

Community Values Workshop Discussion Notes  
Thursday, 3/29/2012

Strong Community Identity

Highest rank – Building an attractive community

Lowest rank – Promoting an active and identifiable downtown.

Comparing downtown Dunedin to Largo isn't comparable. We have a lot to offer in different ways. Dunedin and Safety Harbor have waterfront. Because of size and shape of Dunedin and Safety Harbor, they both have an identifiable downtown., people drive through West Bay district. We may never have that “downtown” that Safety Harbor and Dunedin have.

Its tough to do downtown in Largo, but there are locations that are unique to our city like Largo Community Center and Largo Central Park. Largo has many downtown destination areas, there is not just one downtown. We have several major shopping areas downtown, code, trees, and parks.

Its valuable to have a nice downtown.

Community special events create great spirit within our community.

Staff asked: Are we achieving building an attractive community? Yes (unanimous)

Having a centralized Library instead of multiple ones like Clearwater is a plus.

The clock tower at Central Park is missed; are there plans to reconstruct?

“I hope the downtown redevelopment on West Bay isn't 10 story buildings.”

Working & Reliable Infrastructure

Highest ranked – Ease in getting around Largo

Lowest ranked – Recycled/reclaimed water system

Approximately one-third to one-half of workshop participants had reclaimed water service. “Reclaimed water is the second most important after sewer for me. Water is going to be one of the biggest expenses and will be scarce in the future. Largo is ahead of the game in providing reclaimed services to residents.”

How much of Largo is covered by the reclaimed water system? Staff answered approximately 2,000 residents and 300 commercial accounts. “We aren't way out ahead of anyone.”

What percentage of our fees cover reclaimed water? Staff answered fees do not cover full cost but the City does save money providing reclaimed water because that water does not need to be discharged.

“Ease of getting around is most important because I feel endangered riding a bike but not by my sewer system.”

“Its hard to find sidewalks to use when you have a stroller or are jogging.”

Most participants thought of “ease in getting around Largo” meant traffic conditions.

“I would ride my bike more, but it is very difficult because there are no sidewalks or bike trails.” In addition to more sidewalks, participants wanted more bike trails.

“We need more lighting on streets and sidewalks.”

## Safety and Secure Community

Highest rank – Quick police and fire response

Lowest rank – City-led disaster preparedness

“Quick Police & Fire response” tough to gauge, perhaps we should aim for “adequate” response time. “The difference between 2 -4 minutes doesn't matter.” Adequate is sufficient, it is not the least or most important.

“I didn't vote for “quick police and fire response” because I see an over-response in an emergency. For one accident there will be 3 fire trucks, 2 police cars and an ambulance.”

“I see City-led Disaster Preparedness as least important because the County and FEMA will be directing efforts if there is an event.”

Largo is becoming a “City of Signs” - too many signs and people ignore them.

“I like signs and feel spoiled because when I go elsewhere I wish there were more signs to find my way around.”

Doesn't “sidewalk, pedestrian safety signals, streetlights and traffic control” relate to “ease in getting around Largo?”

“I have lived in Largo for 20 + years and never called Police or Fire departments. I voted the highest ranked value as “Sidewalks, pedestrian safety, etc.” because it is for my personal safety. Since I never used police or fire, its not the most important value to me.”

## Vibrant Economy

Highest ranked – Increase of higher quality jobs in Largo

Lowest ranked – City providing incentives to new businesses to come to Largo

Does “revitalization of business and shopping areas” need to be addressed? No, because Largo is doing a good job. This is not on everyone's mind.

“The variety of shopping and dining makes me want to live here.” Largo surpasses Clearwater and surrounding communities.

Revitalization leads to more Community Pride.

“Providing business incentives hasn't worked federally and will increase corruption.”

“Without incentives we won't get a lot of higher paying jobs.”

“How much does City really influence economic development?”

“Two very large apartment complexes are building in Largo without some impact fees. We do need incentives like this.”

“Incentives mean reduction in fees. That's a tax break anyway you cut it. It is taking away from Largo citizens and giving to businesses.”

“A cost/benefit analysis should be performed on incentives that businesses receive from cities. It seems that cost is exactly what is planned, but the benefit to the City is under delivered, so citizens always get short-changed.”

“People that live in Largo don't always work in largo so creating high paying jobs shouldn't be a priority.”

“Maybe the incentive should hit the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year instead of an up-front incentive. We should have more of that.”

### Quality Community Amenities

Highest rank – The two recreation complexes, the Community Center and athletic fields

Lowest rank – Largo Golf Course

To improve golf course performance “look at what has changed at Largo Golf Course vs other golf courses. Check to see what you get for the player costs and adjust fees accordingly.”

“Why does Largo own a golf course?”

Staff mentioned the City is currently reviewing proposals to privatize golf course operations.

“Do any proposals stop the city from general fund income for the course?”

Are we taking staff away from somewhere to put at the golf course? Staff answered yes.

“Turn golf course into a park.” Participants and staff discussed it would cost more to operate a park because there would be no revenue generated.

“I'm not opposed to Largo Golf Course, but its what I value least.”

“Why not sell the Golf Course?” Staff explained the site could be sold for redevelopment through a referendum. Participants were very put off by this notion. Staff asked “Would you approve sale of golf course?” Yes – 5 No – 15 Participants would want to know what is going there. “I like open space, wouldn't want high rise condos.”

Feelings on selling golf course were mixed. It might be alright, but no high rises.

People appreciate that we have a community center.

“I don't care if developers won't come here to build a 10 story building, I don't want it here.”

Regarding library, “many don't have internet access and library provides this service. People looking for jobs need this instant access – impacts kids and workforce.”

One participant mentioned they are unsatisfied with no Sunday hours at Library.

“Why don't we sell Largo Cultural Center?” Participant group reacted adversely to this comment. Mentioned other benefits of Cultural Center: attracts people to our area, it's good for citizens, and business.

### General Values

Highest rank – Feeling safe and secure in my community

Lowest rank – A strong community identity

“If you don't feel safe and secure the rest is irrelevant.”

“If you want culture go to Ruth Eckerd Hall, Mahaffey Theater, sports venues, St. Pete/Clearwater.”

“I don't see a Largo community identity as different from the County as a whole.”

“Cities need to stop competing with each other.”

### How do you receive information on City Affairs?

The Largo Leader and Tampa Bay Times were the top read newspapers.

### Questions & Comments

“I like this format, it is a less contentious discussion than the roundtables you have had in the past.”

Participants would still like to have a budget roundtable exercise, too, either as a group or on the website.