



City of Newberry

Community Visioning Workshop

August 28, 2021
9:00 a.m.

25440 West Newberry Road
Newberry, Florida 32669

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Marlowe called the Strategic Planning Workshop to order at 9:00 a.m. and acknowledged the absence of Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Farnsworth, and Commissioner Marden.

QUORUM CHECK

Mayor	Jordan Marlowe
Commissioners	Rick Coleman Tony Mazon
City Manager	Mike New
City Clerk	Judy Rice
Staff:	
Assistant City Manager, Director of Finance and Administration	Dallas Lee
Assistant City Manager, Director of Utilities and Public Works	Jamie Jones
Director of Recreation	Travis Parker
Director of Planning & Economic Development	Bryan Thomas
Principal Planner	Wendy Kinser-Maxwell
Absent:	
Commissioner	Mark Clerk
Commissioner	Monty Farnsworth
Commissioner	Tim Marden
City Attorney	Scott Walker

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Community Visioning and Strategic Plan.

9:05 Welcome – Mike New, City Manager
Public Comment

9:20 Introductions – Commissioners, Sr. Leadership
Manager New introduced Facilitator Mari Rains, Director & Consultant; Florida Institute of Government at UCF. Facilitator Rains provided an overview of the Strategic Planning Process and an overview of the agenda.

- 9:30 Manager New and Asst. Manager Lee provided the State of the City and Budget. Mayor Marlowe asked for questions from the Commission.
- 10:00 Facilitator Rains shared survey results and responses with the Commission and senior staff from the following:
- Community Public Forums (group responses),
 - City of Newberry's Strategic Planning Resident Survey (165 responses), and
 - City of Newberry Employee Survey (22 responses).
- See Exhibits A and B.
- 11:00 Discussion ensued on the SWOT Analysis with emphasis on the following priorities:
- Establishing green belt east of 202nd Street and Jonesville,
 - Economic development, extension of infrastructure,
 - Newberry Downtown Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA),
 - Restoration of historic buildings,
 - Paving of interior streets, street lighting, additional sidewalks, and
 - Methods to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion within the workplace and the community.
- 12:00 Lunch Break
- 12:35 Vision 2031
- The following is a draft of the proposed vision statement; word smithed by workshop attendees.
- Vision Statement: A progressively conservative community that focuses on innovation, excellence, and family values.**
- The following is a draft of the proposed mission statement; word smithed by workshop attendees.
- Mission Statement: The City of Newberry is dedicated to building a diverse and vibrant community by investing in our infrastructure, embracing innovation, providing excellent customer service and a responsive government while remaining fiscally conservative and preserving our small-town feel.**
- 1:30 Newberry's Top Priorities for the next 5 Years
- Discussion ensued. Top priorities will be revisited during the next scheduled strategic planning meeting with senior staff.

COMMENTS


There were no public comments.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Signed and dated this 13th day of September 2021.



Jordan Marlowe, Mayor

Judy S. Rice, City Clerk



THEMES REPORT FROM CITY OF NEWBERRY

Strategic Planning Resident Survey

August 2021 – 165 responses



Survey developed & itemized by
UCF Florida Institute of Government
407.882.3960



The Entire survey results are attached in a PDF document, so the Commission & senior staff can see all 165 comments for each question. All comments are relevant, however, this report is intended to provide a list of themes with frequent/similar responses for each question.

Q1 Was to establish residency (or not; this will be reviewed by City staff)

Q2 What are Newberry's strengths? (Pg 6 of report)

- Sense of Community
- Small town feel
- Small town values
- Great Schools
- Great people/caring neighbors
- Family oriented
- Friendly
- Growth opportunities
- Proximity to Gainesville for jobs, resources, retail
- Strong community leadership
- Seeks input from community
- Quiet
- Lovely rural setting and green space
- Unique downtown

Q3 What are Newberry's weaknesses? (Pg 12 of report)

- Lack of businesses/commercial growth - grocery store, retail
- Lack of entertainment for families, in particular young people
- Lack of strategic planning for growth
- Traffic management/planning issues (traffic signals, street lighting, traffic flow)
- Lack of code enforcement
- Growing too fast without proper planning – developments and subdivisions impacting natural spaces
- Abandoned buildings
- Schools are at capacity/overcrowded
- Large growth rate with no planning
- Springs County

- Alachua County
- Newberry Road

Q4 What are potential POSITIVE things that are occurring, or could occur, across the state/nation/globe that Newberry could capitalize on? (specifically consider areas related to the environment, technology, legal, political, societal changes/demographics, and economy). (Pg 20)

- Increase community engagement/involvement
- Sharing of information – input from citizens, gov’t sharing info through podcasts, local news
- Long term plan manageable growth/better city planning - business medium and small –(make it easier for family businesses), encourage restaurants to open
- Find a balance between “small town” and current needs
- Focus on green initiatives/ energy efficiency/renewable energy alternatives – solar power, charging stations for vehicles, rainwater harvesting
- Land conservation/create natural green space for the community, community garden, recreation, scenic walking trails
- Develop transportation infrastructure – transportation options to/from Gainesville
- Rails to Trails - examples Newberry to High Springs and from Newberry to Trenton.
- Work with congress representatives, Florida park service to support local initiatives
- Look at and continue to apply for grants that benefit our community – (housing rehab, FRDAP, upgrade and improve community centers, outside bathrooms and parks)
- Create events and entertainment engage community – music, festivals, sports
- Creating jobs and unique opportunities in Newberry for its citizens
- Technology - Newberry should talk to AT&T and Cox about deploying Fiber (not DSL), 5G, increased/RELIABLE internet access and availability, make infrastructure investments
- Focus on providing programming for the youth locally
- Study the impacts of housing development – schools, roads (alternative attract aging population with disposable income, brings in more jobs, businesses services)
- Separation from Alachua county (Springs county -mentioned several times)
- Maintain historic downtown
- Support local agriculture and agricultural research – make connections with UF or state

NOTE: Reading comments in this entire section of survey report (pg. 20-27) would be especially helpful. Many thought-out answers. You will get a good feel from what residents are thinking.

Q5 What are potential NEGATIVE things that are occurring, or could occur, across the state/nation/globe that Newberry should avoid? (specifically consider areas related to the environment, technology, legal, political, societal changes/demographics, and economy). (pg 28)

- Lack of long-term master planning
- Housing developments, small lots, too crowded, cheaply made
- Rapid, unmanaged growth
- Over population in schools
- Increased crime
- Alachua County
- Increased or better policing – no defunding or decrease of funding
- Lack of Employment opportunities
- Divided city over heated issues (housing, police, dividing the county etc...)
- Political divisiveness

- Commuter suburb
- Concerns over Divide of breaking away from Alachua County (county split in two)
- Address blight – spruce up downtown
- Planning to attract elderly population and young families (tax base, jobs available)
- Lack of services and business that don't match housing growth
- Racism/fear mongering
- Protect our greenspace/water issues

**Q6 What are some "Treasures" of Newberry that you would like to preserve?
(pg 35)**

- Small town atmosphere
- Parks
- Community
- Historic buildings
- Historic Downtown area
- Green Spaces
- Goethe and Watermelon Pond
- Watermelon Festival (all things watermelon!)
- The natural beauty of Newberry – canopy streets
- Open fields of farmland
- Farmer's market
- Little Red School
- Farming/Agriculture
- Schools
- City Hall

Q7 Describe what you would like the City of Newberry to "look like" 10+ years from now (pg 41)

- Growth (27)
- Still small town/Keep it the way it is now (15)
- Aesthetically pleasing infrastructure
- Thriving downtown
- Better road systems in place
- Known for great schools
- Not industrial but more variety of shops and dining
- Spaces/complex for the community to gather for events, sports etc...
- More events
- Strong sense of community
- Job opportunities
- Keep small town feel not another suburb of Gainesville
- Parks and outdoor spaces for community use
- More commercial
- Restaurants
- More options

Q8 What accomplishments/projects would you like the City of Newberry to achieve in the next 5-10 years? (Pg 48)

- Sidewalks
- Road improvements and planning – address road/traffic congestion & expanded infrastructure
- Upgrade Schools
- Build infrastructure such as fiber optic & broadband
- Provide real options for our children – community center, pool, parks etc.
- Strategic business initiatives to attract the right fit for Newberry
- Develop parks and green space
- Build community through variety of events, festivals, bike trails,
- Downtown initiative
- Protect from urban sprawl
- Improve water issues and quality
- Grocery store needed
- Preserve and renovate our historic main street
- Restaurants
- Expand

Q9 What other comments (if any) would you like to add about the future of Newberry? (Pg 55-59)

NOTE: Reading comments in this entire section of survey report (pg 55-59) would be helpful.

Q10 Approximately 100 people included their email for future updates about Strategic Planning (pg 60)

Florida Institute of Government

College of Community Innovation and Education

RESIDENT STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP REPORT

For the City of



Drafted by:

UCF Florida Institute of Government

Mari Rains, Director & Consultant

407.882.3960

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City decided to host two resident stakeholder workshops to attract larger attendance and gain more feedback. Due to COVID-19 and people's varied level of concern about COVID safety, the City and UCF jointly decided to host one virtually on May 11, 2021 and one live on June 26, 2021. The agendas were identical, as noted on the following pages. This would ensure consistent data collection.

Whether using Zoom/Virtual or in-person, the UCF Consultant kept the participants engaged by breaking them into small group discussions, polling, and then reporting back to the larger group for broader discussions. The Zoom had approximately 20 attendees (not all could stay for the duration), and the in-person had approximately 30 (not all could stay for the duration). The Commissioners were invited to attend, but instructed not participate/add to the conversation, only listen to the residents. The themes the residents identified are captured in the following report.



Resident Stakeholder Workshop - VIRTUAL

May 11, 2021

AGENDA

- 6:00 Welcome – Mike New, City Manager
Introductions – Commissioners, Sr. Leadership
Facilitator Introduction: Mari Rains, Florida Institute of Government at UCF
Overview of Strategic Planning Process – Mari Rains
- 6:15 State of the City & Budget:
▪ Mike New, City Manager
▪ Dallas Lee, Director of Finance & Administration
Questions
- 6:45 Treasures of Newberry – Mari Rains & Residents
Report Back – Mari Rains & Residents
- 7:05 Break
- 7:10 Vision 2031 – Mari Rains & Residents
Report Back – Mari Rains & Residents
- 7:40 Strengths & Weaknesses – Mari Rains & Residents
Report Back – Mari Rains & Residents
- 8:10 Break
- 8:15 Opportunities/Threats – Mari Rains & Residents
Report Back – Mari Rains & Residents
- 9:00 Adjourn





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Resident Stakeholder Workshop: IN-PERSON

June 26, 2021 - Easton Newberry Sports Complex

AGENDA

- 9:00 Welcome – Mike New, City Manager
 Introductions – Commissioners, Sr. Leadership
 Facilitator Introduction: Mari Rains, Florida Institute of Government at UCF
 Overview of Strategic Planning Process – Mari Rains
- 9:15 State of the City & Budget:
 ▪ Mike New, City Manager
 ▪ Dallas Lee, Director of Finance & Administration
 Questions
- 9:45 Treasures of Newberry – Mari Rains & Residents
 Report Back – Mari Rains & Residents
- 10:05 **Break**
- 10:20 Vision 2031 – Mari Rains & Residents
 Report Back – Mari Rains & Residents
- 10:50 Strengths & Weaknesses – Mari Rains & Residents
 Report Back – Mari Rains & Residents
- 11:20 **Break**
- 11:35 Opportunities/Threats – Mari Rains & Residents
 Report Back – Mari Rains & Residents
- 1:00 Next Steps & Adjourn



After the State of the City Presentation and Q&A the UCF Florida Institute of Government Facilitator, Mari Rains, began by asking what the Treasures of Newberry are. The groups reported:

1. Responsive government
2. Sports Teams/Facilities (2)
3. Youth
4. Schools - Upgrading (3)
5. Agriculture
6. Sense of/Blended community (3)
7. Very low crime
8. Small town hospitality (2)
9. Not extremely busy
10. Future agriculture economy/Light industry (3)
11. Economical utilities
12. Generations of families
13. Friendly
14. History
15. Close access to medical, education, cultural activities

To focus on the Vision for Newberry, the facilitator asked participants to pretend it is the year 2031 and answer A) What are Newberry's accomplishments over the past 10 years:

1. Schools - 3 (2)
2. Infrastructure (2)
 - a. Roads
 - b. Sidewalks - pedestrian friendly
 - c. Wastewater
 - d. City hall
 - e. Agriculture parks/IFAS
 - f. Twin pairs (SR 26)
 - g. WWTP Expansion/Addition
3. Commercial development (2)
 - a. SR 26 and East of town
 - b. Downtown
4. Vocation programs at Agriculture park - more affordable housing (2)
5. New RV park
6. Recreation - sports
7. New church
8. Hotels
9. Newberry has continued to grow fruitful partnerships with schools, UF/IFAS, Santa Fe.

10. There have been several additional light industrial/agricultural oriented businesses attracted to the area because of new infrastructure/partnerships.
11. Sports tourism has continued to grow along with the youth programs

B) Describe what it is like to live in Newberry now (in 2031):

1. Uncrowded - state of the art schools
2. Still Alachua county
3. Pedestrian friendly and bicycle friendly (downtown) (2)
4. Accommodating for all - small town feel
5. Great education of children
6. Great activities for kids
7. Great leadership
8. Multiple opportunities for young people to be education for local 24 and industrial jobs in Newberry
9. More outdoor dining opportunities
10. Much better traffic flow on SR26
11. Multicultural options - Food, pharmacy, beauty
12. Health and fitness activities (all ages) locally - Zumba, spinning classes
13. New schools
14. Positive one-way pairs
15. Buy right of ways
16. 27/41 Speed limit reduction (Please!)
 - a. Newberry corners- Hazard for drivers
 - b. 50 to 40 mph

The facilitator then led a SWOT Analysis. She asked the group to begin with Strengths and Weaknesses and explained these are internal things the City COULD control.

Strengths

1. Small government (2)
2. Small town
3. Churches united
4. Community pride
5. Schools - quality (3) & Providing lunch every day for all kids
6. Development-guidance (government)
7. Staying in tune with community - elected officials/staff (2)
8. Forward looking administration
9. Safe community
10. Recreational programs
11. Friendliness
12. Visioning
13. Keeping outskirts different than city

Weaknesses

1. Staff diversity - Does not represent the community
2. Aging infrastructure - sidewalks
3. No natural gas available
4. One circuit feeding Newberry downtown
5. 337 dangerous - Narrow/accidents
6. Commission diversity - females
7. Communication
 - a. Not all get utility bill statements
 - b. Not all on social media
 - c. 1x a month not enough
8. School systems - overcrowding
9. Create interest/education in Youth agriculture
10. Loss of property
11. Small farms cost money/startup money
12. Stores
13. Road lighting
14. Speedbumps through the community (more added - Newberry Corners)
15. More places to eat out

Then the facilitator then asked the small groups to discuss Opportunities and Threats. She explained these are POTENTIAL things that COULD impact the city positivity or negatively. She asked them to focus on external things the City cannot control, for example, economic, political, legal, environmental, societal changes, technological changes, and regional and national trends.

Opportunities

1. Growth in jobs (2)
2. Schools (2)
3. Roads/lighting
4. Things for families to do
5. Broadband (2)
6. Clinic
 - a. Purchase w/ ARPA funds
 - b. Rent
7. Purchase home
8. Sales Tax - County
9. Growth in housing
10. American
11. Reserve fund
12. Rural areas

Threats

1. People/Crime (youth) (2)
2. Traffic
3. Springs county
4. Lack of diversity on community
5. Undivided growth
6. Unaffordable housing
7. Pandemic
8. Deregulation of utility by legislature
9. School board (2)
10. Environmental (natural) water or weather
11. Growth
12. Economic downturn - people losing jobs, etc.
13. County government
14. Development - over
15. Roadwork - responsibility
16. Outside

At the In-person workshop, the City specifically asked for feedback about how the residents would like to see SR 26 (westward) developed

1. Safe Peds/bike crossings in one-way parks (3)
2. City aware of greenspace needs
3. 202 East - keep green between business along highway
4. Balance with agriculture vision
5. Purchase land (East side) for another park
6. Pollution free 0 need community to offset tax and city revenue
7. Improve road lighting between 41 and 241 S
8. Concrete poles in one-way pairs or decorative
9. Minimize curb cuts
10. Historical charm
11. Convenient shoppes
12. Business west - Downtown redevelopment/revitalize (2)
13. Parking
14. E-bound (morning), all businesses
15. W-bound (evening), need to develop
16. E of town development (2)
 - a. Coffee
 - b. Hotel/conference center
 - c. Restaurant
 - d. Small light industry