

CITY OF Mt. DORA

# STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

Facilitated by Marilyn Crotty

Institute of Government

University of Central Florida

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Mount Dora City Council held a Strategic Planning Workshop on July 9, 2016. Ms. Marilyn Crotty, director of the Florida Institute of Government at the University of Central Florida facilitated the session.

The Mayor, the Council Members, and senior staff participated in the day-long workshop that was held at City Hall. Ms. Crotty asked the elected officials to speak about their visions for the future of the city in 2026. After conducting an environmental scan, the participants assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the City of Mount Dora.

The Council then identified strategic issues that should be addressed in the next few years. The list of issues was incorporated into eight goals for the city and objectives under each goal were specified. The final activity of the workshop was the selection of priority objectives for implementation. The objectives receiving support from at least four of the elected officials were identified as Tier One priorities objectives. Those receiving support from at least 3 council members are designated Tier Two priorities. All of the rest of the objectives were listed as Other Objectives.

This report is a summary of the discussions and conclusions of the workshop.

## **VISION – CITY OF MOUNT DORA, 2016**

*The Mayor and Council Members were asked to describe their visions for the future of the city ten years from now. The following comments were shared:*

Planned and controlled growth  
Infrastructure in place – citywide  
Maintain image – festival/dining  
Still in Top 10 for retirement  
Tree lined streets  
Parking garages – satellite  
Foot traffic  
Innovation district – half full (university, medical)  
Highland St – uptown – own flavor  
NECRA – Council member  
Redrawn districts  
Athletic Park across highway  
    (Connected) exercise, water facility, bike and walking, adult and children activities  
Adequate revenues  
Some light industry – clean  
Commercial development – 441  
Annexation  
Not known as a “retirement” community – good mix – attract younger residents  
Maintain downtown Mt. Dora  
More artist downtown – studios  
    “Art roots” – antiques  
Open opportunities for campaigning throughout city  
Nature trails  
Signature festivals – some limits  
Right kind of economic development  
    Small tech, light industry  
Jobs so young people will return to Mt. Dora  
Housing opportunities  
Enhanced education – higher & K-12  
Parks in District 4  
Parking solutions – small facilities  
Accessibility – parking, trails  
Ethos – transparent, open, easy to work with government  
    Feeling people get when visiting Mount Dora  
Keeping up with infrastructure  
Population growth  
Maintaining unique aura – beauty  
Promoting city nationally to attract families  
Expanded downtown to Highland and beyond  
NECRA – historical opportunities  
    Expansion from downtown  
Unique public transportation  
Historical tours

Historical museum – NECRA?  
Recreation expanded  
Enhanced city staff – attract quality staff

### **EXTERNAL ISSUES & TRENDS**

*The group discussed trends and issues that are occurring in the international, national, and state environment that may have an impact on the city in the near future. The following external forces were identified as significant for the City of Mount Dora:*

Terrorism – preparation  
Aging population – baby boomers  
More retirees coming to Florida  
Multiculturalism  
Space industry – come-back  
Over population  
    Water supply  
More need for solar energy  
Sea level rise  
More sink holes  
Erosion of home rule by Florida Legislature  
    Need to engage  
Living longer – active elders  
    Quality of life  
Socio-economic relationships  
    Shrinking middle class  
    Haves and have-nots  
    Leading to divisiveness  
Federal Mandates – inclusion, compliance  
    Affordable Care Act  
Public expectation for transparency  
Adversarial relationships  
    City vs. State – need more collaboration among govt. entities – county/city; city/city  
Technology – changes  
    Autonomous vehicles  
Expectations from citizen  
    Fast service – response  
Information explosion  
Social media  
    Positive/negative  
Diminishment of trust in government  
Quick responses maybe without thought  
Need be fast – moving (technology speed)  
Loss of human contact/connection  
    High tech/hi touch  
Privacy rights

## **INTERNAL ISSUES & TRENDS**

*The group analyzed internal trends and issues that may have an impact on the city. The following items were identified:*

Food insecurity – high rate of poverty – seniors, children  
Caring community – volunteerism  
Terrorism – preparation- security system  
Inclusive - welcoming  
Competing worldwide for jobs, etc. – globalization  
HOA's restrict campaigning  
Leader in Lake County for moving forward – growth  
Interagency agreements  
    Open communication  
Demand on resources greater than ability to provide  
Population increasing  
Flexible approach to problem-solving; hiring personnel  
Need for informal interactions  
    Council – staff  
2019 Comp Plan – EAR  
Envision plan – updated  
More citizen involvement  
Two year term – constraint/but supported by residents  
Move forward with issues at hand

*The Council and staff then identified what they perceive as strengths and weaknesses of the city and its government. They also identified opportunities and threats that the city faces. The following chart is a compilation of these ideas. The number in parentheses ( ) next to each comment indicates how many participants made this comment.*

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
Staff (9) – outstanding; professional(2); great depth of knowledge and experience; great (2) dedicated	Staff (9) – lack of succession planning dealing with decimated key staff departing; lack of staff in maintenance and repairs; dangerously understaffed in key areas; need more; appropriate staffing; short staffed in some areas;	Growth (5) – poised for future growth; smart growth; room to grow; potential for growth; proper management of future growth	Economy (3) - including global; fragile; downturn in economy
Community (4) – involvement; sense of community; educated; high level of volunteerism	Council (5) – 2 year terms; new council micro-managing staff; No leadership; comment time over run with non-agenda items; lack of understanding of policy role for council	Innovation District (3) – preparation for district growth; world class	Staff (2) - loss of staff due to low wages or overworked – need backups
People (3) – great; outspoken; care deeply for Mount Dora	Political (2) - slander	Expanded ways of citizen communication	In Fighting (2) - within Tri-Cities; and negativism
Historic (3) – downtown; concerned about historic preservation	Attorney (2) – lack of effective use of City Attorney; letting a good city manager and Assistant City Manager and Attorney go without reason	Developing a comprehensive public building analysis inventory	Not able to go into HOA’s during election
Downtown (2) – charming; beautiful	Bench strength (2) – of employees	Social media expanded use	Growth (2) – pressures; not planning enough for future growth
Cooperation from State, County, surrounding communities	Cumbersome development process	Regular updates of long term planning	Someplace special (2) - Losing; over-development that could spoil charm of “someplace special”
Kim	Decisions without knowing citizen desires	Region leader with the right niche	Property tax burden moves people out of town
Vision	Lack of attention to infrastructure	Focus on outputs not inputs	Lowered revenues
Diversity of ideas	“Sunshine on government” group false accusations	Increase bike/walk paths w/ 441 and 46 plus Wekiva Parkway	Encroachment from Orlando. Don’t want to be a suburb of that
Character	Online capabilities	429	Politics
City location topography	Fund balance	Economic Development	Loss of privacy
Progressive and inclusive	Lack of transportation	Intergovernmental cooperation	City’s image w/digital media

Reputation as FL “festival city” (Visit Mount Dora)	Taking on more debt	Develop a special events department w/in Parks & Recreation	Land locking the city
Natural beauty, lake front, trees, quaint charm	Lack of formal ethics program process	Continuation of plans for streetscape and envision Mount Dora Plan	Political distrust of council by public (perception)
We have invested in quality of life in our parks	Lack of industry and high paying jobs	Make a Citizen Centric City	Undefined succession planning
Physical growth potential	Entrenched “we/they” feelings. These often involve concerns about favoritism	Expand services in Parks and Recreation ex. Community Center	Nearby cities – smarter – quicker competition
Great fire department	Division of city	Location, location, location	Terrorism and public security of public and government
Safe city	Calling oversight mistrust	Proactive public relations	Division
Solid police department	Distrust	Being quick in solutions	Lack of funding
Employees willingness to help	Revenue	Tri-Cities (2) Tri-City approach to problems; Collaborative meetings with Tri-City governments	Political divisiveness
Strong commitment to special events	Communication from staff to Council	Lakefront usage – balance “development with need for Green Space	Big City problems with growth
Balanced budget	Resources	Use of CRA assets to improve accessibility	Failure to timely address parking needs
Taxable values	More staff is solution to issues belief	Vacant land to East	Technology – keeping up
Common love for Mount Dora	Unfriendly business environment perception	Still have time to invest in the direction we are headed to	Perception of being non-inclusive
Commitment to excellence	Acceptance of new ideas		Growing socio-economic divide locally
Marketable city to different age groups/demographics	City Fire Department non-compliance w NFPA standards		Not keeping up with repairs and lack of funding and staff
Public perception of Mount Dora	Can’t run departments or programs entirely or efficiently with only volunteers		
	Higher education opportunities		

## STRATEGIC ISSUES

*The Council and staff identified strategic issues and organized them into like categories:*

### **Economic Development**

- Hiring Director
- Evaluation and assessment of special events
- Marketing of city – branding

**Infrastructure**

Right-of-ways for infrastructure easements  
Facilities for future growth  
New Public Works building  
Maintenance of infrastructure (buildings, roads, water, sewer, sidewalks)  
Expansion of utilities  
Technology needs  
Enhanced fiber optics

**Human Resources**

Staff shortages  
Increase staffing levels – Fire (NFPA Standards), Police, Building Maintenance,  
Staff – pay and benefits, development, succession

**Fiscal**

Needs assessment tool for justifying resource allocation  
Strategies for increasing revenues/fund balance  
Balance citizen ability to pay with city budgetary needs

**Community engagement**

Increase 2-way communication with citizens  
Coordinating volunteers  
Update implementation of Envision Plan

**Growth Management**

Plan for dealing with growth related to innovation district, Wekiva Parkway  
Expediting parking study  
New Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
Maintenance of Mt. Dora as a “special place”  
Streetscape implementation  
Increased accessibility throughout city - intermodal

**Enhanced Public Safety****Council Effectiveness**

Council Development  
Training, etc.  
Workshops and educational presentations

*The Council confirmed that the eight strategic issues listed above were appropriate goals for the city. The Council then identified objectives under each goal. They then selected priorities. Any objective that received support from four or more Council Members (identified by number in ( ) in front of each objective) is considered a Tier One priority. Objectives with support from at least three elected officials are Tier Two priorities. The rest of the objectives are listed as*

*Other. There is no significance to the order in which the goals and objectives are listed.*

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **GOAL - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Priority Objectives**

##### **Tier One**

- (5) Hire Economic Development Director
- (4) Create an Economic Development Plan – to include marketing and branding

##### **Tier Two**

- (3) Evaluation and assessment of special events

### **GOAL – INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **Priority Objectives**

##### **Tier One**

- (5) Maintenance of existing infrastructure

##### **Tier Two**

- (3) Master plan for future infrastructure utilities, buildings
- (3) Construct new Public Services Building

#### **Other Objectives**

- (0) Develop Comprehensive Technology Plan (including fiber optic, hardware, software)

### **GOAL - HUMAN RESOURCES**

#### **Other Objectives**

- (2) Conduct staffing needs assessment – current and future (levels)
- (1) Conduct pay and benefits assessment
- (1) Do succession planning

(0) Continue providing continuing education and development for council, education boards, staff (including ethics)

**GOAL – FISCAL**

**Priority Objective  
Tier One**

(4) Develop strategies for increasing fund balance (additional revenue/revenue sources) - including financial forecasting

**Other Objectives**

(2) Develop assessment tool for justifying resource allocation

**GOAL - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**Priority Objective  
Tier Two**

(3) Update and implement Envision Plan

**Other Objectives**

(1) Enhance the use of volunteers with improved coordination and assessment

(0) Increase 2-way communication through a variety of methodologies

**GOAL - GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

**Priority Objectives  
Tier One**

(5) Plan for future growth of innovation district including appropriate annexations, land use designations, etc.

(4) Develop a new master plan for parks and recreation

**Other Objectives**

(1) Review and implement parking study as appropriate

(0) Implement phase 4 and 5 of Streetscape Plan

(0) Develop city-wide intermodal mobility plan

## **GOAL - PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **Other Objectives**

(1) Achieve and maintain accreditation for public safety entities

(1) Assure enhanced security at City Hall

(1) Develop long range plan for public safety needs as city grows (facility, personnel, vehicles, etc., equipment)

(0) Achieve and maintain NFPA standards for personnel

## **GOAL - COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS**

### **Priority Objective Tier One**

(4) Conduct periodic/regular council workshops and educational presentations

### **Other Objectives**

(0) Reinststitute regular meetings of Tri-City elected officials

(0) Promote legislative advocacy by council through various mechanisms

## **PRIORITY OBJECTIVES**

### **Tier One**

- (5) Hire Economic Development Director
- (5) Maintenance of existing infrastructure
- (5) Plan for future growth of innovation district including appropriate annexations, land use designations, etc.
- (4) Create an Economic Development Plan – to include marketing and branding
- (4) Develop strategies for increasing fund balance (additional revenue/revenue sources) - including financial forecasting
- (4) Develop a new master plan for parks and recreation
- (4) Conduct periodic/regular council workshops and educational presentations

### **Tier Two**

- (3) Evaluation and assessment of special events
- (3) Master plan for future infrastructure utilities, buildings
- (3) Construct new Public Services Building
- (3) Update and implement Envision Plan