

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

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THE PURPOSE OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN



What Is Our Strategic Plan?

The St. Johns County Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap charting a course for the future, outlining the results we aim to achieve for our community. It guides who we serve, what we do, and why we do it. The Plan defines a shared vision for the future enabling us to focus the County's resources on clear priorities while holding ourselves accountable to you, our community. The vision, goals, priorities, and objectives outlined in this Plan are the result of a comprehensive engagement process, where community members expressed their aspirations for the future and identified key priorities and significant steps toward progress.

At its core, the Strategic Plan enables us to realize the community's vision and adapt to a changing environment.

Why Is the Plan Important?

The Strategic Plan helps the County prioritize and determine where to invest its resources. It provides guidance for the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners, leadership, and staff clarifying what is important to the community and how to achieve those goals and aspirations.

- The mission outlines what we need to accomplish, keeping us focused on our purpose and tasks at hand.
- The **vision** indicates our destination, ensuring we remain focused on our goals.
- The values guide how we conduct our work, informing our decisions and the service we provide.
- The strategic priorities, goals, and objectives define the focus and actions needed to achieve the vision.

The Strategic Plan lays the foundation for targeted actions by emphasizing outcome-oriented goals and objectives. It allows the County to prioritize its activities, budget accordingly, and deliver the highest value possible to our community.

With the Strategic Plan as a guide, all other County plans and initiatives can be built to align so that everything flows in a common direction. This alignment enhances our capacity to steer our future, make informed decisions with available resources, and maintain accountability to you, our community.



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Dear St. Johns County Residents,

It is with great excitement and gratitude that I write to you today about an important milestone for our community. After months of collaboration and invaluable input from residents like you, we are proud to announce and share our new Strategic Plan.

This plan is more than just a roadmap for the future; it reflects our collective vision for a thriving community and an exceptional quality of life. Your feedback has been instrumental in shaping this direction, and I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you who participated in our community forums, surveys, and discussions. Your voices have truly made a difference.



Together, we've defined our mission, vision, and values to guide us as we move forward. We have also identified six strategic priorities for the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners: community trust, community well-being, enhanced conservation, economic prosperity, infrastructure, and organizational excellence. These priorities will help us focus our efforts and ensure we are serving you effectively.

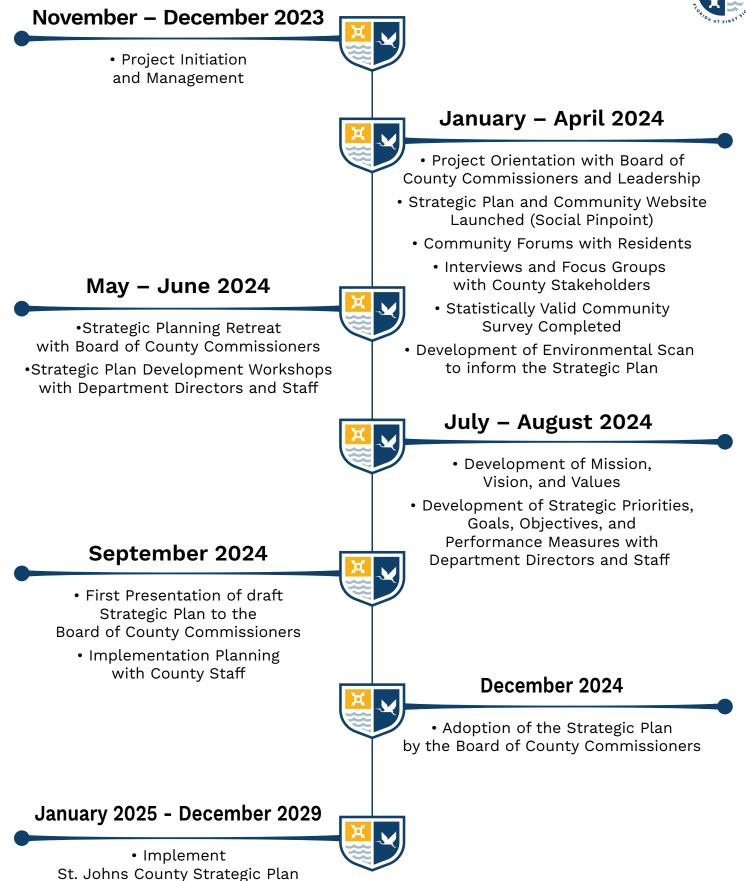
As we implement this Strategic Plan, your continued involvement will be essential. We are eager to keep the lines of communication open and welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have.

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners and County staff, thank you once again for your dedication and partnership in shaping the future of St. Johns County. Together, we can make a meaningful difference and build a community we can all be proud of.

Sincerely, Joy Andrews County Administrator

HOW DID WE ARRIVE AT THIS STRATEGIC PLAN?





HOW DID WE ARRIVE AT THIS STRATEGIC PLAN?





2,243 Online interactions with Social Pinpoint



Survey responses



665 Comments and responses on Social Pinpoint



325 Residents attended 6 community forums



Interview and focus group participants



Board of County Commissioners engagements



Post generated 65,841 impressions, demonstrating significant visibility



Total engagements, including reactions, comments, shares, and clicks



11,128 Video views across the posts

MISSION VISION AND VALUES



Our Mission

We serve and invest in our community through innovative leadership, highquality services, and preserving the County's history and natural beauty while enhancing economic vitality.

Our Vision St. Johns County is a historic community with a thriving population and economy, offering world-class cultural and recreational opportunities and an exceptional quality of life. Our Values

Dedication

We are persistent and determined in our unwavering dedication to serving our community and committed to delivering results that meet the diverse needs of our residents.

Openness

We believe in the power of clear and transparent communication to foster trust, collaboration, and understanding.

Adaptability

We embrace flexibility, innovation, and resilience in every aspect of our work.

Visionary

We foster a culture of curiosity and creativity to drive meaningful progress and deliver forward-thinking community solutions.

Fiscal Responsibility

We are prudent and accountable stewards of our financial and physical resources so that our community thrives.

Integrity

We make trustworthiness, reliability, and honesty the cornerstones of our actions, building and maintaining trust with our community through consistently delivering our promises and ethical behavior in every action.

Humility

We approach our work in partnership with our community, providing services in a compassionate and empathetic way so that all feel valued and respected.

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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES





COMMUNITY TRUST



Enhance community trust through proactive communication to foster engagement and build an environment of public participation.

OBJECTIVES

Expand opportunities for community input and access to information to promote awareness and understanding of government operations and decision-making.

Outcomes

- Improved community trust
- Supported educated, engaged, and informed public who provides input and obtains information
- Developed public participation and citizen feedback platforms

Performance Measures

- Maintain/increase residents' overall trust in the County government (measured by annual community survey)
- Maintain/increase residents' satisfaction with County communication and engagement (measured by annual community survey)
- Maintain/increase residents' satisfaction with the County website (measured by annual community survey)
- Increase in community participation in communication channels and activities measured year-over-year

Build effective organizational communication to ensure consistent and accurate information is delivered to the community.

Outcomes

- Community received consistent and accurate information
- Internal department communication strategy is efficient and effective
- Developed inter-department and countywide collaboration platforms

Performance Measures

• Maintain/increase resident satisfaction with the quality and responsiveness of County services (measured by annual community survey)



COMMUNITY TRUST

Expand and promote volunteer opportunities to enhance citizen participation in County programs and services.

Outcomes

- Enhanced citizen participation
- Expanded volunteer opportunities
- Increased public awareness of volunteer opportunities

Performance Measures

- Increase in volunteer rates for boards and committees
- Increase newsletter distribution as compared to industry averages annually

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- Increase volunteer applications received for board or committee positions
- Increase the County's mobile app subscribers

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING



Expand access to safe public spaces, diverse recreational facilities, attainable housing, and innovative community activities to foster physical and mental well-being and connectivity within our community.

OBJECTIVES

Improve and expand recreational and cultural facilities to promote diverse connections across the community and foster social engagement for all interests and abilities.

Outcomes

- Improved existing leisure and cultural facilities for accessible social engagement
- Increased community utilization of amenities

Performance Measures

- Increase in the number of parks per 1,000 residents, per National Recreation and Parks Association
- Increase in the number of programs provided at parks and libraries
- Maintain/increase resources to adequately support Parks and Recreation and Library Services facilities and assets
- Complete an assessment of current facilities and assets requiring renovation or replacement and maintain inventory
- Increase in the number of library card applications
- Increase in circulation of print and electronic library materials

Engage with the arts and culture sector to preserve the community's identity through events, programming, and educational classes provided by the Library and Parks & Recreation Departments.

Outcomes

- Increased community participation in Park and Library programs
- Improved collaboration between the Library Services and Parks and Recreation Departments for program delivery
- Established new arts programming and education classes

Performance Measures

- Increase internal and external programs offered by Library Services and Parks and Recreation
- Increase in the number of community partner engagements to provide programing
- Increase in the number of art installations in County facilities
- Maintain/increase community satisfaction with events/programs hosted, sponsored or coordinated by Parks and Recreation and Library Services (measured by annual community survey)
- Maintain/increase resources to adequately support the demands on Parks and Recreation and Library Services facilities and assets

Leverage partnerships with nonprofits and other community organizations to enhance human and social service programs and initiatives.

Outcomes

- Improved resident awareness of available County services
- Enhanced resident self-sufficiency and stability
- Educated participants who comply with program requirements

- Improve outcomes in County human services programming year-over-year
- Increase in the number and variety of social service resources available to the community each year
- Increase in the number of individuals positively impacted by partnership initiatives
- Maintain/improve participant satisfaction with program outcomes (measured through annual satisfaction and feedback surveys)



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING



Encourage and support pet ownership through programs and partnerships to reduce the number of stray animals and owner surrenders.

Outcomes

• Reduction in stray, feral, and lost pet population

Performance Measures

- Reduction in the percentage of pets surrendered each quarter
- Increase in the number of pet outreach events
- Increase in the number of volunteers at the Pet Shelter and pet outreach events
- Increase in the number of low-cost and no-cost vaccines administered

Focus capital investments on transportation options to create a more livable, connected, and resilient community.

Outcomes

- Connected residents to the community by providing efficient transportation options and resources
- Expanded sidewalks, trails, and bike paths connecting communities

Performance Measures

- Complete Connectivity Plan for mobility
- Identification of pedestrian/bike trails gaps
- Increase in number of miles of sidewalk added annually
- Increase in number of bike lanes/trails added annually
- Maintain/increase community mobility through expanded culture and recreational facilities and amenities (measured by annual community survey)

In partnership with public safety agencies, maintain a low crime rate and further enhance the safety of residents and visitors in the community by supporting strong policies, funding, and initiatives.

Outcomes

- Increased community safety
- Maintained a strong foundation for crime prevention and community efforts through community education and engagement
- Engaged non-profit organizations for collaboration with law enforcement, fire rescue, code enforcement, and animal control to educate, conduct policy research, and explore new initiatives

- Decrease/maintain crime rate year-over-year
- Increase in community education engagement events about local code enforcement ordinances
- Increase in percentage of non-profit participation in education programs aimed at improving safety and reducing crime
- Increase in the number of law enforcement, fire rescue, code enforcement, and animal control-sponsored community events
- Reduce/improve response and "control" times of fire incident calls
- Reduce/improve response and "transport" times of medical aid call
- Maintain/increase community satisfaction in law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical response times, interactions, and encounters (measured by annual community survey)
- Maintain/increase community satisfaction with the County's emergency preparedness (measured by annual community survey)

COMMUNITY WELL BEING

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Support public safety programs through expanded career development opportunities, comprehensive training, and robust wellness programs for Fire Rescue personnel.

Outcomes

• Well-trained and emotionally supported public safety personnel to respond to emergencies

Performance Measures

- Expand patient treatment and protocol in line with medical procedures and technology advances
- Expand community-based emergency medical services programming to reduce non-emergency response calls for assistance
- Increase the number of quarterly training hours for all fire and emergency medical services personnel
- Maintain/increase resources to adequately support annual public safety personnel, capital equipment, and training investments

Provide support to homeowners through initiatives focused on preventing displacement and fostering affordability.

Outcomes

- Supported residents in remaining housed and maintaining generational wealth
- Restored and/or recognized safety, health, and sanitation levels in neighborhoods
- Improved education about home maintenance and upkeep that supports neighborhood values

Performance Measures

- Increase in affordable housing units preserved, rehabilitated, or repaired annually
- Reduce the number of code enforcement engagements with homeowners regarding safety, health, and sanitation issues annually

Leverage private and public sector resources to establish programs and opportunities that preserve and create affordable workforce housing units and initiatives.

Outcomes

- Created additional workforce housing stock
- Expanded access to homeownership

- Complete a Local Housing Needs Assessment
- Increase in the number of workforce housing units annually
- Increase in the utilization rate of the Housing Counseling Program for first-time homebuyers



ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



Promote suitable economic growth by diversifying revenue sources, building strong business partnerships, and expanding community opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

Enhance the proactive approach to identifying and attracting industrial and commercial businesses suitable for St. Johns County to diversify the commercial tax base.

Outcomes

• New businesses built, expanded, or relocated into St. Johns County

Performance Measures

- Create a comprehensive lead generation process for target industries
- Complete a business recruitment program
- Increase the number of site submissions for project referrals from regional partners
- Increase the number of first contacts with prospective companies
- Increase in the number of business attraction activities hosted or participated in by the County annually
- Increase in the number of net new jobs created by businesses that have been attracted to the county because of the attraction program
- Increase in the amount of outside capital investment brought to the community because of the attraction program

Invest in economic incentive programs in target industries to expand the local economy and create jobs.

Outcomes

- A thriving and diverse economy that is sustainable
- Increased the availability of livable wage jobs

Performance Measures

- Improved property value of incentivized projects in target industries
- Increase in the number of jobs added from incentivized projects
- Increase commercial and industrial tax base
- Decrease the number of residents leaving St. Johns County for work

Cultivate a strong workforce pipeline through community partnerships to meet the needs of employers.

Outcomes

- Readily available skilled labor force
- Support for new workforce training programs in the County

- Increase in the number of "in-area" workforce and industry training programs
- Increase in the number of skilled certifications, diplomas, and advanced degrees obtained



ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Boost local business competitiveness and sustainability by partnering with development networks for access to resources, training, and technical support.

Outcomes

- Thriving local businesses within the County
- Supportive network of partners for business retention

Performance Measures

- Implement a comprehensive business retention strategy
- Increase positive business climate ratings as reported by the annual business satisfaction survey
- Increase in the number of business retention activities hosted or participated in by the County
- Increase in the number of businesses that use the county business assistance services
- Reduction in local business closings

Provide resources and solutions to local agricultural businesses through partnerships aimed at enhancing their sustainability.

Outcomes

Sustainable growth in agricultural businesses

Performance Measures

- Create programs and incentives for agricultural businesses
- Increase in county agriculture productivity rates
- Increase in the number of new or expanded agricultural businesses

Cultivate an innovative and vibrant entrepreneur ecosystem that fosters startup and entrepreneurial activity throughout the County.

Outcomes

- Expanded networks, available resources, and viable locations for startups and growing entrepreneurial firms
- Positive reputation among investors and capital providers

- Increase in the number of entrepreneur-focused events
- Increase in the number of local entrepreneurial programs
- Increase in the number of new business starts, excluding rental properties
- Increase/maintain the change in capital investments from angel investors and venture capital firms
- Increase/maintain capital investment from mission-based lending institutions







ENHANCE CONSERVATION



Collaborate with key stakeholders and partners to protect environmentally sensitive lands and natural resources.

OBJECTIVES

Pursue diverse funding sources to support land conservation, including partnerships, government grants, donations, corporate sponsorships, and philanthropic investments.

Outcomes

- Increased land preservation
- Improved ecological management of county-owned/managed lands

Performance Measures

- Increase in the number of acres encumbered by conservation restrictions
- Reduction in general fund dollars per acre of conservation land
- Increase in funding sources for land acquisition
- Maintain/increase resident satisfaction with conservation efforts (measures by annual community survey)

Improve opportunities for outdoor recreation and increase public awareness of access to trails, waterways, and natural areas.

Outcomes

- Improved public awareness of green spaces and natural corridors
- Enhanced identification and protection of vital green spaces, natural habitats, and wildlife corridors
- Strategic approach to improved access to trails, waterways, and natural areas

Performance Measures

- Update the Greenway, Blueway, and Trails plan
- Increase in participation in outdoor recreational activities
- Increase miles of green space trails
- Additional recreational acreage dedicated
- Maintain/increase resident satisfaction with public enjoyment of, and access to, natural areas (measured by annual community survey)

Establish proactive planning and sustainable strategies to protect the community's infrastructure and natural ecosystems from natural disasters and rising sea levels.

Outcomes

- Mitigated storm impacts on infrastructure and dunes
- Identified vulnerabilities across the County

- Complete the Coastal Resilience plan
- Complete county-wide vulnerability assessment
- Increase in resilient infrastructure protected
- · Increase in grant funds awarded through vulnerability assessments
- Increase in the number of hardened beaches restored
- Increase in the number of accessory elements maintained
- Maintain/increase resident support for coastal resilience plans (measured through community survey in 2027)

ENHANCE CONSERVATION



Outcomes

- Developers prioritized and incorporated conservation efforts into their projects
- Adopted policies and incentives for developments with increased natural areas

Performance Measures

- Increase in developer contributions for land conservation and preservation
- Increase in the number of development projects with conservation measures incorporated
- Land Development Code amended by 2026

Support the agricultural community by providing incentive options to promote and sustain the cultural identity of agricultural land while respecting the rights of individual property owners.

Outcomes

• The agricultural community is informed on incentives and options to conserve agricultural lands.

Performance Measures

- Complete an agricultural preservation plan
- Increase in the number of acres in agricultural conservation easements
- Maintain/increase awareness of agricultural conservation incentives (measured through community survey)

Protect cultural, historical, and natural resources that maintain neighborhood character and stability in alignment with resident goals

Outcomes

- Protections within the Land Development Code consistently applied
- Increased public awareness of resource protection regulations

- Establish an inventory and map of cultural, historical, and natural resources preserved
- Maintain/increase awareness of cultural, historical, and natural preservation protections and incentives (measured through annual community survey)



INFRASTRUCTURE



Implement comprehensive, safe, and efficient public infrastructure programs to enhance community mobility and ensure access to goods and services.

OBJECTIVES

Build and maintain safe transportation systems to connect communities across St. Johns County.

Outcomes

- Enhanced and diverse transportation system
- Improved reliability and extended life of system assets
- Improved traffic safety with a reduction in roadway crashes
- Collaboration with public safety agencies for disaster management

Performance Measures

- Maintain/improve resident satisfaction with transportation services levels (measured by annual community survey)
- Improve the Walkability Score (benchmarked against similar municipalities)
- Maintain a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 75-85 for all streets and roads
- Reduce fatal and serious injuries for all users of the County Road network
- Completion of sidewalk gap analysis in four years
- Improve number of sidewalks gaps annually
- Change in "Target Zero" crash rating
- Increase in the percentage of roads that meet drainage capacity requirements
- Reduce the number of flooded roadways annually

Increase the capacity of major collector roadways to reduce traffic congestion.

Outcomes

- Reduced travel times in high-congested areas
- Improved commute times during peak travel periods

Performance Measures

- Improve signal delay at intersections
- Reduce the percentage of traffic congestion complaints by residents and commuters
- Reduce average vehicular speed on arterial streets
- Increase in state and federal funding to maximize investment in local infrastructure
- Completion of North-South corridor

Minimize the impacts of flooding on adjacent properties by properly designing, building, and maintaining roads and bridges.

Outcomes

- Properties saved or preserved after flood events
- Increased public awareness of the importance of drainage design and stormwater management

- Reduction in property damage flood claims
- Increase in the number of capital projects completed
- Increase in the amount of funds invested in resiliency project areas or adaptation areas
- Increase the percentage of homes at or above floodplain elevation requirements

INFRASTRUCTURE

Define requirements to offset/reduce impacts of new development to maintain adequate service levels.

Outcomes

- Infrastructure in place before development
- Developer compliance with mitigation guidelines

Performance Measures

- Change in amount of impact fees received annually
- Complete Mitigation Plan

Collaborate with public and private water and sewer utilities and leverage available funding sources to maintain reasonable utility costs to homeowners.

Outcomes

- Competitive utility rates are maintained
- Enhanced utility infrastructure assets

Performance Measures

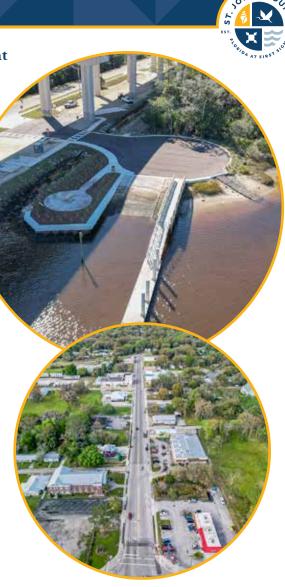
- Compare utility rates with the region
- Annual changes in how assets are depreciated and reinvested (benchmark to industry 10%)
- Increase diversification of funding sources for utility infrastructure
- Maintain/improve resident satisfaction with utility services reliability (measured by annual community survey)

Expand stormwater policies and practices to improve water quality while reducing sediment and nutrient runoffs.

Outcomes

- Improved water quality
- Compliance with state stormwater mandates
- Increased public awareness of water quality best practices

- Increase in water quality testing results below required limits
- Increase in capital investment in water quality improvement equipment
- Increase in training for water quality management staff



INFRASTRUCTURE

Implement actions to protect and ensure the long-term sustainability of the County's water supply and enhance public education about these actions.

Outcomes

- Reliable long-term water source
- Enhanced water conservation
- Increased public awareness of water conservation

- Increase in the number of new Florida Friendly Landscaping projects completed
- Maintain/improve residents' knowledge of water conservation (measured by annual community survey)



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Create an environment that fosters collaboration and teamwork, empowering County staff to deliver exceptional service.

OBJECTIVES

Create a work environment that keeps employees informed and engaged and allows them to suggest improvements in operations.

Outcomes

- Engaged staff
- Implementation of best practices across functions

Performance Measures

- Increase employee engagement and satisfaction with internal communication (measured by an annual engagement survey)
- Increase employee suggestion initiatives
- Increase the number of business processes improved annually

Leverage modern technology and system capabilities to improve operations.

Outcomes

- Reduced redundancies across functions
- Leveraged technology to streamline operations

Performance Measures

- Implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning Solution
- Create technology governance and management framework
- Develop an information technology modernization plan
- Increase employee satisfaction with technology tools and services as measured by an annual employee engagement survey

Secure critical infrastructure for public safety, transportation, and utility programs by investing in appropriate human and technology resources.

Outcomes

- Implemented advanced technology to meet future critical infrastructure needs
- Completed system upgrades to achieve optimal functionality

- Maintain/increase investment in technology upgrades annually
- Maintain/increase resources annually to adequately support, secure, and improve technology



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Improve employee retention at the County by implementing a comprehensive onboarding and professional development program to sustain an engaged and committed workforce.

Outcomes

- Improved continuity of operations following staff turnover
- A well-trained workforce prepared for professional advancement

Performance Measures

- Develop a comprehensive employee onboarding program for the organization and within each department
- Improve organizational employee recognition program to acknowledge and celebrate employee successes annually
- Increase the number of training hours per employee annually
- Improve and improve utilization of employee tuition reimbursement assistance
- Improve system for evaluating employee performance and supporting professional growth
- Maintain/increase employee engagement (measured through an employee engagement survey annually)
- Maintain/increase employee retention rate quarterly

Streamline the hiring process, build a strong talent pipeline, and improve the candidate experience to attract top talent and become a sought-after employer.

Outcomes

- Reduced productivity loss from vacant positions
- Highly qualified and experienced workforce
- Positive experience for new hires

- Maintain/reduce staffing vacancy rates quarterly
- Increase in the number of qualified applicants per job posting
- Increase/maintain new hire satisfaction experience (measured by new hire survey)



WHAT'S NEXT?



Putting the Plan into Action

We know our community has high standards and aspirations. We enjoy a high quality of life in St. Johns County and want it to remain an excellent place to be. The plan's five-year timeline allows for thoughtful sequencing of priorities and objectives that will make our continued high quality of life possible.

With the strategic plan in place, an implementation plan will translate the priorities, goals, and objectives into action steps with assigned responsibilities and established timelines. This will allow County departments to work together to achieve our desired future. The Office of Performance and Transparency will provide regular monitoring, and evaluation systems will be put in place to help ensure continuous improvement and ongoing alignment with the County's overarching goals. Implementing the County's new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system will support this by enhancing efficiency, transparency, and decision-making.

We are committed to focusing resources on the priorities that best serve the needs of the community and captured in this plan. We will align the strategic plan with the County's annual budget process so we can ensure that resources are utilized efficiently and directed toward the most important priorities. As needs or opportunities shift during the plan's life, the County expects to address any needed changes as part of the annual budget process.

Keeping Track of Progress

The County will utilize strategic planning software to plan, monitor, and report progress toward goals and objectives, as well as report on performance measures. Tracking and monitoring holds us accountable.

The County will provide the community with an annual report and year-end presentation to the Board of Commissioners. Dashboards and other data visualization tools will be shared with community members so they can understand what we are working on and the benefits that will result for our residents, businesses, visitors, and the community overall.

Monthly -

County staff will discuss and evaluate progress on strategic goals and objectives.

Quarterly -

County leadership will provide the County Administrator with progress updates for each strategic plan priority.

Twice a Year –

The County Administrator's Office will prepare an update to the Board for each strategic priority, including progress updates, successes and wins, and challenges.

Annually -

The County Administrator's Office will prepare a year-end update detailing progress on each strategic priority, goal, and objective. The report will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners and shared with the community on the County's website **www.sjcfl.us**





STRATEGIC PLAN • 2024-2029