

City of DeLand

Strategic Plan

2015-2025



VISION FOR DELAND, FLORIDA

DeLand will remain a city whose diverse citizens demonstrate a strong sense of community. The City will remain dedicated to preserving and enhancing those assets which make DeLand distinctive. We, as citizens of DeLand, will continue to strive to maintain DeLand's heritage as the "Athens of Florida."

Guiding Principles: *To achieve this vision, the Commission has adopted a number of principles to guide it as it seeks to preserve and enhance the City's distinctive assets. These principles are presented below by major theme.*

1. COMMUNITY. We will develop and implement programs and services that enhance the small town atmosphere and quality of life in DeLand by maintaining and / or developing:

- a community of beautiful and safe neighborhoods, all with easily accessible public space, green space and bike and pedestrian friendly design;
- a culturally diverse community that values its diversity;
- a core community distinguished by its historic downtown, arts and cultural community, trees, Stetson University, and older, well maintained homes;
- downtown events that bring people together for a wide range of recreational, cultural, and intellectual events;
- infrastructure that provides interconnection between all community neighborhoods;
- services or infrastructure which help our community and residents remain healthy and mobile;
- a safe community;
- a community with quality and accessible healthcare.

2. EDUCATION. We will support comprehensive educational opportunities that provide our citizens with tools for their well being by:

- recognizing the critical importance that education and work skills play in ensuring we can have the quality community we want;
- advocating for our educational institutions to meet the lifelong learning needs of our residents, our employers and our employees;
- advocating family and parenting skill development as the building blocks of education;
- advocating quality educational opportunities for all residents as a lifelong pursuit;
- advocating vocational programs that meet the needs of employers and employees;
- providing community education about government;
- advocating a community with advanced technology that supports the enhancement of education and the economy;
- recognizing the importance and efficacy of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) in K-12 education.

3. ECONOMY. Recognizing that a healthy economy promotes our success, we will:

- foster an entrepreneurial environment that supports local partnerships to create small business incubators and start ups;

- have a sustainable growth policy requiring the wise use of fiscal and natural resources;
- foster an economy that encourages diverse and economically rewarding job opportunities for all, resulting in a strong tax base;
- foster an economy that takes advantage of our regional location, transportation connections and airport;
- develop an economic infrastructure that supports local, regional and global business practices;
- seek out active partners in regional economic development;
- emphasize and promote Ecological, Cultural, Heritage, and Outdoors [ECHO] Tourism resulting in capital development;
- develop or advocate for transportation and mobility options that support economic activity.
- recognize and support the existing “economic generators” in our community.

4. HISTORY. DeLand is identified as the “Athens of Florida.” That heritage started with the City’s Founder, Henry A. DeLand. Henry DeLand’s goal was to create a town dedicated to the advancement of education and culture, much like the Athens of Greece. To this end, he started the DeLand Academy, which became Stetson University and in fulfillment of his dream, DeLand has been a center for culture and education. Recognizing that our future is guided by our heritage, we will:

- protect
 - our historic downtown
 - Stetson University
 - our neighborhoods
 - our other historic areas;
- encourage historic preservation and restoration efforts;
- advocate for flexible development standards for historic properties;
- encourage new development in the core that complements the historic character of the core community;
- encourage functional reuse of historic buildings while maintaining the historic character of the community;
- support programs that emphasize and promote the historic attributes of the community.

5. CITIZENS. DeLand is comprised of citizens who are truly engaged and actively work to make the community a great place in which to live work and play. Recognizing the value of an active and engaged citizenry, we will:

- work to ensure that there are living wage jobs in our community so that our youth remain in DeLand and become of active part of our civic culture.
- support community engagement in all aspects of policy development.
- develop and/or support programs that keep citizens engaged in making DeLand a great place in which to live work and play.
- develop and implement policies that produce tangible and measurable solutions for people experiencing homelessness.

- encourage a high level of citizen participation in the community, particularly on cross-generational, multi-cultural projects;
- develop policies and programs to support growing senior citizen population.
- provide variety of recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages.
- foster a community culture that embraces the community's diversity.
- foster a city workforce culture that provides quality service to our citizens and recognize service of employees to the public.

Strategic Focus Area: Regional high value job creation.

Strategic Context: This first strategy acknowledges that DeLand is part of an economic region and when the region benefits, DeLand benefits. Secondly, the strategy emphasizes that the desired end result is high value jobs. A high value job is one that generates a family supporting wage while also offering meaningful work that would retain the youth of a community.

Strategic Results:

- Environmentally clean, high wage jobs.
- Increased diversity of the economic base of the community.

Strategies:

Retention and expansion of existing businesses and sites

Action Steps:

1. As opportunities are presented coordinate with Enterprise Florida to promote international marketing.
2. Continue business retention / communication programs and efforts.
3. Conduct staff analysis and hold Commission discussion of redevelopment sites to determine potential costs and potential beneficial uses.
4. Develop business sites at airport, including “ready to build” sites.
5. Support policies and programs that encourage the retention and growth of our economic generators.
6. Work with Team Volusia, County Economic Development and other agencies to promote the DeLand Airport to facilitate diverse industries with clean jobs.
7. Work with the DeLand Chamber of Commerce and other agencies to assist local businesses with expansion efforts.

New business development (business recruitment and site development).

Action Steps:

1. Work with Team Volusia, County Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, and other agencies to promote the area and work prospects for the DeLand Airport and other properties to bring diverse industries with clean jobs.
2. Evaluate existing and additional incentives for economic development to remain competitive in the marketplace.
3. Provide assistance to fill vacant industrial/commercial sites.
 - a. Spring Hill
 - b. Downtown DeLand.
 - c. Airport.
 - d. Industrial areas.
 - e. Gateway areas.

4. Develop a marketing strategy for new commercial and industrial businesses that includes brand and reputation management.
5. Pursue Sport Aviation Village at DeLand Municipal Airport.
6. Develop and implement strategies to attract jobs in science, engineering, architecture, education, arts, music, and entertainment whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology, and new creative content – the “Creative Class Businesses.”
7. Identify and pursue strategies to expand the downtown beyond its current boundaries.

Foster collaboration and partnerships

Action Steps:

1. Provide a unified and coordinated strategy with Team Volusia, County Government, and other economic development partners.
2. Cooperative efforts with other West Volusia cities.
3. Work with the County, west side cities, and other partners on the SunRail Transit Oriented Development Plan for DeLand Station.
4. Enhance user-friendliness in terms of economic development support.
5. Work with Career Source Flagler/Volusia to provide more job training and job opportunities for residents including those with criminal records and felony convictions.

Strategic Focus Area: Institute Smart Growth principles:

Strategic Context: To manage growth, the City will need to institute a number of smart growth principles. For reasons of both community identity and governmental efficiency, an annexation strategy is required which will “square off” the City’s boundaries.

Strategic Results:

- Annexation which will “square off” the City’s boundaries.
- Quality growth that preserves the character of the City.
- Encourage redevelopment

Strategies:

Annexation

Action Steps:

1. Require contiguous properties to annex.
2. Continue to review annexations from a business plan perspective.
3. Conduct annexation feasibility studies when appropriate.

Redevelopment

Action Steps:

1. Pursue downtown residential redevelopment.
2. In cooperation with County, support Spring Hill redevelopment through the Spring Hill Community Redevelopment Agency.
3. Promote downtown commercial redevelopment with MainStreet DeLand.
4. Pursue redevelopment in areas outside of City core.
5. Develop action plan for use of existing public lands and buildings owned by county and City in Downtown.

Community consistent growth

Action Steps:

1. Implement the 2050 vision plan, to include joint planning agreements with the County.
2. Implement smart growth policies relating to increasing urban densities and protecting conservation areas.
3. Provide 4.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 population.
4. Encourage use of Planned Development Agreements in zonings.
5. Promote mixed use development that localizes traffic trips.
6. Adopt County sponsored stormwater requirements utilizing 100 year storm event.
7. Manage the difference in rates between potable and reuse water so as to encourage conservation.

8. Work with other cities and the County to provide a sustainable and affordable water supply to meet demand.
9. Review land development regulations and policies and incorporate principles that encourage smart growth and redevelopment.
10. Develop transportation mobility strategy which may include traffic congestion management approach.
11. Explore development of similar rules for commercial development between the City and County on gateway corridors.

Strategic Focus Area: Preserving “Sense of Community” as a key asset.

Strategic Context: Throughout the strategic planning process, the term “sense of community” has been highly valued as a distinctive DeLand asset. The term is most often associated with downtown, the historic district, Stetson, and the old city grid. It is this core city identity that citizen’s want to maintain and preserve. This distinctiveness is critically important in the New Economy where sense of place is a highly valued asset. There is synergy between high value jobs and maintaining the current sense of place that distinguishes the core city.

Strategic Result:

- Maintenance of distinctive core city.
- Preserve “sense of community.”

Strategies:

Current asset protection and maintenance

Action Steps:

1. Ensure that the quality of public investments is maintained through a long term maintenance plan.
 - a. Implement multi-year maintenance plan for city assets (buildings, parks, pools, etc) and downtown improvements that promote mobility.
 - b. Enhance right of way maintenance, pavement/sidewalks, signage, and curbs city-wide.

Promote additional investment

Action Steps:

1. Work with MainStreet DeLand Association to prioritize and schedule additional public improvements.
2. Continue private investment in those core assets that define “sense of community.”
 - a. Encourage private investment in commercial redevelopment and residential restoration.
 - b. Provide incentives to encourage redevelopment of commercially underutilized buildings.
3. Develop plan for maintenance and utilization of downtown parking lots.
4. Implement other facets of Downtown Master Plan Update.
 - a. Develop alternate forms of transportation downtown linked to Intermodal Facility, i.e. downtown trolley.
 - b. Continue partnership with Main Street Association.
 - c. Maintain linkage with Stetson facilities.
5. Promote bicycle/pedestrian friendly resources.
6. Create an Arts and Culture District in downtown DeLand.

7. Develop policies and plans for development outside of our core that promotes public and private investment that is complementary to our core, not competitive.

Create and/or support public policies that promote a sense of community, promote our community's history, promote inclusiveness or solve important community issues.

Action Step:

1. Support additional diverse and inclusive events throughout the City.
2. Add youth programs that create more youth influence in the community.
3. Create a database for volunteers in the community.
4. Support preservation of historic structures in core city as well as throughout the City.

Strategic Focus Area: Creating the connected community.

Strategic Context: It is the connections between the three elements identified so far which will create the economic dynamism and the community vibrancy desired by the citizenry. This connection takes form in four ways:

- **Key Corridors.** The City has two key corridors – Woodland and SR 44 and several gateways that are important entry ways into the City. The look and feel of these corridors and gateways needs to be consistent or complementary with the City both to enhance the sense of community as well as permeate across the City the image of DeLand as a distinctive place which attracts high value wage earners and high value jobs.
- **Greenways.** This includes recreational areas, bike paths, urban trails, sidewalks and other physical connections which allow one to move about the city in a pedestrian-friendly manner. This connection fosters sense of community while also supporting the attractiveness of the City to high value jobs.
- **Information.** To attract high value jobs and high value wage earners and entrepreneurs, the City must offer access to the world through electronic means.
- **Comprehensive Code Enforcement on a focused basis.** If the City is to maintain its competitive advantage as a real place with a sense of community, no part of the City can be allowed to deteriorate. Therefore code enforcement must be comprehensive, but used on a focused, priority basis.

Strategic Results:

- Mobility.
- Community aesthetics and appearance.
- Human and technological connections.
- Preserve sense of community for long term as well as new residents.

Strategies:

Walkability and alternative mobility

Action Steps:

1. Continue implementation of sidewalk master plan with emphasis on safety and linking neighborhoods to each other and to the other features of the City, i.e. downtown, parks, schools, etc.
 - a. Continue the sidewalk construction using a ten year plan and repair all broken sidewalks within a five year program.
2. Continue to develop all phases of the DeLand Greenway.
3. Develop and implement a plan to make DeLand a bicycle friendly community modeled after best practices put forth by the League of American Bicyclists.

Traffic Mobility

Action Steps:

1. Identify and implement options for traffic calming throughout the City.
2. Continue street resurfacing plan.
3. Continue to pursue Sunrail station for DeLand.
4. Develop options to shuttle commuters from Sunrail to downtown DeLand.
5. Encourage other alternative forms of public transportation.

Design and Appearance

Action Steps:

1. Continue development of DeLand Greenway.
2. Roadways:
 - a. Partner with the Florida Department of Transportation and Volusia County to develop a corridor improvement plan which identifies ways in which the major entrances into the City can be improved.
 - b. Improve City's gateway signage.
3. Maintain and improve the aesthetic appearance throughout the City and along its gateways.
 - a. Gateways:
 - i. Enforce the City's Design Standards.
 - ii. Focus proactive enforcement on major issues that create unsightliness along the City's gateways.
 - iii. Mowing, litter control, planting trees.
 - iv. Continue Joint code enforcement/gateway standards with the County.
 - v. Develop joint code enforcement programs with the County on shared corridors.
 - vi. Maintain Tree City USA designation.
 - b. Continue focused program for razing condemnable structures as funding allows.
 - c. Review sign requirements.

Strategic Focus Area: High value government.

Strategic Context: To support the combination of high value jobs and sense of community a high value government must be fostered. This would include as:

- Increased use of e-governmental tools to communicate internally and externally.
- Alignment of resources to the strategic plan.
- Integrated city infrastructure with other public and private infrastructure sources.

Strategic Results:

- Efficiency.
- Effectiveness.
- Organizational Capacity Leadership.
- Interaction with citizenry and access to city government.

Strategies:

Technology leadership

Action Steps:

1. Continue implementation of a strategic information technology plan.
2. Continue to position the City to be a municipal leader in the use of information technology for public services by achieving e-qualified community status.
3. Enhance e-government capabilities:
 - a. Expand and continually improve city web site. Develop interactive website.
 - b. Endeavor to install all new customer accounts through electronic payments.
 - c. Develop a social media strategy consistent with Florida law.
4. Facilitate partnering opportunities with other related infrastructure providers.
5. Provide education to city workforce on technology utilization.

Organizational Improvement

Action Steps:

1. Annually provide customer service training for employees.
2. Continue implementation of an organizational improvement / process re-engineering program.
3. Systematically and continuously review City functions from the perspective of how technology can improve efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Identify long term investments in technology, facilities, and training to enhance services and operations.
5. Systematically and continuously review City functions for improved efficiency and effectiveness and consider potential privatization and/or public partnership advantages.

Facilities and infrastructure

Action Steps:

1. Maintain park system to provide 4.6 acres per 1,000 citizens and increase capacity at existing facilities.
2. Continue maintenance of City facilities in accordance with five-year maintenance plan.
3. Aggressively pursue expansion of reclaimed water system master plan for expansion.
4. Complete a comprehensive analysis of all underutilized public property in downtown and determine optimum future use.

Future planning

Action Steps:

1. Maintain City Strategic Plan and update at City goal setting workshop.
2. In cooperation with the other west-side utilities, develop and implement strategies and facilities to meet the requirements of the Blue Springs Mitigation Strategy.
3. Continue capital investments to alleviate future flooding of neighborhoods.
4. Prioritization of projects included in Stormwater Master Plan.
5. Plan for increased cultural diversity and increased senior citizen population.
6. Continue expansion of activities at the Sanborn Activity Center to meet demand for programs.
7. Expand programs at Chisholm Community Center.
8. Develop a plan for future park facility needs.

Service Improvements

Action Steps:

1. Emphasize paperless record keeping.
2. Develop partnerships for better efficiency, reduced costs.
3. Develop interactive use of City web site.

Staff development

Action Steps:

1. Strengthen leadership/management skills of existing employee base.
2. Continue to implement succession plan.
3. Develop a diversity plan.
4. Provide technology training to City work force. Regularly scheduled classes, technology curriculum, ask employees what they need.

Strategic Focus Area: Communication.

Strategic Context: To maintain a high level of both internal communications within the City Government as well as ensure a two-way flow of information between the City Government and the citizens.

Strategic Results:

- Informed and engaged citizenry and city employees.
- Improved access to city government.

Strategies:

Public communication and outreach. A comprehensive public relations approach incorporating newsletters, e-communications, outreach efforts and other identified tools for improving both public access to and understanding of government, as well as to increase public participation in civic affairs.

Action Steps:

1. Develop and implement a strategic communications plan.
2. Emphasize personal contacts with citizens vs. heavy reliance on electronic communication.
3. Survey community periodically on city services.

Citizenship development

Action Steps:

1. Continue local student government academy designed to provide high school students with knowledge of local government (Chamber, High School).
2. Pursue development of a youth council.
3. Pursue development of a citizen's academy.
4. Continue/expand activities related to Florida city government week.

Expanded access

Action Steps:

1. Encourage civic engagement in the policy development process.
2. Continue a City Commission citizen concern response system.

Legislative

Action Steps:

1. Continue development of annual legislative action platform.
2. Communicate policy positions of City to State legislators on specific State legislative initiatives.

Strategic Focus Area: Maintaining a Safe Community

Strategic Context: To have a thriving, prosperous, and exciting community in which to live work and play it is necessary to first provide for the safety of our citizens.

Strategies:

Maintain public safety

Action Steps:

1. Insure public safety services are developed to meet needs of annexed areas.
2. Continue a program of stricter speed limit enforcement.
3. Continue closest station response with Volusia County and coordinate public safety service delivery.
4. Maintain strong law enforcement presence in the community.
5. Develop additional preventative public safety services that are not emergency services.
6. Enhance communication between public safety and citizens.
7. Continue Citizens Police Academy and utilize alumni in appropriate ways to assist in law enforcement efforts.
8. Work with the Volusia County Sheriff's office to develop and implement a joint policing program to ensure consistency in enforcement.
9. Develop and implement policies that produce tangible and measurable solutions for people experiencing homelessness.

Strategic Focus Area: Preparing for the Future/Sustainability

Strategic Context: Recognizing that the City itself is dynamic and that extensive changes will occur in the region in the near and long term future, it is important that there be a strategic focus on the future.

Strategic Results:

- Identification of emerging issues that can impact the City.
- Proactive development of plans and strategies to address those issues.

Strategies:

Identification of emerging issues and options regarding a growing senior population.

Identification of emerging issues and options regarding health care services in the community.

Recognize and where possible facilitate or participate in mobility (transportation) planning for the community in the regional context.

Increase opportunities for affordable housing.

Identify and facilitate means to address community social needs.

Identify and pursue sustainability opportunities.

Action Steps:

1. Promote sustainability in policy decisions.
2. Identify sustainability initiatives to be pursued with grant money.
3. Pursue Florida Green City platinum designation.

A Strategic Plan for the City of DeLand

Approved by the City Commission of the City of DeLand this 18th day of July, 2016



Robert F. Apgar, Mayor – Commissioner



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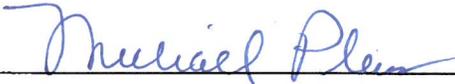
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