

Economic Development

Initial Community Activity and Rankings From Focus Group

Activity	Votes
Recruit trades/technical jobs	7
Eco-Tourism	7
Attract corporate offices, management oriented, regional offices	6
Continue/expand agriculture (crops, technology)	6
Target industry(s) with needs for rail, high energy use	5
Agricultural support services	5
More restaurants and entertainment activities (movie, music, cafes)	4
Revitalize main street/historic core	2
Develop a community garden, (indoor) flea market (south of Ace Hardware on US 17)	2
Develop/expand Hardee Lakes Park (w/ cabins and additional facilities)	2
Expand Pioneer Days: add Ranch and Citrus tours	2
Sports/training complex (professional sports), including outdoor activities	2
Trucking and distribution services	1
Expand season residents opportunities	0

Recruit Trades & Technical Jobs:	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Identify existing opportunities beyond the existing commerce park		
Update/create a master downtown/county-wide list of available properties		
Pre-identify workforce and skills (and update on a regular basis)		
Expand and identify collaboration with school system and colleges		
Focus on expanding trade/technical jobs and businesses		
Identify "green" jobs and business opportunities		
Other Strategy:		

Eco-Tourism:	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Identify property owners along the Peace River (willing to participate); also provide public education on use conflicts		
Confirm central location for public access sites/local eco-tourism sites and activities (i.e., clearinghouse of information)		
Develop a master blueways/greenways plan, including marketing approach		
Educate users on available activities		
Identify liability issues (see also public education on use conflicts)		
Other Strategy:		

Economic Development

Attract corporate offices, management oriented, regional offices	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Build on hometown values and feelings ("Hardee way of life")		
Invest and expand health care and medical services		
Discuss with Florida Hospital and FINR roles for generating additional interest		
Create and or update a list of amenities and community-wide activities for potential employers/employees		
Other Strategy:		

Continue/expand agriculture (crops, technology)	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Identify/inventory all existing agricultural products produced/grown in Hardee County – look for opportunities to expand and or re-establish, including opportunities for diversification		
Supply locally grown produce to local/regional restaurants		
Provide incentives for risk/change		
Establish a mentoring program between agricultural community and schools/those interested in agriculture; knowledge sharing		
Establish a community identity/branding		
Provide and promote awareness through internet and other media sources		
Identify and fill gaps in existing services		
Analyze transportation and infrastructure availability		
Other Strategy:		

Target industry(s) with needs for rail, high energy use	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Note: Hardee County has an electrical surplus and also has alternative energy projects (although not overall cost-effective at this time).		
Other Strategy:		

Land Use/Environment/Open Space

Agricultural/Eco-Tourism (including ranching lifestyle/farming and citrus/Peace River tours, connected trails and parks (including master plan for greenways and blueways):

Specific Actions/Strategies:

Tie Agricultural activities to educational components (co-ops, classes, mentoring)		
Establish a program to support and build agriculture in the community (i.e., meet quarterly or monthly)		
Establish an "Orange Blossom Festival" or similar; identify a festival(s) based on the growing seasons to draw visitors to the community; look to partner with a local civic or service organization ("start small and build")		
Provide funds/grants for startup, expansion or diversification of products (see also 1-1 Strengthen Agricultural Land Uses and Support Services)		
Identify and remove/streamline regulatory barriers for agricultural activities, festivals and similar, including those "on-site" (i.e., on the farm) <i>Identify properties that may be interested in hosting festivals</i>		
<i>Change the mindset in government – have faith in the people and owners to do what's right</i>		
Need to study a local citrus processing plant/facility; work with the co-ops to understand the needs <i>Identify location(s) for a facility</i> <i>Partner with the USDA</i>		

Other Strategy:

Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments

Protection of Property rights; prescriptive vs. restrictive development regulations

Specific Actions/Strategies:

See also recommended strategies for item 1-1, specifically with regard to regulatory barriers		
Review the current regulations and identify obstacles/challenges that can be removed or reduced to achieve this goal		

Other Strategy:

Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments

Infrastructure

Initial Community Activity and Rankings From Focus Group

Activity	Votes
Airport expansion including marketing and corporate fly-ins	12
More ADA compliant sidewalks within both Neighborhoods/communities and the County	7
Code enforcement; enhanced and increased	7
Enhanced Parks & Recreation infrastructure	6
Expansion of public water and sewer service County-wide	5
Improve/upgrade stormwater infrastructure	4
Replacement of aged watermains for both water service and emergency services (i.e., fire protection)	3
Privatize utilities within the City	2
Bridge and road replacement; Improvements in the schedule and prioritization of these projects	1
Utilize prison trustee work program for County projects	1
Arterial travelways enhancements including visual improvement	1
Develop a traffic calming program for neighborhood improvements	1
Develop a Safe-Routes-To-School (SRTS) program	0

Airport expansion including marketing and corporate fly-ins:	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Analyze and expand the range of uses: aviation and non-aviation at/close proximity to the airport		
Build and or expand: Recreational activities and opportunities Aviation uses Aviation support uses Non-aviation uses Support agriculture uses/other eco-development activities		
Need expertise from the aviation users		
Other Strategy:		

More ADA compliant sidewalks within both Neighborhoods/ communities and the County:	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Continue grant programs to add sidewalks in neighborhoods/around schools		
Prioritize where demand is evident and right-of-way is available. Review and identify historical pedestrian routes and where roads are used (i.e., where there is a lack of sidewalks)		
Evaluation sidewalk needs and conditions (where sidewalks are present) beyond internal development areas		
Weigh/Identify long-term maintenance costs		
When designing/installing sidewalks and pedestrian connections, separate users, where feasible, and reduce opportunities for conflicts		
Other Strategy:		

Code enforcement; enhanced and increased:	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Prefer complaint driven code enforcement strategies (reactive vs. proactive) Calls should only be made (by property owners) when situation becomes a problem.		
Establish community values and appearance guidelines but also provide opportunities to "self-regulate"		
Establish "Keep Hardee Beautiful" but make it community-based and provide community assistance.		
Other Strategy:		

Enhanced Parks & Recreation infrastructure	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Hardee Lakes – provide more campsites, horse/equestrian areas, trails, etc.		
Better develop/support existing facilities		
Keep up Pioneer Park		
Consider overall maintenance costs		
Look for additional water access		
Augment/increase festivals and special events Create "Orange Blossom Festival"		
Identify and develop bike trails/courses		
Identify/establish birding opportunities and butterfly gardens		
Analyze need/location for additional soccer fields and facilities		
Prepare and provide a map identifying uses, parks and similar facilities		
Other Strategy:		

Quality of Life

Initial Community Activity and Rankings From Focus Group

Activity	Votes
Community beautification/code enforcement/improve image	7
Opportunities for youth/family recreation	6
Education system improvements	4
Reduce drug and alcohol use/teen pregnancy rates	4
Planning for mining reclamation – including County benefits/uses	3
Street lighting – safe neighborhoods	2
Sidewalks – improved transportation and connectivity	1
High speed internet/continued technology improvements	1
Impacts of/perception of illegal aliens, immigration (i.e., Hardee County viewed as a sanctuary)	1
Enhance/create a vibrant downtown	1
Diversify restaurants/evening entertainment	1
Celebrate/provide faith based activities	1
Hardee Lakes – continued improvement	1
Aviation Business/Services (improved/expanded – general aviation, commercial, international)	1

	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
Community beautification/code enforcement/improve image: <i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Develop/implement a “help thy neighbor” attitude and strategy; involve the local ministerial association and habitat for humanity, civic groups to identify and assist individual properties and or neighborhoods. <i>Develop a citizen/community outreach program</i>		
Develop community education programs about programs and services including establishing “community pride”		
Modify the process of code enforcement including following state statutes. Allow code enforcement officers to visit and inspect sites on adjacent properties when called out to a site		
Other Strategy:		

	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
Opportunities for youth/family recreation: <i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Establish a mentoring program and process for kids; also develop a mentoring program for parents		
Identify and list a “menu” of good choices and activities available in the community. <i>“get the word out” on FFA, 4H Summer Camps, religious based youth groups, etc.</i>		
Develop a community education component targeting parental involvement in children’s lives; establish positive role models and activities.		
Identify liability issues (see also public education on use conflicts)		
Other Strategy:		

	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
Education system improvements/ Reduce drug and alcohol use/teen pregnancy rates: <i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Partnerships with School Board/increased information		
Other Strategy:		

Education/Workforce

Initial Community Activity and Rankings From Focus Group

Activity	Votes
Public-Private-Partnerships (help fund gaps in education system) and partnerships with businesses and trusts	13
Provide local flexibility for curriculum and programs	12
Accountability for parents; create successful opportunities	8
Programs to engage kids (educational)	7
Expand technical-vocational programs	7
Ways/opportunities to keep jobs here (not export)	4
Expanding school-family support	3
Expand diversity of educational opportunities (pre-k, public, private) and look at careers and transferability	2
Separate vo-tech school (i.e., 3 yr program)	1
Look at successes across the state and nation, and apply the model(s) here	1
Establish internships with businesses and industries (can quality for class credit)	0

Public-Private-Partnerships (help fund gaps in education system) and partnerships with businesses and trusts	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Ongoing Activities with Chamber and other Civic Groups		
<i>Discussion Items:</i>		
*Need to balance certifications, graduates with business needs		
*Teach work ethic		
*Create community trust for "student businesses" (own and work grooves and properties)		
*Involve State Legislators with interest to change educational requirements		
Other Strategy:		

Accountability for parents; create successful opportunities	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Businesses Support for employees – school related activities with their children		
Expand mentoring programs with schools (look at Rotary) with other Civic Groups		
Other Strategy:		

Programs to engage kids (educational) and Expand technical-vocational programs	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
Develop/expand business internships		
Look at Heartland Educational Consortium for programs and ideas to implement		
Develop a regional Vo-Tech curriculum (look at Travis in Polk County)		
Other Strategy:		

Provide local flexibility for curriculum and programs	Steering Committee Ranking	Steering Committee Comments
<i>Specific Actions/Strategies:</i>		
This priority becomes an "Action Item" vs. a stand-alone item		
Other Strategy:		