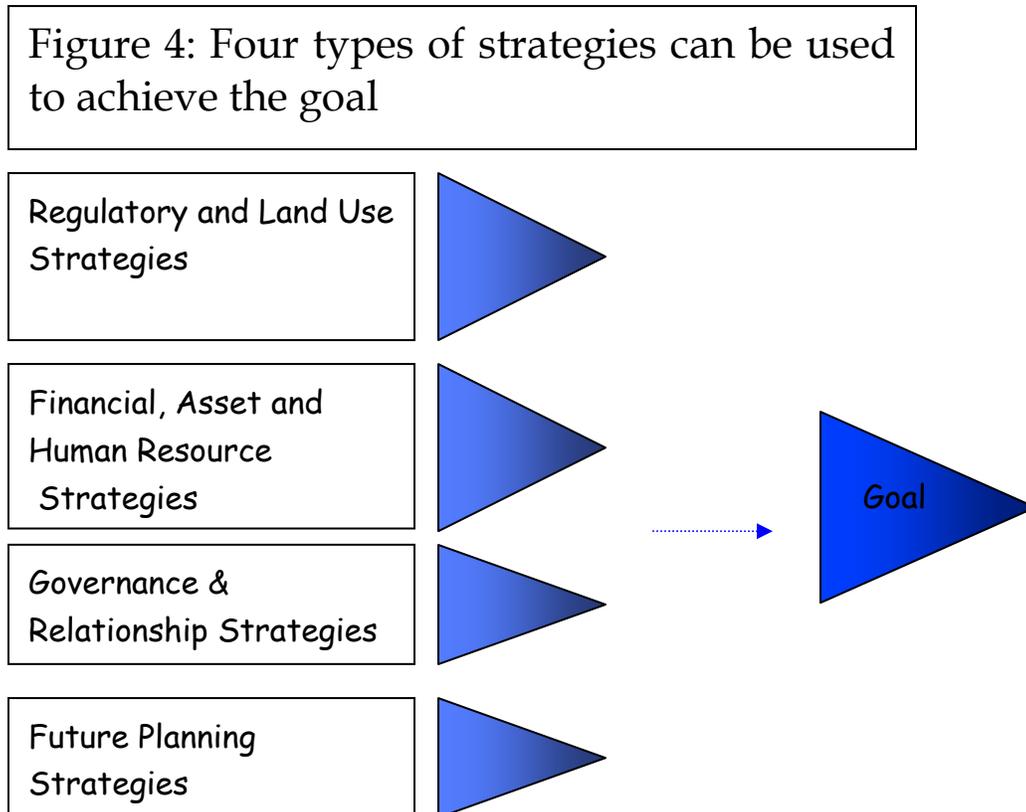
- **Regulatory and Land Use based strategy**

encompasses the planning and policy based plans and regulations that direct public and private investments in environmental, open space, recreation and culture developments. These plans and regulations provide the foundation that sets the parameters for those physical assets that need to be constructed, and directs resources through either mandated or incentive based policies.

Financial, Asset and Human Resources strategy encompasses the financial, physical and human assets which fund environmental, open space, recreation and culture development, and conduct operations. These assets include physical infrastructure (preserves, parks and similar properties), capital assets (improvements and equipment) and the services that make those physical assets usable.

- **Governance and Relationships strategy** covers the working and funding relationships among various stakeholders that make the system function, and leverage resources to the benefit of residents and visitors.
- **Planning and Future Thinking strategy** covers the knowledge about the system, future needs and how those needs can be met.

These four types of strategies are combined in an initiative to achieve the goal as shown in Figure 4.



4. Strategies & 5. Actions

Within each strategy type, there are specific pathways or strategies that PINELLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT seeks to deploy or influence in order to achieve its Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation and Culture goals. Along each pathway there are specific actions that would occur. The strategies and some actions the county can use include:

Regulatory and land use strategies.

- Codify the key policies and visions of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan in the County's Comprehensive Plan (Recreation and Open Space Element).
 - Action: Staff will review appropriate plan changes, including County's Level of Service (LOS) standards, and prepare revisions as appropriate to achieve consistency.
- Consider revisions to the County's Land Development Regulations to require the construction of neighborhood parks in new developments.
 - Action: Staff to review appropriate plan and code changes, and present options to appointed and elected boards.
- Revise the County's Roadway Design Standards to require street trees, bike lanes, wide, multi-use bicycle/pedestrian paths and safety/ADA features on all new/improved roadways as appropriate.
 - Action: Planning, Parks and Public Works staff will coordinate efforts to ensure that recommendations are incorporated into plans and projects.
- Review options for policies regarding open space and golf course land conversions.
 - Action: Staff to review appropriate plans and code changes, and present a range of options to County Commissioners.

Resource optimization and funding strategies

- Accept and promote the priority capital programs identified in the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan.
 - Action: Promote public understanding of the projects and priorities called for in the Plan.
 - Action: Promote the project support and understanding of key funding partners and stakeholders.
- BCC will finalize review of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations, including funding proposal for a capital program over a 15-year period through a renewed Penny for Pinellas.
 - Action: In-depth discussion and review by the BCC of the proposed \$339 million, fifteen year programmatic program with respect to both capital projects and O&M costs.
 - Identify partnerships and other financial sources for ongoing operations and maintenance costs, including specific partnerships in the venues of arts and active recreation.
 - Action: Study methods to leverage local dollars against other public and private funding sources.
- Consider Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations regarding increased investments in arts and cultural programs and organizations. Adopt action plan to increase per capita spending to be at par with top Florida communities.
 - Action: Identify multiple funding strategies – including public and business support.
 - Increase marketing of cultural activities and destinations to visitors and residents to increase usage and diversify tourism base.
 - Consider Tourism Development Tax resources that can be appropriately leveraged to assist in cultural marketing and other qualifying programs.
- Continue to utilize MSTU grants and partnerships with municipalities who provide recreational services to unincorporated residents.

- Forge new partnerships with municipalities and non-profits to manage and operate active recreational facilities constructed with principally County resources, to improve efficiencies and equitably share burdens.
- Pursue revenue neutral or revenue enhanced options for acquiring and expanding additional boating access facilities.
 - Action: Staff will proactively pursue opportunities to develop and expand boating ramps, without negatively impacting environmental resources. First priority facilities are noted in Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan (minimum of one deep water ramp in north, central and south areas of the County).
- Review options for Toytown and Struthers parcels for active recreational development and redevelopment, including a review of all recreational components.
 - Action: Staff will bring a range of alternatives for Toytown and Struthers sites to Board for policy discussion.
- Review options for AIRCO site.
- Continue to pursue naming rights, vendor opportunities and other revenue enhancement measures.

Governance and relationships strategies

- Institutionalize Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations regarding close coordination between County departments, local governments, and other agencies to maximize benefits and minimize conflicts of every public and private project and initiative.
 - Action: Staff will systemize inter- and intra-agency efforts, and strive for high levels of leveraged opportunities.
- Coordinate with the School Board to provide for after-hours use of school parks, playgrounds and gymnasiums.
 - Action: Staff to coordinate efforts with school district peers.
 - Action: Commit to ongoing dialogue with School Board to proactively identify challenges of joint use programs, and find solution-based alternatives.
- Consider Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations to forge new and expanded funding partnerships with

municipalities and non-profits to manage and operate recreational facilities on County sites.

- Build from MSTU foundation to strengthen relationships and form new operational agreements that ensures efficiencies and optimum service levels.
- Consumer engagement.
 - Broader citizen engagement to improve awareness of recreation needs and plans:
 - Develop educational material around flagship projects and facility proposals.
 - Develop strategies for dialogue in community settings to build support around Penny for Pinellas reauthorization.

Planning and future development strategies

- Link Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan into Livable Communities efforts, transportation CIP plans and transit concepts.
- Establish benchmarks and measurable indicators to monitor progress of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan.
 - Action: Staff will prepare and implement system monitoring and review conclusions with Board on periodic basis.

Strategic Business Plan:

Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation & Culture



1. Overview of Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Strategic Focus Area

Today, over 30 years of land acquisition by the county have set aside over 12 percent of our natural lands in public ownership, managed for a passive recreation or environmental purpose. The county boasts a world class regional passive park system, a network of managed environmental lands in an otherwise urban county, exemplary recreational boating amenities, an award-winning trail system, and interpretive centers for natural and cultural history that instill a sense of appreciation and stewardship for the county's history and lands among residents and visitor's alike. We are a model of a well-rounded urban community, fortunate to have an extensive natural backdrop to intersperse our larger urban area. The county could not have accomplished this without the unwavering trust and support of its citizens for successive land acquisition referenda and the one cent infrastructure sales tax.

Today though, we are at a pivotal time. Most of the opportunities to buy land are gone, and competition for land is high. A younger population is demanding more active recreation and diversity in recreational options. Becoming a mature urban area brings with it a keen awareness of the value of promoting and interpreting our culture and history. The array of protected lands we worked so hard to secure is being threatened increasingly by activities both in and around them.

With diminished vacant land in our built-out county, our open spaces start to look very attractive – and very developable - for other uses and purposes. Public awareness and concern over the future of this county's parks and preserves is heightening each day. Traditional recreational and waterfront uses are being threatened by escalating taxes, land values, and redevelopment pressures.

While we have amassed an enviable park and preserve system, we did not necessarily plan as comprehensively for the active recreation needs of a built-out county and a population that is getting younger. While we assumed the municipalities would address our active recreation needs, we did not factor in municipal sentiment. The pace of annexation, though, is changing the unincorporated and municipal landscape daily, making the active recreation discussion, and who we are really planning for, ever-changing.

For the Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Strategic Focus Area we are fortunate to have several plans that help with our decision-making. For over 15 years, the Countywide Comprehensive Plan has provided direction for resource protection and environmental stewardship, land acquisition and sound management of our parks and preserves. More recently, the Recreation, Open Space and Cultural System Master Plan analyzed active recreation needs and recommended approaches and partnerships for meeting those needs. It also suggested the county take the lead with flagship projects and bold initiatives that will set this county apart from others. But it also emphasizes that we need to protect the lands we have already purchased for their intrinsic natural value. A new emphasis on the value of cultural activates and an amenity, as well as historic preservation, has taken hold and we can build on the results of the Art Council's Community Cultural Plan as well as the Historic Preservation Task Force.

This business plan, therefore, builds upon the plans in place, capitalizing on what is underway, and at what can be accomplished, or set in motion, during the next five years. It also highlights new initiatives and opportunities, as well as cooperation and coordination among departments that will be necessary.

On a final note, the Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Strategic Focus Group concluded that the goals of this strategic focus area currently do not adequately address a commitment to the county's environmental programs. It is recommended that the goals for this strategic focus area be amended to broaden the focus beyond the areas covered by the Recreation, Open Space and Cultural System Master Plan.

2. Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Strategic Focus Area Summary of Situational Analysis

The primary conditions, or situations, affecting the ability to meet the Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture System goals and desired outcomes essentially amount to money, jurisdictional issues, economics and competition for land, and public sentiment. They cannot be considered as separate situations, as they are intertwined in their impact and scope.

Funding: This strategic focus area is dependent on the funding necessary to accomplish the goals established. In past years, the public has consistently supported taxation for the acquisition of passive parks and open spaces. Few other local governments in Florida have as lengthy a track record of public support for such initiatives as we do in Pinellas County. But today, there is not much land left to buy, and the focus for major new funding initiatives is shifting more to active recreation and community-based recreation centers. Other costly new initiatives include attempts to protect and enhance boat access. Implementing new initiatives is largely dependent on the Penny for Pinellas for funding, which means we need to make sure proposed Penny projects continue to represent the public sentiment.

All of our funding needs are not based on new capital expenditures though. Money is also required to sustain, maintain and enhance what we already have. We also need to make sure we allocate the money necessary to maintain high standards of operation, maintenance and programming at our parks and preserves, consistent with public expectations. We need to commit the funding required to support new and exciting cultural ventures in programming and events needed to put us in the ranks of other successful and dynamic urban centers.

Foremost, we need to use our dollars wisely. For example, money is being parceled out for annual grants and incrementally to offset active recreation fees for unincorporated residents. Is this the best way to spend our money? Is this going to produce the biggest bang for our buck? Regardless where we stand on those issues, collaboration, partnership and creativity are essential to the Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture System funding strategy.

Finally, we must not forget that while there is a need to implement new active parks opportunities, protecting the investment in our passive parks and preserve lands is as important.

Political Jurisdictions: Annexation and jurisdictional issues fundamentally interfere with the ability to do good planning for active recreation needs. The pace of annexation changes the landscape daily. So who exactly are we planning for? Making decisions solely on the basis of meeting unincorporated needs is not sufficient. What monies might we use to meet an unincorporated need, and is the unincorporated investment lost if the area is annexed? The dialogue with the county's municipalities needs to be ongoing. Creative deals and partnerships need to become the mainstay in meeting the needs of both unincorporated and municipal residents. But while the larger question may still loom regarding who exactly we are planning for, the Recreation, Open Space and Cultural System Master Plan provides some direction in that it suggests that, while we look for partners to help us with our active recreation ventures, we continue to focus, on the whole, on what we do best, which is countywide systems concerning best meeting our community's recreational, cultural and environmental needs.

Economics and Competition for Land: While little vacant land remains, there are open space and recreational holdings in our local golf courses and marinas. Changing economics are forcing property owners to re-think their investment and commitment to these uses. Therefore, we need to be financially poised when the opportunity arises, with the ability and flexibility to acquire these

properties for their public open space or recreational value. We also need to think creatively about where we can find land for our active recreation ventures. For example, redevelopment of defunct commercial areas may provide substantial opportunity, but potentially at a great cost. Protecting waterfront uses is particularly challenging due to the cost of land and the desirability of the location for other purposes. In this regard, legislative, land use and taxing solutions are going to be required to change the dynamics of conversion and loss.

Public Sentiment: When it comes to the Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Strategic Focus Area, the citizens of this county are passionate. The county has had a long-standing relationship with its citizens in this regard, and has been able to accomplish much with their trust and support. But too much complacency in judging the sentiment of the public and a series of decisions affecting our public lands has put us in a very new place. We are now dealing with erosion of that trust and suspicion of our motives. Our re-building of that trust is critical to accomplishing the goals of the Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Strategic Focus Area. But, equally as important, the county's key leaders must not waver and over-react with each new criticism. Open and honest communication with the public is essential. Input from the public must be thoughtfully considered. At the end of the day, the county also needs to value staff input and know when to place its trust in that staff and allow them to do their job.

Life used to be a lot simpler. Today, the pressures of redevelopment are foundational to this situational analysis. As we move forward, how we fund and plan for the components of this strategic focus area, and whether we continue to elevate the intrinsic value of recreation, open space and culture in all discussions of redevelopment, will determine in large measure whether we retain the characteristics of a quality community and remain a place where people will 'plan to stay.'

3. Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture (EOSRC) Strategic Focus Area Goals

The Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture goals are:

EOSRC-1 – Promote a Sustainability Ethic in Pinellas County.

The foundation of this goal is to ensure that ecological limits and environmental impacts are considered during all aspects of community design, from energy efficiency in buildings to transportation system solutions. Sustainability principles, practices and indicators will be brought into policy debate and decision-making on a broad basis.

EOSRC-2 – Strengthen Connections to Water.

Outstanding water bodies uniquely surround Pinellas County. For many residents, the water was a main reason for coming, and then staying, in Pinellas. The county will promote and expand recreational access to the surrounding waters, and utilize this natural asset as a keystone community attribute.

EOSRC-3 – Lead the Development of Outstanding Countywide Systems.

The county's preserves, historical and cultural sites, and regional system of recreational and environmental systems span nearly every corner of Pinellas County. This goal seeks to ensure that the system is updated and improved as the County transforms into its final built-out state. Trail, roadway and sign design standards are among the first components of upgraded features sought in this goal.

EOSRC-4 – Provide Urban levels of Active Recreation Facilities in Unincorporated Areas.

In an effort to meet the needs and expectation of residents in unincorporated areas, the county will expand its efforts to develop community centers, community parks and sports complexes to serve the entire county. Concurrently, the county will seek partnerships with municipalities, the School Board and non-profit agencies for ongoing operations and maintenance.

EOSRC-5 – Inject Life, Color and Energy into Regional Parks and Preserves.

The county's regional parks and preserves is a classic system of passive parks. Without compromising the environmental integrity of these facilities, the county will explore ways to build a broader base of compatible activities that will draw in users and be relevant to today's "lifestyles". Examples might include outdoor classrooms, educational exhibits and kiosks, canoe and kayak rentals, public art, gardens and other amenities.

EOSRC-6 – Increase Protection of Regional Parks and Preserves.

The long-term protection of the county's preserves and passive parks is fundamental. The county will ensure that the natural resources of our preserves are guided by pro-active plans that set clear policies for management of these assets. In addition, plans will examine surrounding management zones to minimized off-site influences.

EOSRC-7 – Promote the Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation.

Promote Arts and Culture and Historic Resources through investments and raised awareness for the existing non-profit facilities and programs. Art through design, both in public and private building and infrastructure, can add to the vitality of the county and community.

Overall, the success of this strategic focus area plan will be gauged by the results of the 13 key performance measures that will be reviewed on an annual basis and at the end of Year 5. For each measure, the Environment, Open Space, Recreation outcomes and Culture Strategic Focus Area

Team will establish a data source, methodology for measurement, baseline measurement and performance goals. The measures are:

- Number of acres converted from preserve or preserved resource management to other future land use category
- Number of days air quality index for Pinellas County measures "Good" by the federal Environmental Protection Agency Standards
- % native vegetation as a portion of all park vegetation
- Loss of shade tree canopy in Pinellas County
- Number of miles of bike lanes and bike trails added per year
- Total dollars spent on cultural programs and activities by Pinellas County
- Total number of attendees at county sponsored or supported cultural events, performances, programs and exhibits
- % park areas available to the public as per cent of entire park system inventory
- Number of ball fields, hard courts, swimming pools, community centers, and playgrounds in unincorporated areas
- Number of boat ramp lanes
- Number of parking spaces for beach access
- Acres of land added or adjacent to existing county parks or preserves
- % beach profiles that meet or exceed county standards

4. Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Strategic Focus Area Strategy Execution and Proposed Deliverables

Strategies and deliverables related to the defined strategic focus area goals are provided in the following subsections:

EOSRC-1 – Promote a Sustainability Ethic.

Strategy EOSRC-1.1 – Incorporate key policies into the County Comprehensive Plan.

Codify the key policies and visions of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan in the County Comprehensive Plan (Recreation and Open Space Element)

Strategy EOSRC-1.2 – Review policy options.

Review options for policies regarding open space and golf course land conversions

Strategy EOSRC-1.3 – Coordinate with public and private entities.

Institutionalize Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations regarding close coordination between county departments, local governments and other agencies to maximize benefits and minimize conflicts of every public and private project and initiative.

Strategy EOSRC-1.4 – Link Master Plan to transportation initiatives.

Link Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan into livable community's efforts, transportation CIP plans and transit concept.

Pinellas County government has a long history of environmental leadership, going back at least to the late 1970s when the pace of development and the loss of the natural environment reached a critical point and triggered an awakening to the fragility of our coastal location and supporting environment. Citizens said that enough is enough. In response, Pinellas County launched the Red Flag Charrete, with participation by scientists, environmentalists, municipal and county staff, and area agencies. This task team achieved a myriad of lasting results. In fact, the county's Environmental Management Department was created from this effort. A succession of referenda for land acquisition were also held, with unwavering support by the citizens, resulting in over 140 environmentally sensitive properties being acquired (only 1 targeted property was not acquired out of the entire list). Today, the county's comprehensive environmental program is regarded as a model throughout the State, and other governments often call to see how we have accomplished what we accomplished. In a survey conducted a few years ago by staff at the University of North Carolina, Pinellas County stood out at the very top of all governments surveyed for not only its environmental initiative and planning, but also for its commitment to follow-through and implementation. Now, with the large land acquisitions behind us, and a strong land management program in place, where does that leave us? Can we continue to be an environmental leader in a rapidly changing and redeveloping county? How do we respond as developers start looking at our last large vestiges of open space (most notably, our golf courses) with the idea of redevelopment?

The Evaluation and Appraisal Report for the Comprehensive Plan focuses on this very question, and the Recreation, Open Space, Cultural System Master Plan emphasizes the idea of a Planning to Stay ethic, where an exemplary quality of life will be the basis for people staying in Pinellas County, or relocating here, to live, work and play. Building on the concept of Planning to Stay, the county's Comprehensive Plan already proposes to integrate sustainability into the county's long range planning.

The challenge is to weave the ideas and concepts and commitment into every facet of our government operations, and into every aspect of our interactions with the public. As we re-draft our

policies in the Comprehensive Plan and develop new regulations to address redevelopment in an urban environment, we must consider each redevelopment opportunity as an opportunity for environmental improvement. This is likely to require substantial re-tooling of not only our development regulations and development review practices, but more importantly, there needs to be a willingness to let go when we need to of “the way we’ve always done it.” Innovation and collaboration need to be key words in our business culture.

We also need to consider both the visual and environmental impact on the county as a whole should private golf courses gradually be replaced by development. The impact would be dramatic. In this County, golf courses often serve as major greenway connectors. One needs only to look at a land use map to see their functional relationship to existing environmental and preservation lands. Clearly, the preservation of recreation/open space land for a recreation or open space purpose (whether a golf course or not) is vital to a sustainable future.

But sustainability goes beyond the obvious need for continued environmental stewardship; a truly sustainable community requires weaving issues of housing, neighborhoods and community character into the equation. It means addressing transportation alternatives, infrastructure needs and constraints, and recreation requirements in a congested urban county. It requires integrating economic decisions and plans with all of the other sustainability goals. Economic development is not a means unto itself – if it compromises the very character and way of life that attracted people to his county in the first place, then it will not sustain itself in the long run. Sustainability means that, above all, that our own practices, and what we promote to the public, whether through incentives or regulation or education, are a model for quality, follow-through and sustainability.

The key to success is ongoing support by our elected officials and a renewed sense of collaboration and commitment among all of our departments. Equally important will be communication and involvement with our citizens. The past year has clearly evidenced that many of our citizens care very much about the environment around them, and the opportunity for staff and the public to work together towards our sustainability goals will institutionalize the county’s commitment and foster citizen stewardship for the natural and human community around us. The private business sector is also integral to our sustainability commitment; they can be an important and innovative partner.

Our success in becoming a sustainable community will be measured incrementally. It will not really be evidenced by compiling plans, regulations and reports, or by receipt of awards or designations. Instead, it will be measured by looking around – people will want to live here; they will have a place to play, to reflect on nature, and to seek respite from the busy world around them. The air and water will be clean; a diversity of plant and animal life will abound. You will find trees, sidewalks and green space interspersing a myriad of diverse neighborhoods and civic gathering places. People will have a place to work and a way to get there. While we probably never will be able to say we have met one concrete goal of being “officially sustainable,” we can take definitive, constant and measurable steps down the path of sustainability.

EOSRC-2 – Strengthen Connections to the Water

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-2.1 – Incorporate key policies into the Countywide Comprehensive Plan.

Codify the key policies and visions of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan in the Countywide Comprehensive Plan (Recreation and Open Space Element)

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-2.2 – Promote capital programs.

Accept and promote the priority capital programs identified in the Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-2.3 – Review funding proposal for capital program.**

Board of County Commissioners will finalize review of the Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations, including funding proposal for a capital program over a 15 year period through a renewed Penny for Pinellas.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-2.4 – Expand boating access.**

Pursue revenue neutral or revenue-enhanced options for acquiring and expanding additional boating access facilities

The Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommended that “the county needs to continue to be a leader in waterfront/resource protection, including the role of facilitator/coordinator with federal, state and municipal agencies. At the same time, the county needs to expand recreational access to the water, including new beach accesses, on and off-beach parking, boat ramps, canoe and kayak launches, and peak season beach shuttles.” The outcome of the master planning process included specific recommendations for both new facilities and new initiatives.

The Evaluation and Appraisal Report for the Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Board in November of 2005, also emphasized strengthening and protecting the county’s connections to the water. Actions were included directed at preventing the conversion of water-dependent land uses through land use and taxing strategies, enhancing public access through municipal and private partnerships, and emphasis on straightforward acquisition. The Evaluation and Appraisal Report recognized the contribution of water-dependent land uses to the overall economy, and on reinforcing, or strengthening commitments to beach renourishment, stabilization and coastal and marine habitat protection. For example, major amendments to the county’s Comprehensive Plan are anticipated to address things like boating and beach access improvements, boat facility siting requirements, and manatee protection.

The Boating Access Task Force convened during the summer and fall of 2005 with the purpose of identifying actions required to achieve the following vision, gleaned from the Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan: “to provide the greatest possible access to Pinellas County waters for both recreational and commercial boaters, while protecting the integrity of natural resources, and enhancing the county’s reputation as the pre-eminent boating/diving/fishing center of Florida.” Out of this effort, several specific sites were identified for further investigation into their potential for boat access, and certain regulatory priorities were identified for additional investigation as well.

In all, a significant amount of recent planning has gone into collecting relevant data, as well as identifying needs and priorities. Throughout these planning processes, coordination among key players has been ongoing, resulting in coordinated, and not dis-jointed, plans. Public involvement and municipal involvement have been components of each planning activity described above, helping to bring a balance of ideas and strategies to the planning efforts. From a strategic perspective, the key outcomes of each initiative must now be coalesced into a clear and coordinated set of deliverables so that Pinellas County can remain a premier boating and recreational destination, continue to be a leader in marine resource protection, and both retain and capitalize on this County’s distinguishing coastal character well into the future.

Success will be measured by increased beach access. In addition, more efficient boat ramp operations and improvements will enable an increase in boating access to the water. The county will become known for an extensive blueways system that is marketed in print and online. We will be working together with the municipalities, making efficient use of dollars, to measurably increase or enhance boat access opportunities. And, the boating and beach-going public will be stewards of our waters, helping us protect the essence of Pinellas County’s character – its connection to the water.

EOSRC-3 – Lead the Development of Outstanding Countywide Systems

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-3.1 – Incorporate policies of Master Plan into the County Comprehensive Plan.

Codify the key policies and visions of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan in the County Comprehensive Plan (Recreation and Open Space Element)

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-3.2 – Revise the county’s Roadway Design Standards

Revise the county’s Roadway Design Standards to require street trees, bike lanes, wide bicycle/pedestrian paths, and safety/ADA features on all public roadways.

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-3.3 – Promote Capital Programs.

Accept and promote the priority capital programs identified in the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan.

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-3.4 – Expand boating access.

Institutionalize Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations regarding close coordination between County departments, local governments and other agencies to maximize benefits and minimize conflicts of every public and private project and initiative.

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-3.5 – Link Master Plan to transportation initiatives.

Link Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan into Livable Communities efforts, transportation CIP plans and transit concepts.

Pinellas County has long been recognized for its outstanding parks, preserves and cultural systems. In Florida’s most densely populated county, residents and visitors are still able to enjoy thousands of acres of passive parks and pristine preserves, and beautiful beaches, as well as outstanding cultural amenities such as Heritage Village and the Florida Botanical Gardens. National recognition for these systems includes being named inaugural winner of the 2005 County Leadership in Conservation Award presented by the Trust for Public Lands and National Association of Counties, being named America’s Best Beach in 2005 by internationally renowned beach expert Dr. Stephen Leatherman, aka “Dr. Beach”, receiving the 2006 Gulf Guardian Award winner by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for the Fort De Soto Park Recirculation Project, and numerous local and state awards for environmental stewardship.

In addition, the Pinellas Trail continues to be the premier example of a successful “Rails to Trails” program for urbanized areas. The county’s outstanding land-based trails system will soon be complemented by the Progress Energy Trail, providing over 30 additional miles of non-motorized transportation and recreational activity. Work is also underway on a comprehensive Blueways trail system for paddlers in almost all of the county’s waterways.

In 2004, Pinellas County initiated its first comprehensive Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan to chart its future development, enhancement, and protection of its valued resources. The plan encouraged the county to continue doing what it does best: leading the development of first-class county-wide parks, preserves, historic and cultural sites, passive regional parks, greenways, Blueways, trails, beach access, transit and roadways.

Recognizing many of the county’s parks, preserves, and cultural systems were first initiated over 25 years ago as part of the Penny for Pinellas Program, much has changed since these facilities were first envisioned. Pinellas County has become increasingly urbanized, creating new challenges and

opportunities for the future. Remaining a “leader in the development of outstanding County-wide systems” requires the ability to integrate the recreation, open space and culture system components into a comprehensive planning effort involving transportation, communications, and future land use planning.

As Pinellas County continues to urbanize, demand on recreation, open space and culture systems will evolve. Appreciation and demand for the arts and preservation of the county’s past will require increased funding and facilities. Balancing the need for active recreation facilities with the need to protect remaining open spaces will require partnerships and collaborative efforts with municipal stakeholders and other public partners. Special interest facilities such as golf courses and marinas, though serving a select population, also contribute to the quality of life that makes Pinellas County unique among many Florida counties and need to be recognized, valued and preserved.

Opportunities for conflict between segments of the population demanding strict protection of existing green spaces and those wanting more urbanized programs and facilities will undoubtedly arise. Protection of our existing resources is best accomplished through the cultivation of new resources to meet urban demands. Requiring new development to address these types of facilities may be one way to soften these conflicts, as may county investment in municipal recreation facilities, increased protection for atypical open spaces such as golf courses, and development of non-pristine areas such as Toytown to meet the need for more urbanized facilities.

Keys to success will include broad consumer engagement and close coordination between county departments, local governments, and other agencies to maximize benefits and minimize conflicts of every public and private project and initiative. Success will be determined by how well the county is able to preserve and protect the limited remaining green spaces while still being able to meet the needs of an evolving community and urban lifestyle.

EOSRC-4 – Provide Urban Levels of Active Recreation Facilities in Unincorporated Areas

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-4.1 – Consider revisions to County Land Development Regulations.**

Consider revisions to the County’s Land Development Regulations to require the construction of neighborhood parks in new developments.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-4.2 – Review open space and golf course conversion options.**

Review options for policies regarding open space and golf course land conversions.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-4.3 – Promote Capital Programs.**

Accept and promote the priority capital programs identified in the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-4.4 – Review Master Plan and funding proposal for capital program.**

Board of County Commissioners will finalize review of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations including funding proposal for a capital program over a 15-year period through a renewed Penny for Pinellas.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-4.5 – Utilize MSTU grants and partnerships.**

Continue to utilize municipal services taxing unit grants and partnerships with municipalities who provide recreational services to unincorporated residents.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-4.6 – Forge new partnerships.**

Forge new partnerships with municipalities and non-profits to manage and operate active recreational facilities constructed with principally County resources to improve efficiencies and equitably share burdens.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-4.7 – Review parcels for recreational development.**

Review options for Toytown and Struthers parcels for active recreational development and redevelopment, including a review of all recreational components.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-4.8 – Partner with other public and private entities.**

Institutionalize Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations regarding close coordination between County departments, local governments and other agencies to maximize benefits and minimize conflicts between proposed projects or initiatives.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC- 4.9 – Coordinate with School Board.**

Coordinate with the School Board to provide for after hours use of school parks, playgrounds and gymnasiums.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC- 4.10 – Use Master Plan recommendations to forge new partnerships.**

Consider Pinellas County’s Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations to forge new and expanded funding partnerships with municipalities and non-profits to manage and operate recreational facilities on County sites.

Traditionally, Pinellas County Parks and Recreation has concentrated its efforts on creating and maintaining passive recreation areas which concentrate recreation activities toward unstructured, environmentally focused, recreational pursuits. Changing demographics, including the increase in families with children within the unincorporated areas, has brought increased demands for recreation facilities and programs currently available through the county’s many municipalities. For many years, this demand has been assuaged through program fee subsidies provided directly to unincorporated residents participating in municipal programs, and grant programs for construction of facilities and program development to cities and non-profit organizations serving the needs of unincorporated citizens. Funding for these initiatives has been provided by municipal services taxing unit assessed on unincorporated residents.

Increasing unincorporated demand for these services, as well as the inability for many cities to keep up with the demand created by their own residents, will possibly outpace the approximate \$2,000,000 per year provided by the municipal services taxing unit. In order to meet this demand, the county will need to contribute to the active recreation facility inventory through direct or indirect participation. This may include the construction of active recreation facilities or sports complexes on county owned property and additional partnerships with area municipalities, other government organizations such as the local school district, and non-profits including the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs.

EOSRC-5 – Inject Color and Energy into Regional Parks and Preserves.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-5.1 – Promote capital programs.**

Accept and promote the priority capital programs identified in the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan.

⇒ **Strategy EOSRC-5.2 – Invest in arts and culture programs and organizations.**

Consider Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations regarding increased investment in arts and cultural programs and

organizations. Adopt action plan to increase per capita spending to be at par with top Florida communities.

The county's regional park system and natural preserves are nationally recognized for their high quality native ecosystems in urbanized areas. The residential communities in which parks and preserves exist are protective of these areas for their beauty and important habitat for native flora and fauna. Parks and preserves offer classic passive recreation opportunities, including hiking, nature study, solitude and related activities. As related in the Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan, many of the parks have become "one dimensional" over time, offering limited activities and/or areas of interest to hold visitors' attention.

Although many parks have expanded programming opportunities or educational activities, many of the areas are underutilized. Without compromising the very qualities that make the parks and preserves so popular, the county could do more to appeal to a broader range of citizens. Initiatives such as summer camps, special events, or other similar activities are currently underway in several parks and preserves. Their growing popularity and appreciation by visitors indicates the departments could do more to satisfy visitors' need to be entertained and/or informed. This goal seeks to broaden citizen support for these facilities by appealing to a larger customer base through the addition of minor programs, activities and facilities which would inject more color, life and energy into the parks and preserve systems.

"Energizing" the parks and preserves might include the addition of signature special events, permanent and traveling art and sculpture exhibits, environmental education exhibits and kiosks, festivals, concerts, cafes and concessions. Care must be taken to not detract from the primary mission of the parks and preserves. The county must develop management tools which recognize carrying capacity, suitability of uses, potential conflicts, and protection of natural resources.

EOSRC-6 – Inject Color and Energy into Regional Parks and Preserves

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-6.1 – Codify key policies of Master Plan into Comprehensive Plan.

Codify the key policies and visions of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan in the County Comprehensive Plan (Recreation and Open Space Element)

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-6.2 – Promote capital programs.

Accept and promote the priority capital programs identified in the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan. A common theme during the evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan during 2004 and 2005, and a common theme during the development of the Recreation, Open Space, and Culture System Master Plan during this same time, was the need to ensure adequate protection of this County's incredible system of regional passive parks and preserves from the threats of encroachment by incompatible uses.

Pinellas County is unique in how it has built its parks and preserve system. Beginning in the 1970s, a continuous series of citizen-supported referenda provided a consistent pot of money for environmental land acquisition. Essentially, once the Red Flag Charrette was completed (see discussion under the Sustainability goal) the County set about systematically acquiring the lands identified as "Red Flag" properties – meaning they had important environmental value and were likely to be otherwise developed if they were not acquired.

As the county approached build-out and property values skyrocketed, the county held the course, and increasingly leveraged its acquisition dollars with State grants so that critical properties could still be acquired. Today, out of the approximated 140 properties originally identified for acquisition, only one was not acquired. This diligence generated consistent public support for the land acquisition

referenda, including the original and subsequent Penny for Pinellas efforts. Because of citizen support, and thanks to an unwavering course by elected officials and staff, this county has a world-class system of regional passive parks and preserve lands, beach accesses and trails. So while it's easy to call us an urban county, through good planning development this county is interspersed with large publicly accessible natural areas – our very character is definable by the open spaces and recreational opportunities around us.

But we are at a critical time. A large open space can look awfully attractive, both to the private developer and the public developer, when there are a myriad of competing wants and needs – but very few areas left to accommodate those wants and needs. Where can we put a sports field or a community center? Where can we put the fire station? Where can the high tech manufacturer expand his business? Where can we put affordable housing? Where can we increase density? Where can the road project go? The list is exhaustive. But there is one fundamental point that must be interjected into the scramble to find enough land for everybody – once you begin to nibble away your open space and your natural areas, it will not take long for them to be gone, plain and simple, and we will not get them back.

These concerns have been echoed in the Comprehensive Plan and the Recreation, Open Space, Culture System Master Plan. Our parks and preserves are also impacted by what goes on around them. Most residents are familiar with the Brooker Creek Preserve and the Weedon Island Preserve, and have probably been to one or more of our regional parks, but do they stop to think about how their own actions contribute to the viability of these natural areas? The management of the uses around the preserves can be as important as management of what's inside, and informed citizens can perhaps be the best advocates for an ecosystem approach based on the premise that contributory lands do not stop at the park or preserve fence.

We have a vast resource in the natural lands and passive open space inventory of our parks and preserves. This inventory makes us one of the most important regional flyways for migratory birds, provides strategic habitat, and contributes to sustaining the biodiversity of the region. However, the key to sustaining the resource is management of the resource. Environmental management in our urban environment is challenging, requiring innovation in management techniques, critical habitat protection, and an integrated watershed approach that focuses on net environmental benefit. This management commitment does not come without a substantial cost.

Success in protecting our parks and preserves can be measured in a variety of ways. Most fundamental is no net loss of land or conversion to an active purpose or use that cannot coexist compatibly with the overall passive purpose of the park or preserve. However, the measure must also include benchmarks that address the function and health of the natural system. Benchmarks will include the completion of individual management plans, identification of critical habitat in each park or preserve, with subsequent funded commitments to restoration, enhancement and managed public access, in a manner individual to each location. Importantly, while clearly most large remaining tracts of natural land have been acquired, this does not mean all aspects of park and preserve acquisition are complete. "Closing the gaps" is an integral part of managing for ecosystem health. The incremental addition of lands to existing areas of open space will enhance both our existing recreational and environmental greenways – that is, they will close the gaps in our system. This idea of acquiring land to "close the gaps," now that most of our big acquisitions are over, has been supported by the Comprehensive Plan since 1998. Funding to take advantage of acquisition opportunities will remain important. The best measure though of our success in protecting our parks and preserves will be found in renewed public trust. The public has trusted Pinellas County since the late 1970s to be a leader in open space and environmental land acquisition and management – arguably, public trust in this regard has been integral to the success of the past two Penny's. This message should not be lost.

EOSRC-7 – Promote the Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-7.1 – Codify key policies of Master Plan into Comprehensive Plan.

Codify the key policies and visions of the Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan in the County Comprehensive Plan (Recreation and Open Space Element)

⇒ Strategy EOSRC-7.2 – Invest in arts and cultural programs.

Consider Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan recommendations regarding increased investment in arts and cultural programs and organizations. Adopt action plan to increase per capita spending to be at par with top Florida communities.

This goal both embraces and deepens Pinellas County's long-standing commitment to arts, culture and heritage. Portions of the work of at least three county-wide groups are included in the goal. They are:

- Pinellas County Arts Council's Community Cultural Plan,
- Pinellas County Parks & Recreation Department's Recreation, Open Space, and Cultural System Master Plan
- Board of County Commissioners' Historic Preservation Task Force

In FY05, the Arts Council developed a **Community Cultural Plan** which identified needs and opportunities, defined goals, and recommended funding and actions to strengthen the county's arts, culture, and heritage, and to enhance the its economic development and quality of life for residents and visitors. Nearly 1,000 individuals participated through interviews, focus groups, a constituent survey, and random-sample polling. Fifty-eight civic, business, cultural, and education leaders served on an Advisory Committee and five task forces. The assessment phase of the Plan revealed the interesting statistics that seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondent households indicated that it is either a Very Good (39%) or Good (40%) investment for Pinellas County to improve the quality of and accessibility to arts, cultural and heritage programs. The process resulted in the following five major goals:

- Develop arts, heritage, and cultural resources to enhance Pinellas County's economy and aesthetic environment.
- Market Pinellas County as a cultural destination to increase participation by residents and visitors
- Value and assist artists and creative workers as fundamental to a vibrant community.
- Ensure lifelong education opportunities to expand knowledge and experience in and through the arts.
- Achieve increased public and private funding to strengthen Pinellas County's cultural sector.

The completed Community Cultural Plan calls for several, specific initiatives, which include:

- A cooperative, comprehensive marketing effort that includes non-profit, county and municipal institutions
- A needs assessment for artist live/work space
- A study of the economic impact of the arts in Pinellas
- The development of a Public Art & Design Master Plan.

During the same time period, the Pinellas County Parks and Recreation Department conducted a wide-ranging study that involved input from hundreds of individual citizens as well as a large number of focus groups and user-groups. The data reported in the subsequent **Recreation, Open Space and Cultural System Master Plan** recorded that the county has, in fact, long been involved in the delivery

of heritage, culture and education to residents and visitors through such existing venues as Heritage Village, Florida Botanical Gardens and the educational centers at Weedon Island and Brooker Creek Preserves.

The **Historic Preservation Task Force** is currently challenged to review, analyze and facilitate the implementation of preservation policies for historically significant structures, neighborhoods and districts throughout the county. Comprised of preservationists from all areas of the County, the Task Force is poised to advise the county commission on the implementation of effective preservation while taking into account the cultural diversity on which this county was founded.

Even without the current plans and studies, Pinellas County has a thirty year history of providing support to arts and culture through the Pinellas County Arts Council. Currently the council provides services to a cultural industry that includes:

- 110 nonprofit organizations,
- 10 major outdoor art/music/cultural festivals
- 4 major county facilities
- 6 municipal facilities
- 800+ artists in all discipline areas and 365 public school art teachers

The council's most recent grants application cycle reflects a vibrant and diverse cultural industry with 33 of the nonprofit organizations that applied to the Arts Council reporting combined operating budgets for FY05 of \$45.3 million and audiences of 2.1 million.

One of the most significant, immediate actions taken as a result of these studies has been the creation of the new Bureau of Culture, Education and Leisure and its assimilation of the Arts Council as the Cultural Affairs Department. This action will more closely align arts, culture, and heritage with future planning in the arenas of economic development, community planning, tourism and infrastructure, and will support the County's "planning to stay" initiative.

5. Environment, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Strategic Focus Area Organizational Capacity Requirements

The county has made significant investment in culture, education, environment and leisure services, programs and facilities. The 30 year history of acquiring environmental lands and passive park spaces, coupled with a consistent commitment to high operational, maintenance and management standards, has resulted in an inventory of parks and managed environmental lands like no other urban county. It is not unreasonable to suggest that much of this success is due to thirty years of continuity, stability, expertise and ingenuity of administration and staff. But the times are changing - old staff is retiring, new staff is hired, the unanticipated challenges of a built-out county threaten our traditional open spaces. New culture and leisure opportunities are also presenting themselves and reflect the changing needs of a maturing and dynamic urban center. To best position the county for meeting such comprehensive recreational, cultural, and environmental challenges, the organization must consider the following:

Internal Factors

Re-Visit and Re-Invigorate Original Motives and Values

Much of the original purpose of, and impetus for, our system of parks, preserves, beaches, trails and boat ramps is perhaps not as evident in our current decision-making. In the quest to meet all needs and to be all things, sometimes our decisions regarding environmental and recreational lands might stray from the foundation of certain long-standing commitments and plans, as we try to balance competing interests for limited land. As long time employees leave and retire, and the institutional knowledge is lost, it will be imperative to not lost track of the foundational plans and concepts, which have based on many years of methodical and incremental planning, to ensure that the vast public investment is not irretrievably lost or compromised.

Embrace New Values - Effective Coordination among Departments and Staff

Implementing this business plan will cross several departmental lines. As each department competes for the money and support to accomplish its goals and priorities, it is essential that coordination and collaboration be a priority. This requires a willingness to adapt compromise and change when necessary. The re-tooling and re-thinking of day-to-day processes is likely. Pinellas County, by resolution, is intending to become the first "sustainable" county in Florida. Perhaps more than anything, this commitment will solidify the need for every department to practice innovation, to embrace new ideas, and to work with each other to get the job done. - A fundamental tenet of a collaborative organization is the hiring, recognition, and retention of those employees with the right stuff to meet the challenge and do the job.

Succession Management and Knowledge Management

The County has been fortunate in having a history of long-term employees with extensive institutional knowledge. But as certain long term employees leave, so does the wealth of background and history. Knowledge management and consolidation of critical policies, maps, data, documentation and processes will enable the organization to move forward without losing the foundation and purpose of its original environmental and recreational commitments.

Staffing for Existing and New Initiatives

To sustain the County's level of public service and to meet the public's environmental, recreational and cultural expectations for tomorrow requires staffing. As new or enhanced initiatives come online, there will be commensurate impacts on workload and staffing. To become a leader in sustainability will mean edging towards more and more efficient government, but there will still be instances where new staff will be required to meet new and increased demands. Under-estimating or under-valuing realistic staffing needs will result in a reduced level of public service, and surely issues of morale. Of note, in the case of the environment, recreation and culture, certain staffing needs were preliminarily identified in the Glatting-Jackson Master Plan, providing a starting place to think about staffing for existing and new initiatives.

External Factors

Public Values and Expectations

We can meet the public's expectations if we pay attention to what the public is saying and if we address the internal factors that enable us to do our day-to-day job. But, clearly, the public's opinions and expectations are dynamic and diverse. The communication component of this business plan will ensure that we are not complacent, but are assessing public sentiment, needs and concerns, and responding timely and as needed, with correct and defensible findings and response. However, we must be careful to not adjust our direction just because of the squeaky wheel - we need to gauge the expectations of the majority before we alter the course.

Coordination with Other Governments

This is perhaps the most challenging aspect of implementing this business plan. We will undoubtedly continue to be pressured from the municipalities regarding the impact of unincorporated residents on municipal recreation programs and facilities. An efficient, realistic and affordable long-term solution for this problem is not yet at hand. In fact, with regard to active recreation, and recognizing the impacts of annexation, this business plan has not entirely answered just who we are ultimately planning for. But the discussion is not over – as the County prepares to significantly update its Comprehensive Plan, the discussion will continue and additional ideas and commitments will be contemplated for the long-term.



SFA STRATEGY MAP ENVIRONMENT, OPEN SPACES, RECREATION & CULTURE

