

Strategic Vision Review Process

The City Council is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the City's Strategic Vision. On March 2, March 18, and April 8, 2005, the City Council held a series of special work sessions to discuss the City of Clearwater's 20-year strategic vision and associated vision priorities. During these sessions the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT analysis) were identified along with a discussion on the mission and vision statements. The vision statement was drafted to encompass the diversity of Clearwater. Thirteen items have also been identified as important elements modified to better support the mission and vision. The issues discussed during the three vision sessions are proposed changes and alterations.

Public input is very important to this process and no decisions will be made until the public engagement piece is complete. There will be eight public visioning sessions beginning in September 2005. The meetings will be held every Tuesday at locations throughout the City (Beach Recreation Center, Main Library, North Greenwood Recreation Center, Ross Norton Recreation Center, Long Center, Morningside Recreation Center, Wood Valley Boys and Girls Club, and Countryside Library). Upon completion of the public feedback process, the Council will review and incorporate this input. Our goal is to have the final revised vision document completed by the end of calendar year 2005.

The following document reflects the Council's current "approved" Strategic Vision.

Clearwater

“A Strategic Vision for Two Decades”

Mission

To provide a safe, healthy, and vibrant community to the citizens of Clearwater and a stimulating and nurturing environment for Clearwater’s business community and tourists.

Vision

Sparkling Clearwater is a uniquely beautiful, economically vibrant community that re-invests in itself and is a wonderful place to live, learn, work and play.

This will be evidenced by (in no particular order):

- A safe, clean, green environment.
- Diverse, high paying jobs
- High quality education
- A variety of cultural and recreational offerings
- Efficient, responsive City services
- Safe, comfortable, walkable neighborhoods
- Well-maintained housing stock in all markets
- A vibrant downtown that is mindful of its heritage
- Well maintained infrastructure
- Efficient transportation systems
- A quality beach environment

Public Safety

Assumption: *Assuming no significant increase in city population, federal/state mandates, or unknown contingencies over the next 20 years; there will be no major increase in the number of public safety personnel or equipment costs other than for previous commitments.*

The City of Clearwater wishes to provide excellent public safety to its residents and visitors. It plans on accomplishing this goal by concentrating on four main areas: continual training for our police and firefighters; focusing existing police presence in communities; up-to-date and strategically located fire stations and equipment; and a well thought out action plan in case of natural disasters or terrorist threats. It is extremely important for both the citizens of Clearwater and the City Council that the city upholds and maintains its current level of public safety.

The most basic building block in providing a **safe** community is the continual training of all our employees. Our police and firefighters train extensively on a variety of subject matters including routine measures such as defensive tactics, handcuffing, and medical procedures along with more complex scenario's such as hostage rescues and hazardous waste emergencies. The safety of our citizens and employees is our highest priority and continual training contributes to the success of Clearwater's number one objective.

Within the sphere of public safety, a significant contributor to public safety is the Clearwater Police Department (CPD). While they currently provide excellent service to the residents of Clearwater, over the next twenty years their role will change in response to emerging needs. The CPD will focus on deterring crime, increasing public perception of safety, and expanding public communication. Through these measures, the CPD will provide a **safe** atmosphere for both **neighborhoods** and individuals throughout Clearwater.

Another vital component of public safety lies clearly within the Fire Department. The Fire Task Force created a vision that is still valid and important. The City of Clearwater intends to support the Fire Department in its long-range goals that were created by the Fire Task Force. These goals consist of building fire stations in under- served areas of the city, increasing the quality of fire equipment and existing infrastructure, and populating Fire and EMS Trucks with enough firefighters to ensure the **safety** of both the residents of Clearwater and the firefighters themselves.

The final element of public safety, the provision of **safety** and security in response to natural disasters and terrorist threats, will involve all departments' cooperation and support. The Fire and Police Departments will play critical roles in implementing and coordinating emergency plans for the entire city, but it will take all departments working as a team to protect the citizens of Clearwater. From the Public Communications Department announcing evacuation directions, to increased Airport and infrastructure security, the City of Clearwater will be prepared to respond to, and address citizens' fears of, natural disasters or possible terrorist attacks.

Economic Development

Assumption: *Well-planned and responsible economic redevelopment of core residential areas, Downtown, the Beach, the commercial corridors and business parks are vital to the entire City of Clearwater. Clearwater is a built out community and therefore requires a stable and strong tax base. Since we are expected to manage the millage rate, we must carefully develop and redevelop the land we possess to ensure the greatest return of investment for the citizens in terms of jobs available, revenue for services, and conservation of green spaces.*

Responsible economic redevelopment and development are essential to ensure the vitality of Clearwater. The city plans on rejuvenating our economy by focusing on four key priorities within Clearwater. By concentrating on core residential areas, Downtown, the Beaches, and the marketability of existing commercial corridors and business parks, we can revitalize our economy.

Core residential areas will be encouraged to participate in the Neighborhood development program. The Housing department will continue to seek grants for renewal and support of the housing stock.

Downtown will be redeveloped and become increasingly more marketable through strategic public investment in infrastructure and programs, while maintaining and cultivating its unique historical past and buildings to ensure **a vibrant downtown that remains mindful of its heritage**. Infrastructure investment will be led by the new Bridge, Main Library, Town Lake, Amphitheater, Waterfront Bluff Park, and additional parking as needed. At the same time the City will focus on the small aspects of making Downtown a special place. Program improvements such as marketing, recruitment, business retention and incentive development will be led by organizations such as the Community Redevelopment Agency, Downtown Development Board, Main Street Program and the Chamber Central Council. Together these groups, the City, and property owners will invite quality investors to bring forward proposals and projects that will encourage both year-round residents and visitors to support new and existing businesses and projects that will increase the overall aesthetics and property values of Clearwater.

Clearwater Beach provides the major attraction for the city's tourist industry, plus offers water-based recreation to our citizens. The future success of Clearwater Beach relies on the redevelopment of current resorts, the increase of entertainment options, and key public sector investments. The City and the County will provide redevelopment incentives, such as the Beach By Design Resort Unit Bonus Pool, streetscape, and "wayfinding" programs that will provide attractive private and public facilities for our residents and tourists to patronize. Public sector improvements will include construction of the Beachwalk project and the streetscape programs for the rest of the beach business district. In addition, parking programs will address both north and south beach public parking options as a catalyst for

private sector investment and will increase available parking to the public. A key component of the Beach strategy will be to assess options to deal with the severe “peak period” access during spring break and summer. Clearwater will become known as a high **quality beach environment** and resort community while at the same time be faithful to its traditional character of open public access to the beach.

The City’s businesses that reside on key commercial corridors or in our limited office and industrial parks, will benefit from continued public investment that will create a quality “public realm” and provide an environment that is competitive within our marketplace. Similarly, these businesses will redevelop and improve the overall environment in which they are located. Clearwater is uniquely positioned to attract such businesses as quality office, small technology, and retail development- we have an unequalled quality of life and the business support services of a large metro area. The city will continue to invest in business attraction and retention programs with partners such as the Chambers of Commerce, Tampa Bay Partnership and Pinellas County. We will jointly pursue incentives so that the City’s built-out environment is competitive within the greater Tampa Bay area. We recognize that the retention and support for existing businesses provides opportunities for redevelopment and growth within our City. In addition, we will support partnerships that encourage workforce development. The combination of these efforts will bring and nurture quality businesses to our community that offer **diverse high paying jobs**.

Infrastructure Maintenance

Assumption: *The City of Clearwater is determined to protect its past and future investments in both equipment and facilities, while protecting its citizens’ safety and health, through its dedication to on-going infrastructure maintenance. Infrastructure maintenance must be addressed if the City wishes to preserve its streets, sidewalks, roads, waterways, and major facilities.*

Infrastructure maintenance is so basic to a well-run city that it is sometimes overlooked. The City of Clearwater has decided to openly commit itself to providing **well-maintained infrastructure** for its citizens. We plan on accomplishing this goal by focusing on asset management, life cycle maintenance, and use of new technology.

In order for Clearwater to fully manage and plan its future infrastructure needs, the full extent of current infrastructure must be measured. Departments will apply asset management techniques to track and catalogue all existing infrastructure. Once this is accomplished, a clearer picture of the city’s future needs will emerge.

However, while the research and data compilation is taking place, the city will support its previous commitments to maintenance. We will continue to move forward with projects such as sidewalk maintenance and increasing reclaimed water usage. The combination of building a valid picture of existing infrastructure and ensuring its long-term health leads to the final strategy the city will undertake in the next twenty years to support infrastructure maintenance.

As technology improves over the next twenty years, the city plans on researching and using cost-effective infrastructure that will provide the best possible services to the citizens of Clearwater. An example of such a program would be devising a system that would store reclaimed water in the rainy season to be distributed during the dry season for irrigation purposes. Only by combining asset management, continual improvement, and future technology can the city hope to provide the citizens of Clearwater with the infrastructure and **efficient responsive services** they deserve.

Quality of Life

Assumption: *Quality of Life encompasses almost all services that the City of Clearwater provides for its residents and visitors. It is foremost in our minds as we move forward to make Clearwater an even greater place to live, work and play.*

Quality of Life is a phrase that sums up all the reasons to live, play and stay in the City of Clearwater. Accessible beautiful beaches, a responsive city government, vibrant neighborhoods, and the fun and excitement of seeing a Phillies game in the spring are only a small part of the quality of life in Clearwater. It is the intention of the city to uphold our current standards of quality for our residents and visitors, but also to improve upon all the reasons why people visit and live in Clearwater. The city plans to advance quality of life by increasing cultural and recreational diversity, supporting our neighborhoods, providing a safe environment, and offering efficient, high quality customer service.

The population of Clearwater is as diverse as it is beautiful. In addition to celebrating this diversity, we must also recognize the differing activities are needed in order to entertain a wide variety of individuals. Therefore, the City of Clearwater is determined to support a wide **variety of cultural and recreational offerings**. We will celebrate our diversity and historical connections to our past through events, festivals and publications. Recreational facilities that meet all residents' needs will also be built. Examples of such projects are the new Main Library, North Greenwood Recreational Complex, and the evolution of Coachman Park into a regional venue for entertainment.

In addition to recreation and culture, citizens need **safe, comfortable, walkable neighborhoods** to truly have a high quality of life. Therefore, the City of Clearwater will uphold programs and projects that support our neighborhoods such as, Celebrate Clearwater Neighborhood Day, code enforcement, the tree bank, homebuyer assistance and homeowner rehabilitation. It is our goal to have **well-maintained housing stock in all markets** throughout our neighborhoods. Our neighborhoods are one of our greatest assets and deserve our care and encouragement.

Just as important as the vitality of our neighborhoods is our environment. In response to this need, the City will preserve and expand projects that protect and improve our beautiful city. Increasing open park land, supporting our nationally known brownfields program, beautifying existing roadways, parklands and infrastructure where possible, plus continuing forward on our initiatives to decrease flooding throughout the area are just a part of our plans to provide the citizens of Clearwater

with a **safe, clean, green environment**. The final component of quality of life for our City is providing **efficient, responsive City services**.

In our modern society, an integral role of government is providing high quality services to citizens. Over the next twenty years, the City of Clearwater plans on accomplishing this goal by improving traffic flow, implementing **efficient transportation systems**, making staff more accessible and friendly, and encouraging a **high quality educational** system to develop throughout our county. All of our services will be superior in nature and provided at the lowest cost possible to our citizens and visitors. When the city successfully integrates an increase in cultural and recreational diversity with continued neighborhood support, a safe environment, and efficient, high quality customer services, Clearwater will become an even greater place to live, work and play.

Human Resource Issues

Assumption: *Just as cities must manage and maximize their financial and physical capital, they must also manage and maximize their largest investment and most important asset, their employees. Without competent, dedicated, and talented people our city cannot provide quality service to citizens or achieve its mission and vision. Our employees will make Clearwater's vision a reality.*

The City of Clearwater's most valuable assets are the men and women who work daily to accomplish the goals of Clearwater's residents and elected officials. Realizing the worth of our employees, the City will nurture and cultivate our existing and future workforce and plan for current and future employment trends.

The public and private sectors are experiencing the impact of several important changes: the emergence of a knowledge-based economy, dramatic advances in technology, and the increased expectations of our stakeholders to create and deliver cost-effective and value-added products and services. Moreover, employees expect greater work/life flexibility and balance, personal and professional opportunities for learning and development, empowerment, and security. Additional pressures such as growing competition for talent, limited financial resources, and a significant loss of employees due to retirements, contribute to the importance of employing and retaining qualified staff for our city.

The City of Clearwater's challenge is to optimize its work force and organizational capabilities by attracting, retaining, developing, managing, and rewarding a skilled, motivated, productive, and diverse workforce in an environment of limited financial resources and rapid cultural, demographic, economic, and technological change. It will accomplish this goal by creating a healthy environment for its employees and providing the citizens of Clearwater with a professional and motivated staff to carry out the city's vision and provide the **efficient, responsive City services** that our citizens demand.

Conclusion

The City of Clearwater intends to provide a safe, healthy, and vibrant community for the citizens of Clearwater and a stimulating and nurturing environment for Clearwater's business community and tourists by integrating the five strategic priorities of the City Council and their vision for our City into our initiatives and projects. This document captures the essence of our plans to rejuvenate Clearwater over the next twenty years.

While the City of Clearwater would like to provide every service and amenity that its citizens desire, we live in a world of finite resources. Due to the desire to continually improve our services to our citizens, we will have to make tough choices about the programs and projects we wish to support and how they will be funded. We have an array of choices in front of us: reducing or eliminating services, raising the millage rate or user charges, pursuing grants or other outside funding sources, or issuing debt to pay for needed capital projects (coupled with funding for the annual debt and operating costs). These considerations and strategies will have to be pondered as we move forward in our strategic planning and implementation of the City Councils' five policy priorities and vision statement.

While choices are still ahead of us, with unknown consequences, we look forward with optimism. By working together, we will succeed and together we will move forward into a bright future. We ask you to join us as we make Clearwater **a wonderful place to live, learn, work, and play.**