



# **Advancing BCC Strategic Focus Areas**

2021/22 – 2022/23 Budget Process



## Table of Contents

Process and Purpose of Materials	2
Strategic Planning Update	3
Post COVID World Scenarios	6
Safe Refuge	7
Retirement Community	8
Everything is Booming	9
Housing Shortage	10
Recession Repeat	11
Overview of Citizen Input	12
Overview of Employee Survey	14
Strategic Plan Overview	15
Public Services	17
Infrastructure	18
Economic & Community Development	19
Efficient & Effective Government	22





## Process and Purpose of Materials

The budget process is divided into four major stages:

- Stage I – Establish Broad Goals to Guide Government Decision Making
- Stage II – Develop Approaches to Achieve Goals
- Stage III – Develop a Budget with Approaches to Achieve Goals
- Stage IV – Evaluate Performance and Make Adjustments

Stage I is primarily the responsibility of the BCC and the purpose of this document is to provide a well-rounded source of information as an update for direction to the organization for 2021/22 – 2022/23. The following pages summarize input from three critical sources: our citizens, our employees and our subject matter experts.

**Citizen input:** During November and December, a citizen survey was conducted by ICMA and the National Research Center. The National Citizen Survey is a standardized survey that makes use of statistically valid methodology, questions and sample sizes. This survey is similar to ones done every two years since 2008, giving the county the ability to compare not only with those results but also with governments across the nation. Those results are summarized on page 12.

**Employee input:** In November 2020, we asked our employees to evaluate the organization through an on-line survey. Approximately half of the organization responded. This survey provided us with an assessment of our strengths and weaknesses as well as a comparison of our results from 2014, 2016 and 2018 (page 14).

**Subject matter expertise:** To take advantage of the wide range of knowledge and expertise within the organization, we typically bring together subject matter experts from across county departments to conduct an analysis of our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) by BCC Focus Area. Because of the COVID pandemic, we revised that approach to conduct an alternative futures exercise to analyze the implications of a post-COVID world. This is discussed on page 3 and the results begin on page 6.

## Strategic Planning Update

### Post COVID World

Like all organizations, Charlotte County government has faced multiple challenges over the past several months of this pandemic. How do we best protect our workforce, how do we best serve and protect our citizens and how do we balance a budget with increased costs and reduced revenues? Those are issues we have already addressed but no one really knows what lies ahead. Not since 9/11 have we faced something that will change our world and the way we operate so dramatically.

To be as prepared as possible, we are incorporating a futuring exercise into the strategic planning process. Although no one knows exactly what a post-COVID world looks like we can imagine multiple scenarios. The process involves five broad steps:

**Identify trends** - What are the assumptions, drivers, and uncertainties involved.

**Fast forward** - Imagine plausible, but dramatically different, futures.

**Inhabit those futures** - Work backward to develop stories about how those worlds came to pass.

**Develop strategies** - What can we do now to remediate or enhance each future.

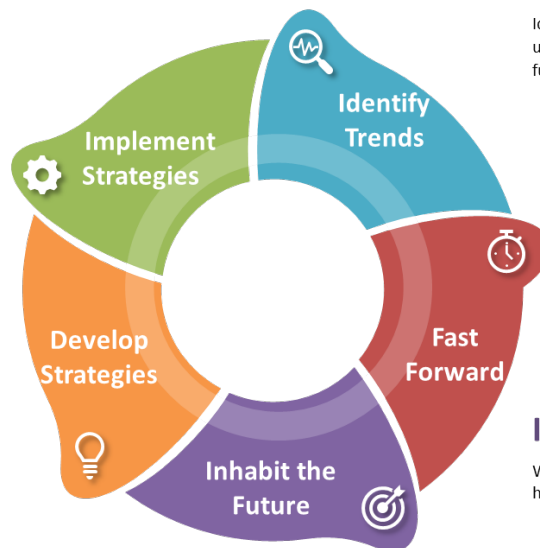
**Implement strategies** - Are there specific things we can do that would impact multiple future scenarios.

### Implement Strategies

Develop plans that address strategies that cut across multiple futures.

### Develop Strategies

What should we be doing now that would enable us to operate better in that particular future?



### Identify Trends

Identify assumptions, drivers, and uncertainties that could impact the future.

### Fast Forward

Imagine plausible, but dramatically different, futures.  
(5, 10, 20 years into the future)

### Inhabit the Future

Work backward to develop stories about how those worlds came to pass.

### Identifying Trends

Using our quarterly business meetings, departments helped us identify a large array of trends that could/will impact the future as a result of COVID or measures taken to address COVID. To make the exercise more manageable, we reduced the list to 20 broad trends grouped under four categories.

## Job related

- Persistent levels of unemployment
- Vanishing industries
- Remote workforce
- Decline of tourism industry
- Diminishing pension funds

## Economy

- Growing national deficit
- Status of the U.S. dollar
- Rise of cyber currencies
- Trade wars
- Inflation
- Local development

## Health

- Future waves of COVID
- Isolation of the elderly
- Operating schools safely
- Burden on the health care system

## Social

- Growing gap between wealth and poverty
- Increased government dependency
- Political polarization
- Racial tension
- Migration from urban to rural

We then asked three groups (employees, stakeholders and the general public) to help us prioritize the trends that will have the greatest impact on Charlotte County. With all three groups, the top two concerns were “local development” and the “growing gap between wealth and poverty”. The third overall concern was “decline of tourism industry”. Full results are listed below.

	Employee		Stakeholder		Public		Total	
<b>Job related</b>								
Persistent levels of unemployment	24.40%	101	19.17%	37	21.34%	35	22.44%	173
Vanishing industries	18.60%	77	14.51%	28	17.07%	28	17.25%	133
Remote workforce	15.22%	63	6.74%	13	8.54%	14	11.67%	90
Decline of tourism industry	22.71%	94	24.35%	47	29.88%	49	24.64%	190
Diminishing pension funds	11.59%	48	6.74%	13	4.27%	7	8.82%	68
	92.51%	383	71.50%	138	81.10%	133	84.82%	654
<b>Economy</b>								
Growing national deficit	6.28%	26	16.58%	32	16.46%	27	11.02%	85
Status of the U.S. dollar	8.94%	37	3.63%	7	7.32%	12	7.26%	56
Rise of cyber currencies	1.21%	5	0.00%	0	1.83%	3	1.04%	8
Trade wars	0.97%	4	0.52%	1	0.61%	1	0.78%	6
Inflation	13.04%	54	6.74%	13	10.37%	17	10.89%	84
Local development	29.23%	121	43.01%	83	53.05%	87	37.74%	291
	59.66%	247	70.47%	136	89.63%	147	68.74%	530
<b>Health</b>								
Future waves of COVID-19	20.05%	83	20.21%	39	17.07%	28	19.46%	150
Isolation of the elderly	8.94%	37	11.40%	22	7.32%	12	9.21%	71
Operating schools safely	14.73%	61	16.06%	31	10.37%	17	14.14%	109
Burden on the health care system	19.08%	79	27.46%	53	21.34%	35	21.66%	167
	62.80%	260	75.13%	145	56.10%	92	64.46%	497
<b>Social</b>								
Growing gap between wealth and poverty	27.54%	114	29.53%	57	24.39%	40	27.37%	211
Increased government dependency	20.29%	84	16.58%	32	18.29%	30	18.94%	146
Political polarization	21.26%	88	24.87%	48	19.51%	32	21.79%	168
Racial tension	7.97%	33	5.18%	10	3.66%	6	6.36%	49
Migration from urban to rural	7.97%	33	6.74%	13	7.32%	12	7.52%	58
	85.02%	352	82.90%	160	73.17%	120	81.97%	632
Participants	414		193		164		771	



## Fast Forward

Using these trends, a small workgroup identified eight potential futures and organization leadership reduced the number to five to make it more manageable. The five alternative futures were:

**Everything is Booming:** COVID goes away and the economy quickly recovers.

**Housing Shortage:** economy recovers, jobs are available but development lags.

**Safe Refuge:** people flee the insecurity of urban areas for a safer habitat.

**Recession Repeat:** COVID hangs on and economic impacts world-wide are deep.

**Retirement Community:** weak local jobs market means we continue to attract an older population.

## Inhabit those futures

We brought Leadership Academy graduates from across the organization to a one-day workshop imaging what these futures would look like. They put themselves in the year 2023 and developed a one-page news article that painted a picture of what the county looked like and the events that occurred over the past three years to shape that picture. The five scenarios are included in Appendix A.

## Develop strategies

With these news articles we used Microsoft Teams to bring together employees from each department to help evaluate each alternative future. Each team was asked to conduct the following exercise.

- The year is 2023.
- Read the news article on where we are and what has happened over the past 3 years.
- Imagine this is your future reality.
- Think about the impacts on the county, your department and the services provided.
- Answer each of the following questions
  - What opportunities does this future present?
  - What threats does this future present?
  - What strategies or initiatives can be enacted to take advantage of these opportunities?
  - What strategies or initiatives can be enacted to mitigate these threats?

Representatives of each of these teams then attended a countywide virtual meeting to report out and prioritize the most important opportunities, threats and strategies to focus on. The results of those sessions are summarized beginning on page 6.

## Post COVID World Scenarios

As covered on pages 3- 5, we conducted an exercise to look at the future of the county from five different vantage points. The individual results for each scenario (opportunities, threats and strategies) are summarized on the following pages but there were some overall observations as well as some strategies that cut across multiple scenarios to highlight.

First, no one scenario is likely to occur but rather a combination of the five. There was general agreement that:

- For the foreseeable future, the population of the county will continue to increase and residential construction will be robust.
- Commercial construction will be more dependent on the overall state of the economy but will lag due to online service delivery and remote work, both accelerated by the pandemic.
- Given the service nature of our local economy affordable housing will be a persistent need.
- Charlotte will remain attractive to retirees but flight from urban areas and the ability to work remotely will bring a greater level of diversity.

Secondly, there were a number of issues and strategies that need to be at the forefront regardless of how the future unfolds.

- Because of our history as a General Development community, land use regulations and zoning require frequent review and flexibility especially in addressing affordable housing options.
- Provision of high-speed internet will be critical for attracting a remote worker workforce.
- Infrastructure must continue to be a priority as new areas of the county develop.
- Development of an ongoing planning group consisting of a cross-section of county departments to update projections, plans and recommendations in coordinated and timely way.
- Use our developed “level of service” standards to be proactive in scaling staff and resources as well as managing citizen expectations.

## Safe Refuge

### Opportunities

- Potential for more families and long-term resident vs. snowbirds. Lower average age of community will make it more attractive to younger families and greater diversification.
- Population growth increases tax base and revenues to the county. Increased school enrollment.
- Boom to local economy from influx of population. Housing market boom will encourage new development. More employment opportunities provided by larger population needing services.

### Threats

- Property values rise, leading to less affordable housing. Retirees on a fixed income will not be able to afford the higher price property and starter homes will be difficult to find. Could lead to increase in multigeneration/multifamily households. Increase in family-sized homelessness.
- Growth happens too fast. Strain on utility services, public safety, infrastructure, roads. Potential to overwhelm the existing transportation system. Increased class sizes or not enough schools to accommodate the influx of families
- Narrower job market due to so many new residents, so perhaps unemployment will rise in our area. Lack of job diversity and opportunities to sustain influx.

### Strategies

- Incentivize development that earmarks a minimum percentage as affordable housing. Plan for low income housing. Offer incentives for refurbishment/reclamation projects vs. new development that would reduce our green areas. Smart growth – more dense, concentrate in core areas, actually need to create some “core areas”.
- Ensure proper planning is occurring as growth happens. Ongoing cross-functional meetings to update scenarios. Department master planning refined to understand the magnitude of infrastructure that will be needed in all event scenarios.
- Work with service providers to establish a more robust grid, both electrical and network. Support work from home & home schooling by providing free countywide wi-fi within county limits, or develop strategy to work with internet companies to make good internet access more available throughout the county.
- Upgrade existing infrastructure and utility structures to meet current demand and to prepare for expansion opportunities. Require connection to sewer/septic for new development to protect environment.
- More flexible zoning to expand upon housing options. Continually update developmental master plan for the community.

## **Retirement Community**

### **Opportunities**

- Attract medical provider and home health organizations. Increase in long-term health facilities. Increase in medical staffing (CNAs, Home health nurses).
- Flexible workforce/job sharing. Knowledgeable workforce due to age. Increase volunteer opportunities. Experienced staff teaching younger workforce. As the majority of retirees or older workers prefer to work on a part-time basis, there is more opportunity for multi-generational job sharing, particularly with high school and college (FSW and remote learning) students, which can lead to more intergenerational respect and understanding.
- Increased demand for enhanced senior programming.

### **Threats**

- Increased burden on housing market. Potential for increase in prices making the area more expensive for both the retirees and the people who can provide services to them.
- Increased burden on local medical facilities, leading to burnout of current medical staff and increased burden to emergency response.
- Older workforce creates more costly health insurance premiums for employers. Reduced availability of working age citizens. Loss of benefits with PT work.

### **Strategies**

- Revisit zoning regulations with an eye toward increased hotels and accommodations (short-term housing). Encourage future residential master plans to include set-asides for affordable housing and utilities within or near the communities that part-time and/or health care workers could serve.
- Technical training. Increase schooling and training for construction workers, inspectors, health care givers, EMTs and fire personnel. Promote vocational or skilled training programs to high school seniors while educating them on the fact that an older population creates demand and job security in many of those professions.
- Provide affordable and innovative housing and services for retirees.
- Target companies in the medical, pharma and elderly services categories to relocate here which would service the older population while providing good paying jobs to attract a younger workforce.

## Everything is Booming

### Opportunities

- Larger tax base. Increased funding for infrastructure. Greater revenue for the utility = sewer hookup.
- Big businesses will be drawn to the area. Current businesses can expand. Sunseeker, Lost Lagoon and Punta Gorda Airport expansion completed. New retail markets catering to a different demographic and a chance to create environment that keeps kids from leaving, or maybe even want to come.
- More resources available to devote to quality of life. Citizens working from home have more time for community engagement and recreation at different times.

### Threats

- Strain on infrastructure required for increased population. Limited hurricane evacuation routes/ /shelter locations/capacity. Growth could happen too fast and outpace the road and utility capacity to grow.
- Keeping housing affordable. Concerns over becoming a “boom town” like the east coast. Locals upset about change, losing the small-town feel. NIMBY
- Government slow to respond to growth. School capacity. Locations to acquire expansionary lands in appropriate places and of appropriate sizes/space limitations at current park lands. Increase in crime rate.

### Strategies

- Proactively strengthen infrastructure. Creation of task force to monitor/manage growth countywide — diverse group representing all departments. Use to address future need of resources, fire, sheriff & schools in potential growth areas. Ensure growth projects and capacity modeling are done often enough to capture the requirements so needs can be met.
- Public\private partnerships – to make it more efficient & better for the community
- Build reserves to protect against future economic downturn. Penny tax to fund more/bigger projects. Increase impact fee to 100%.
- Invest in building green for longer term sustainability. Identify and implement renewable resource strategy including charging stations, additional solar projects with FPL, fleet hybrid vehicles. Balancing growth and natural resource sustainability. Proactive environmental regulations. Evaluate emissions standards. \$ dedicated to green/tech and solar options.

## Housing Shortage

### Opportunities

- Explore affordable housing opportunities, including: modular construction, multi-housing options, tiny house communities.
- Shift from single-family to multi-family housing will attract younger demographic, creating neighborhoods near schools, and opportunities for entrepreneurs.
- Encourage teleworking. Create an opportunity to provide high-speed internet access in rural communities which would create demand where it is cheaper to build.

### Threats

- Increase need for social services. Increase in homelessness, and related issues such as: community park usage/safety, mental health concerns and substance abuse, increase in crime, increase in taxpayer medical costs related to covering homeless population
- Local business closure. Deters the establishment of new businesses. Construction industry looks elsewhere for work. Empty/derelict retail space.
- Reduction in local labor pool. Stagnant ideas – no growth in employment candidate base. Citizens of working age leave the county.

### Strategies

- Alternative housing – tiny houses, duplex, transition homes. Build dorm-like structures that are affordable for younger people going to school. Follow Tampa Bay example: "create a housing affordability plan; maximize and leverage housing funds to create micro-housing options, such as container homes or tiny homes. Work with nonprofits to help homeowners rehab their smaller properties to proposed village-style housing."
- Create a construction program to train vocational skills and use to build new dwellings (expand upon our current program). Partner with local builders/general contractors with potential for immediate job placement after completion of educational components. Fund/partner/ pursue grants to grow our current vocational program. Partner with existing trade schools to bring a campus here that focuses on multiple dwelling builds.
- Modification of current zoning codes to allow for multi-family living in more areas of the county. Rezone commercial property to residential or multi-use. Attempt to have incoming developers build commercial spaces with associated multi-family housing units.
- Create an opportunity to provide high-speed internet access in rural communities which would create demand where it is cheaper to build. Offer incentives to business to assist them with internet infrastructure in rural areas.
- Promote redevelopment in stagnating areas. Build stronger community – neighbors helping neighbors. Encourage community safety measures that can be placed to avoid having an unsafe neighborhood, such as 24-hour security, visitor screening, and even video surveillance.

## **Recession Repeat**

### **Opportunities**

- Automation of services/utilizing apps/mobile workforce/teleworking to streamline and explore creative efficiencies.
- Openness to new ideas and growth. More entrepreneurial activity.
- Government refocuses stimulus efforts to reflect the FDR's New Deal and begins to reinvest in its infrastructure nationwide and offering grants for innovative projects. Institution of a stronger preventive maintenance program.

### **Threats**

- Increase reliance on government when budgets are low, leaving limited resources for programming and insufficient staff to accommodate needs.
- Increased social problems: domestic violence, substance abuse, criminal activity, lack of access to food, animal shelters overflowing, unsafe housing, increase in foreclosures.
- Degradation of infrastructure.

### **Strategies**

- Increased technology to support self-service functions. Automate processes.
- Increase mobile workforce. Reduce government overhead and need for physical buildings.
- Early retirement packages for long-time employees. If pay for performance or a pay freeze is coming, explore additional options for staff to utilize their benefits.
- Level of Service discussions now vs. when the recession happens. Plan now for reductions at a scalability level. Preemptively generate an annual priorities list forecasted out to five, 10, and 20 years to prepare for funding reductions and to quickly adjust.

## Overview of Citizen Input

The National Citizens Survey provides the opinions of a representative sample of Charlotte County residents about community quality of life, service delivery, and civic participation. A periodic sounding of resident opinion offers staff, elected officials and other stakeholders an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements and to sustain services and amenities for long-term success.

From a broad perspective, our residents' responses were similar to those of other participating communities nationwide. In terms of comparison to previous results, this marks the sixth time Charlotte County has engaged in this survey process: 2007, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020. The ratings received in 2010 were significantly higher than in the 2007 survey. In fact, Charlotte was recognized by ICMA as having the best overall improvement nation-wide. The change in ratings received since that time have been much less dramatic, but we continue to improve compared to the national benchmark.

Most residents experienced a good quality of life in Charlotte County with 87% of respondents rating the county as an excellent or good place to live. A majority (91%) reported they plan on staying in Charlotte County for the next five years. Charlotte was higher than the benchmark as a place to retire (86%), and lower than the benchmark as a place to raise children (even though this rating increase by 19% to 66%).

As in 2018, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Charlotte County community in the coming two years. The overall feeling of safety within the community was 84%, and 97% for feeling safe within their neighborhood. Both of these ratings are similar to the national benchmark. The rating for overall economic health increased to 64% (52% in 2018) and is similar to the national benchmark.

Another high priority identified by citizens was a new category, "The overall quality of utilities infrastructure in Charlotte County" with 91% rating it as an area of focus for the next two years.

A variety of characteristics of the community were evaluated by those participating in the study. The characteristics receiving the most favorable ratings were the feeling of safety, the natural environment and opportunities to volunteer in Charlotte County. The characteristics receiving the least positive ratings were employment opportunities, affordable housing and ease of bus travel in Charlotte County.

In general, survey respondents demonstrated increased trust in local government with 54% rating the overall direction being taken by Charlotte County as "good" or "excellent" (similar to the benchmark). However, less than half felt that the County welcomed citizen involvement, which is also similar to the benchmark. Those residents who had interacted with an employee of Charlotte County in the previous 12 months gave high marks to those employees. Most (82%) rated their overall impression of employees as "excellent" or "good."

On average, residents gave favorable ratings to most local government services. County service ratings were able to be compared to the benchmark database. Of the 30 services for which comparisons were available, 1 was below the benchmark comparison, 1 was higher and the rest were similar to the benchmark comparison.



The table below provides an overview of the ratings for livability and governance for 2020 compared with previous years and the national benchmark. Data that is significant to the BCC Focus Areas is also summarized in those sections.

## Overall Ratings

Survey Question	2020	2018	2016	2014	2012	2010	Benchmark
<b>Favorable rating of the following characteristics:</b>							
The overall quality of life in Charlotte County	84%	79%	83%	78%	73%	69%	Similar
Charlotte County as a place to live	87%	86%	84%	82%	80%	78%	Similar
Overall education and enrichment	53%	53%	51%	52%			Similar
Sense of community	61%	52%	57%	47%	56%	59%	Similar
Charlotte County as a place to raise children	66%	47%	63%	57%	56%	53%	Lower
Charlotte County as a place to retire	86%	87%	85%	78%	83%	80%	Higher
Overall natural environment	77%	72%	79%	83%			Similar
Overall appearance	68%	68%	62%	59%	51%	58%	Similar
Overall feeling of safety	78%	84%	82%	81%			Similar
Safety in your neighborhood	97%	96%	97%	94%	93%	92%	Similar
Value of services for the taxes paid to County	58%	56%	46%	52%	47%	38%	Similar
Overall rating of services provided by County	69%	70%	72%	68%	64%	61%	Similar
Overall direction Charlotte County is taking	54%	58%	52%	47%	43%	36%	Similar
Confidence in County government	51%	46%	44%	39%			Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	45%	45%	39%	35%			Similar
Acting in best interest of Charlotte County	55%	46%	46%	45%			Similar
Being honest	57%	50%	45%	43%			Similar
Treat all residents fairly	57%	52%	47%	43%			Similar

## Overview of Employee Survey

The employee survey consisted of 25 statements grouped into four major categories: teamwork, communication, organization and personal. For each statement, employees were asked to evaluate the organizations capabilities and rank how critical it was for success. We conducted our first self-administered survey in 2014 which provided us with a baseline against which to measure progress. We are now able to compare results for 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020.

### Strengths

Our greatest strength remains an extremely dedicated workforce. An overwhelming majority of our employees not only rated themselves as being “committed to doing quality work” and “understanding how to be a good team player” but rated their fellow employees in the same way.

Further, they tell us that “increasing the line of sight” has become part of our culture. Employees say they “know what is expected of them”, have an “understanding of our business goals” and as an organization “we consistently try to improve our customer service for our external clients”. In addition, they understand how their role fits in with the organization’s future.

### Opportunities

Just as important, we also received feedback on where we need to improve. As in any organization, communication is always an area that can be improved. The county is a large diverse organization and communication is a challenging task. Our employees have told us we need to improve our efforts across the organization, between departments and also within departments when changes occur. Since 2014 there has been a conscious and concerted effort to improve this coordination and communication and we have seen those scores improve. This year was especially difficult because of the pandemic yet we actually saw an increase in the organization’s ability to “communicate changes or decisions that affect employees” and “communication between depts regarding changes or decisions that affect employees”.

We have also seen an increase in employee morale. The percentage of employees that said they “would recommend my organization to friends and family as a good place to work” and “my employer is helping me meet my career objectives” have both increased again this year and are now 20% higher than in 2014.

Although we saw an increase there is still room for greater efficiency as employees tell us we can improve in terms of having “consistent, usable work practices”.

## Strategic Plan Overview

During the 2019/20 and 2020/21 planning process the Board modified the structure of their strategic plan to make it easier to communicate both to the public and to staff. A major reason for this was to “increase the line of sight”, an ongoing initiative in the county, to make sure employees could clearly see how their individual jobs link to the goals established by the Board.

The BCC streamlined from nine Strategic Focus areas with 70+ goals to four Focus areas:

- Infrastructure — to build and maintain countywide infrastructure that meets our evolving needs and enhances our community appearance, improves public safety and protects our natural resources.
- Economic and Community Development — to create a business climate that promotes a diversified, growing economy consistent with sustainable growth management plans, environmental stewardship and enhanced quality of life.
- Public Service — to maintain a safe and healthy community by delivering essential services from skilled, professional and dedicated public servants.
- Efficient and Effective Government — to manage fiscally sound county operations with a culture of transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and innovation.

These four focus areas identify the major types of work Charlotte County engages in and commits resources to. Because these four Focus areas are comprehensive, every employee is be able to readily understand how their work contributes to the strategic direction of the county.

The following pages contain the current Strategic Plan as developed by the Board.

**VISION**

**MISSION**

**VALUES**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS**

**Public Services**  
To maintain a safe and healthy community by delivering essential services from skilled, professional and dedicated public servants.

**Econ. & Community Development**  
To create a business climate that promotes a diversified, growing economy consistent with sustainable growth management plans, environmental stewardship and enhanced quality of life.

**Infrastructure**  
To build and maintain countywide infrastructure that meets our evolving needs and enhances our community appearance, improves public safety and protects our natural resources.

**Efficient & Effective Government**  
To manage fiscally sound county operations with a culture of transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and innovation.

**Bold Goals**



**Strategic Initiatives**



**Results / Measures**

## Focus Area: Public Services

To maintain a safe and healthy community by delivering essential services from skilled, professional and dedicated public servants.

### **Bold Goal: Define levels of service for both quality and quantity by 2020**

#### **Initiatives:**

Define Service Delivery Levels of Service - **Completed**

Define Infrastructure Levels of Service/Maintenance (LOM) – **In Process**

#### **Measures:**

Service Provided	2020	2018	2016	2014	2012	2010	Benchmark
Sheriff services	81%	86%	85%	87%	81%	79%	Similar
Fire services	83%	97%	96%	90%	91%	93%	Similar
Ambulance or emergency medical services	86%	94%	93%	92%	89%	92%	Similar
Crime prevention	77%	77%	73%	78%	71%	61%	Similar
Fire prevention and education	76%	81%	79%	75%	76%	72%	Similar
Animal control	78%	67%	63%	63%	57%	57%	Higher
Emergency preparedness	73%	77%	75%	74%	76%	77%	Similar
Traffic enforcement	61%	71%	67%	67%			Similar
Road repair	54%	53%	44%	49%	48%	45%	Similar
Street lighting	57%	64%	51%	56%			Similar
Sidewalk maintenance	51%	57%	46%	56%			Similar
Traffic signal timing	46%	50%	44%	43%			Similar
Bus or transit services	27%	36%	33%	21%	26%	23%	Lower
Garbage collection	71%	94%	89%	92%	90%	87%	Similar
Recycling	83%	93%	90%	90%	87%	89%	Similar
Yard waste pick-up	80%	87%	84%	90%	82%	85%	Similar
Storm drainage	71%	53%	49%	51%	55%	50%	Similar
Drinking water	67%	57%	54%	55%	54%	56%	Similar
Sewer services	66%	80%	67%	71%	72%	70%	Similar
County parks	73%	78%	78%	80%	84%	82%	Similar
Recreation programs or classes	65%	65%	62%	57%	66%	57%	Similar
Recreation centers or facilities	62%	67%	61%	58%	63%	68%	Similar
Land use, planning and zoning	36%	33%	37%	33%	33%	32%	Similar
Code enforcement	44%	39%	37%	33%	28%	27%	Similar
Economic development	51%	53%	36%	33%	25%	32%	Similar
Health services	74%	65%	61%	59%	60%	59%	Similar
Public library services	80%	86%	82%	87%	82%	80%	Similar
Public information services	60%	71%	62%	58%	60%	60%	Similar
Preservation of natural areas	62%	61%	63%	69%	60%	60%	Similar
County open space	71%	59%	61%	56%			Similar

## Focus Area: Infrastructure

To build and maintain countywide infrastructure that meets our evolving needs and enhances our community appearance, improves public safety and protects our natural resources.

### **Bold Goal: Funding and Completion of Capital Needs Assessment (CNA) through 2024**

#### **Initiatives:**

Maintain current and realistic picture of capital needs – **Ongoing**

Strive to achieve renewal of 2020 Sales Tax extension - **Completed**

### **Bold Goal: Define and maintain balance between Capital and Operating Budgets**

#### **Initiatives:**

Use Budget Process to reassess on biennial basis - **Ongoing**

#### **Measures:**

Survey Question	2020	2018	2016	2014	2012	2010	Benchmark
<b>Favorable rating of the following characteristics:</b>							
Traffic flow	54%	50%	46%	63%			Similar
Ease of travel by car	72%	64%	56%	68%	66%	66%	Similar
Public places	61%	63%	63%	60%			Similar
Street repair	54%	53%	44%	49%	48%	45%	Similar
Street lighting	57%	64%	51%	56%			Similar
Sidewalk maintenance	51%	57%	46%	56%			Similar
Storm drainage	71%	53%	49%	51%	55%	50%	Similar
Drinking water	67%	57%	54%	55%	54%	56%	Similar
Sewer services	66%	80%	67%	71%	72%	70%	Similar

## **Focus Area: Economic & Community Development**

To create a business climate that promotes a diversified, growing economy consistent with sustainable growth management plans, environmental stewardship and enhanced quality of life.

**Bold Goal: Add 3,650 affordable housing units by 2024**

### **Initiatives:**

#### **Policies & Processes**

Create a policy for the use of incentive density with specific criteria and award amounts - **Completed**

Create a process for Local Government Area of Opportunity (LGAO) funding - **Completed**

Implement process for the transfer of county properties to qualified non-profits through the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) - **Completed**

Expand the scope of the AHAC to lead the efforts in expanding affordable housing - **Completed**

#### **Planning & Zoning**

Revisit Affordable Housing section of the comprehensive plan to reflect current goals - **Ongoing**

Explore mixed-use zoning in target areas throughout the county - **Completed**

Review existing incentive density - **Ongoing**

Develop a strategy to address “missing middle” housing - **Ongoing**

#### **Funding & Financing**

Determine a funding source for the Housing Trust Fund - **Completed & ongoing**

Use county-owned property as incentive to build affordable housing units - **Completed**

Explore the use of incentive density - **Completed**

Remove cost barriers wherever possible in the construction of affordable housing - **Completed**

#### **Potential Projects & Partnerships**

Opportunity Zones - **Where possible**

Bachmann Tract - **Ongoing**

Work with Together Charlotte, AHAC, and identified partners - **Completed & ongoing**

Explore and encourage public/private partnerships & creative solutions - **Completed & ongoing**

**Bold Goal: Improve water quality by 5%**

**Initiatives:**

Identify partners and stakeholders - **Completed**

Identify current conditions and prioritize key areas of improvement – **In Progress**

Define economic impact – **Completed via Coastland and Heartland National Estuary Partnership**

Identify current & potential funding sources - **In Process**

Develop key short-term, mid-term and long-term outcomes - **In Process**

Inventory & spatially map current efforts – **In Process**

**Bold Goal: Increase enrollment in secondary education by 5% (including trades and vocational)**

**Initiatives:**

High school & College Partnerships - **Ongoing**

Connecting Charlotte Technical College with new businesses - **Ongoing**

School District Partnership - **Ongoing**

Research a Business Alliance model - **Completed**

Potential Projects & Programs - **Ongoing**



**Measures:**

Survey Question	2020	2018	2016	2014	2012	2010	Benchmark
<b>Favorable rating of the following characteristics:</b>							
Rating of employment opportunities	40%	36%	26%	21%	13%	11%	Similar
Overall economic health	64%	52%	44%	36%			Similar
Quality of K-12 education	59%	52%	67%	60%			Lower
Adult education	46%	53%	51%	52%			Similar
Overall quality of business establishments in County	72%	62%	58%	55%	53%	57%	Similar
Charlotte County as a place to work	55%	49%	42%	36%	33%	24%	Similar
Charlotte County as a place to visit	74%	74%	72%	70%			Similar
Cost of living in Charlotte County	58%	50%	48%	48%			Similar
Overall quality of new development in County	52%	55%	44%	42%	41%	44%	Similar
Overall appearance of Charlotte County	59%	68%	62%	59%	51%	58%	Similar
Overall impression/reputation of Charlotte County	68%	63%	64%	58%	53%	54%	Similar
Overall built environment	61%	53%	50%	52%			Similar
Affordable quality housing	39%	35%	35%	43%	44%	41%	Similar
Housing options	53%	49%	50%	52%			Similar
Land use, planning and zoning	36%	33%	37%	33%	33%	32%	Similar
Code enforcement	44%	39%	37%	33%	28%	27%	Similar
Economic development	51%	53%	36%	33%	25%	32%	Similar

## Focus Area: Efficient & Effective Government

To manage fiscally sound county operations with a culture of transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and innovation.

### **Bold Goal: Ensure Culture as “Great Place to Work”**

#### **Initiatives:**

Update & integrate Mission, Vision and Values - **Completed**

### **Bold Goal: Ensure Culture of continuous improvement**

#### **Initiatives:**

Identify core processes and targeted improvements by 2020 – **In process**

Target % of Budget spent on Run, Grow, Transform - **Ongoing**

Increase % of Services Provided Online – **In process**

#### **Measures:**

Survey Question	2020	2018	2016	2014	2012	2010	Benchmark
<b>Favorable rating of the following characteristics:</b>							
Value of services for the taxes paid to Charlotte County	58%	56%	46%	52%	47%	38%	Similar
Overall rating of services provided by Charlotte County	69%	70%	72%	68%	64%	61%	Similar
Overall rating of services provided by Federal Government	41%	46%	35%	36%	38%	33%	Similar
Overall direction Charlotte County is taking	54%	58%	52%	47%	43%	36%	Similar
Confidence in County government	51%	46%	44%	39%			Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	45%	45%	39%	35%			Similar
Acting in best interest of Charlotte County	55%	46%	46%	45%			Similar
Overall customer service of County employees	82%	77%	75%	75%	79%	80%	Similar

# Alternative Future Scenarios

## Everything is Booming in Charlotte County

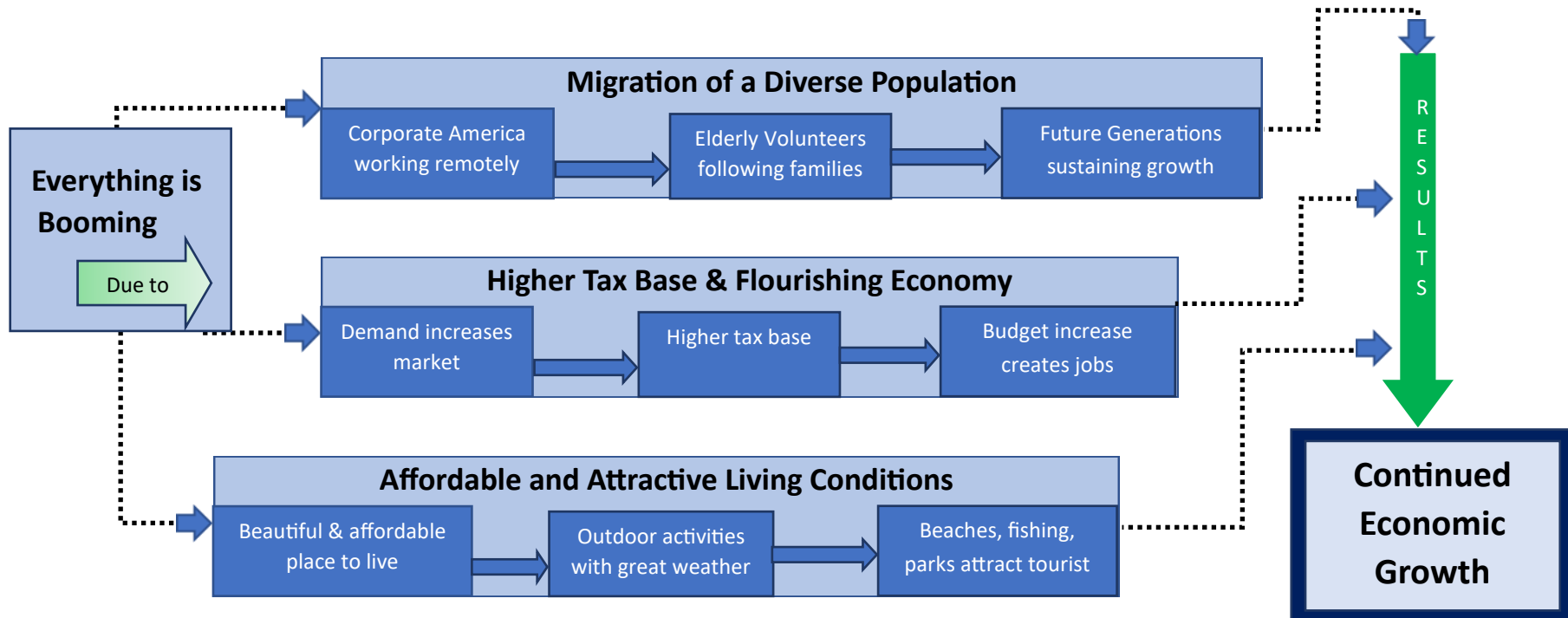
Everything is booming in Charlotte County due to a migration of a diverse population, a higher tax base, a flourishing economy, a natural environment, and affordable and attractive living conditions. Diversity within our community allows for a healthy workforce, a city of volunteers, and future generations to sustain growth. A higher tax base provides resources for public infrastructure and social services, creating jobs, investing in schools, and providing safer neighborhoods. A thriving environment has attracted tourists, fishermen, and nature enthusiasts. Affordable and attractive living conditions entice people to flock to Charlotte County.



Diversity within our workforce has resulted from telecommuting opportunities, which has allowed corporate America to live remotely, leading to an assortment of families moving to the area. The community of volunteers has increased with economically stable retirees following their extended families to the area. With the population growth, the real estate market has seen steady growth leading to increased property values contributing to the higher tax base. As the county budget expands, so does the need for infrastructure and services, resulting in larger schools and safer neighborhoods, creating more jobs. Planned developments such as West Port and Babcock have attracted newcomers interested in sustainability, green technology, and socialization. These neighborhoods have prompted a sense of community, which enables society to thrive.



Families of all ages and backgrounds have found themselves attracted to Charlotte County for various reasons. The growth of Punta Gorda Airport, the completion of Sunseekers, and our environment have enriched all community members' quality of life. As migration continues to thrive, our planning and zoning department has maintained a healthy balance of preserving our natural assets and living opportunities, enhancing tourism.



# Housing Shortage

How did we get to where we are? The 2020 development numbers closely mirrored those of post Hurricane Charley; the County was still recovering from the recession and was working to gain 10 years of lost natural development, in all facets, most clearly in the realm of multi-family development. A study commissioned by the Economic Development Office (EDO), found the County was deficient by about 11,000 multi-family units, and climbing yearly. Already behind natural growth patterns, strategies were created to try and even out residential development and create more opportunities for multi-family housing. Subsequent to the boom of 2015-2020, and due to market volatility, pandemic response, and other world issues, the US was thrust into another recession which further depressed world markets.



Jobs were the first thing to go, followed by the housing market. The workforce, and therefore the employers, relocated to where the least expensive costs of living were located. This then trickled down to the local governments who were not able to collect the income to provide the services demanded by the residents and those residents unwilling to pay for said services, thus necessitating increased taxes and fees. The 2023 housing shortage is cause for concern for the workforce and for the future of the County's economic development.

There are many issues that lack of housing opportunities presents and there is a need to evaluate the impacts to employers and employment opportunities. Without the ability to house a workforce, employers will choose to locate where their workforce is, due to efficiencies of market. This will have a further chilling effect on the local economy and workforce. The County's demographics continue to skew more towards the retirement age. Many are already retired, may work part-time, or continue to work full time to survive, this can further limit opportunities to groom and establish a younger workforce more adept at new technology and exhibiting newer/different skill sets. This coupled with the lack of housing opportunities, means that a younger workforce is slowly moving away (or at the least, not moving here), to less expensive communities, therefore employers are following their workforce. Coupled with land prices inland that are significantly less than in a coastal community such as ours, this mass migration will continue unabated until such time as the market stabilizes and we can find the ability to create the necessary housing opportunities, as well as any incentives for the workforce, and therefore the employers, to begin to relocate back the County.

The county faces even greater impacts due to this unique scenario of its demographics. Being a retirement community there is little interest in constructing multi-family housing units due to our demographics desire for independent living. Commercial development is unwilling to invest resources due to uncertainties in various markets including materials, economy and the world markets in general. The County faces this cyclical pattern and will continue to feel these impacts until it balances the housing crisis and economic impacts for its future work force.



## Escape from New York: a SWFL community provides Safe Refuge for Ramirez family

Three years ago, the Ramirez family moved from their New York City borough and found Safe Refuge in Charlotte County, Florida. The family, including their school-aged children and elderly grandparents, discovered their own slice of paradise. We talked to them about their experience settling in when all aspects of their life have changed.

When they first arrived, Joe and Maria sought out an apartment for their family of six. Due to the lack of affordable workforce housing, the Ramirez family settled into a rental home vacated by a Canadian “snowbird” couple that were not able to come down to Florida due to the closed national borders. They found their monthly rent payments got them a lot more space in Charlotte County than they had in Brooklyn.



The couple’s children, age 7 and 9, enrolled in local schools where they attend in person two days a week and virtually three days a week. Joe found work with a local construction company, and Maria started her own home-based business as part of the growing work-from-home movement. Childcare is provided by the grandparents, and when the kids are in school, they maintain an active retiree social life.

In considering the Ramirez’s story, is Charlotte County prepared to adequately support the potential for a migration of those looking to escape politically-charged environments and deteriorating social conditions? This southerly move has the potential to expand across the demographics and generations.

In their efforts to find safety for their family, they sought out an area with sufficient public safety and quality schools to help support a healthy lifestyle. They also found affordable housing, adequate transportation networks and good infrastructure in their new home in Charlotte County. Their realtor cautioned them about the areas where flood insurance is required, and what places might be evacuated when tropical systems pass through our area during hurricane season.

As we look at the entire county, the potential for this growth is strongest along the existing transportation corridors to support commuting families. Other opportunities exist for infill development where sewer and water infrastructure are in place to support additional density and height associated with multi-family residential housing.

National trends have revealed that the move of the Ramirez family is becoming a common solution in our current political and social climate. Families are seeking safety while also pursuing opportunity. This trend means now is the time to make the moves to support this type of growth and its resulting impacts. We need to begin planning and developing these areas now.

Three years later, the Ramirez family is happy in Southwest Florida, but are struggling to find a long-term housing solution with the rising cost of living that this migration trend has created. Joe and Maria are part of the “sandwich generation,” providing for their children and aging parents at the same time, which has them feeling squeezed financially to keep their family afloat. Joe’s long commutes for his construction job mean a lot of the household work falls on Maria and strains their relationship. But these are considered small inconveniences compared to their life in a cramped NYC apartment and the goals they are working towards in their new life here in paradise.

# RECESSION REPEAT

After a prolonged economic downturn spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, conditions worsened resulting in a weak jobs market & weak local development in Charlotte County

Allegiant ceases operations at PGD coinciding with a construction downturn to include Sunseeker, West Port & Babcock Ranch

Commercial sector mirrors construction industry with a downturn in hospitality causing closures

Reduction in tourism traffic is seen in long-term/short term rentals and all affected sectors

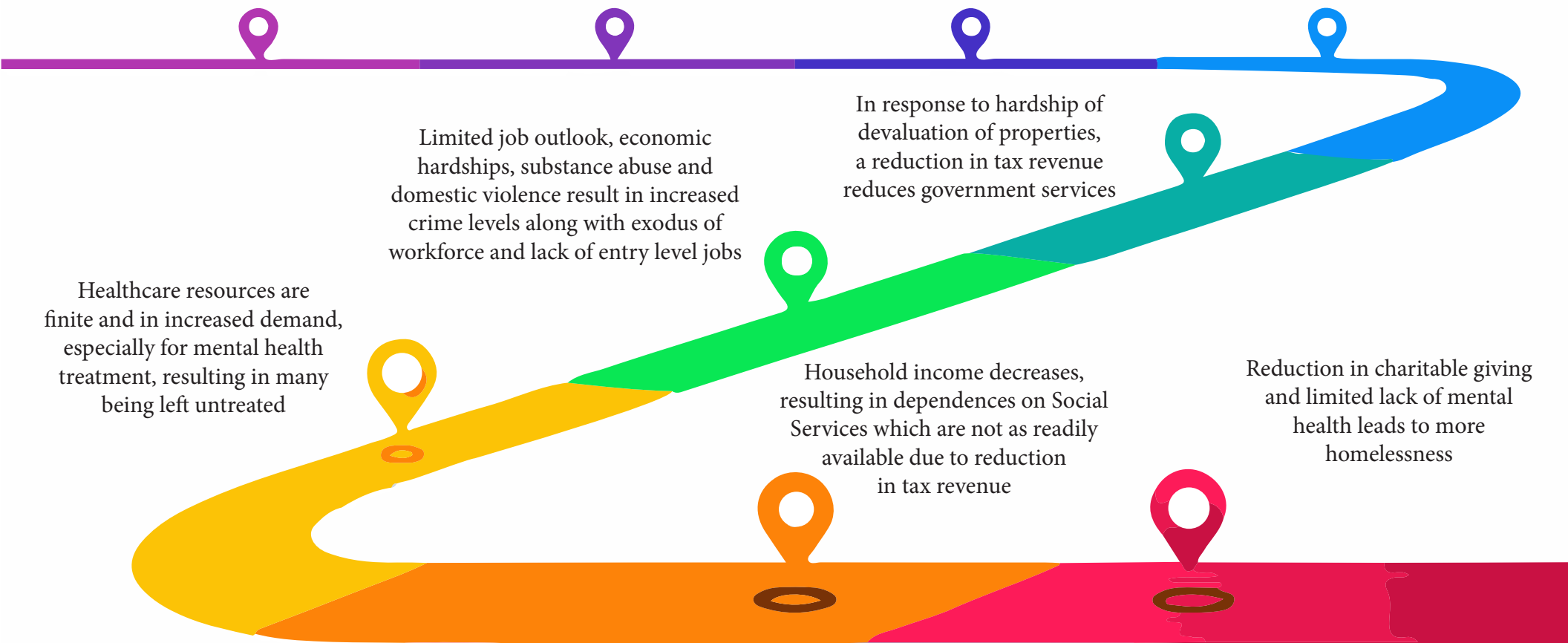
Limited job outlook, economic hardships, substance abuse and domestic violence result in increased crime levels along with exodus of workforce and lack of entry level jobs

In response to hardship of devaluation of properties, a reduction in tax revenue reduces government services

Healthcare resources are finite and in increased demand, especially for mental health treatment, resulting in many being left untreated

Household income decreases, resulting in dependences on Social Services which are not as readily available due to reduction in tax revenue

Reduction in charitable giving and limited lack of mental health leads to more homelessness



# THE DAILY RETIREE

CHARLOTTE COUNTY – RETIREMENT COMMUNITY OF THE FUTURE

## New Way of Living

Charlotte County has historically had an older demographic with the average resident age in 2018 of 58.6. This average age is on the rise with more of our peers moving to the area every day. In the 2010's, many Florida communities, including Charlotte County, began investing in self-sustaining communities such as The Villages in Ocala or Babcock Ranch located here in Charlotte County. These communities proved desirable to retirement age individuals because of the services, amenities and activities provided. The success of such communities spurred additional development in Charlotte County. Retiree's looking to spend their freedom years in our community now have many options to choose from with nearly all options providing the ability have everything you need in walking distance.



## COVID-19- Three Years Later

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced many changes making Charlotte County more desirable to those of retirement age. With the lack of COVID-19 restrictions put in place in 2020, Charlotte County became an attractive alternative to those living in more restrictive states.

Another change we've seen that's benefited the 55+ community is the shift in the service industry. During and after the pandemic, the service industry used technology to transform their business models allowing them to provide contactless alternatives to their goods and services including getting virtually anything you need delivered to your door. This shift provided the businesses the opportunity to step away from the traditional brick and mortar business model, leading to an increase in vacant commercial property and decreased commercial development. The service business' that remained have seen a shift in their work force. The struggle for service workers to find affordable housing in our area has resulted in a shift in the service industry from full time employees to part time retirees providing active adults the opportunity to get out and socialize.

## When Home Is More Than Home

The resulting increase in population of retired individuals, who spend the majority of their time at home, has resulted in an increased strain on utilities and created a need for more home health care. The reason is, more people are not only living in these homes but they are working from the home, remote learning and being cared for as they begin to reach the years they are no longer able to take care of themselves. The increased healthcare demands cause the retirees to have more remote assistance from their

doctors and less in person care because they do not want to leave the house. This extra time at home has put a huge strain on the utilities and less on our roadways and our vehicles. This includes the fact people are not going out to the stores, to restaurants, school or any recreational activities.



## Generational Shift

Charlotte County has seen generational shifts in both residents and workforce. The excessive population of retired individuals has acted as a deterrent for younger families to settle in this area. That has, in turn, made the area more desirable to retirees.

The available workforce is now more than ever made up of part-time retirees. Disappearing pensions has also spurred the return to work plans for retirees.

While the experience that the retirees bring to the table has helped area businesses, their limited physical abilities and unwillingness to work long hours has limited their contributions to the workforce. Hospitality and healthcare, our largest industries, remain in need of more full-time workers.