

## Commission continues review of strategic plan

By Hector Flores

On Thursday, the County Commission continued revising its strategic plan at a workshop focused on economic and community development, financial trends and goals for affordable housing, environmental water quality and workforce development.

Economic and community development is one of four focus areas in the board's strategic plan, which is reviewed every two years as part of the county's two-year budget process. The other focus areas are public services, infrastructure, and efficient and effective government. Future workshops will cover those topics.

Budget Director Gordon Burger provided an overview of financial trends with a focus on the impact of Hurricane Ian and any potential economic downturn or recession that may occur over the coming years. The extent of damage Ian caused will actually boost county revenues in the short-term, as insurance payouts to residents to rebuild their homes increase sales tax revenue. That impact will be coupled with another sizable increase in property values and tax revenue, driven by new construction and rising home sale prices. Due to our recent growth, which is projected to continue, the county may be largely insulated from a national recession, Burger noted.

The board's goal for affordable housing is to increase the number of units available by 200 each year for the next five years. Progress was made with the establishment of the county's affordable housing trust fund. Last year, the board approved an agreement with Palladium Group to build a 600-unit development on county-owned land near Veterans Boulevard. Construction will begin in 2024. The 88-unit Jacaranda Place apartment complex for low-income families and disabled individuals on Loveland Boulevard has scheduled a ribbon-cutting ceremony for June.

Water Quality Management Brandon Moody presented an update on the One Charlotte, One Water initiative. Moody implemented the first phase of ambient water quality monitoring in June 2022. To view a site map of monitoring location, visit [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and search for One Charlotte, One Water. Additional progress included creating a webpage containing dozens of water quality links, including red tide updates, health alerts, emergency notices and partner monitoring efforts. By year's end Moody expects to complete his water quality monitoring plan and organize another water quality summit.

Workforce development is an ongoing effort, especially given the tight labor market and steep competition for talented employees needed to operate local government. The county starts young, with a target of increasing the number of interns we hire to 20 in fiscal year 2023-24. We

hired 13 last year in a variety of areas including utilities, public information and information technology.

The Human Resources Department held an internship event at Charlotte Technical College and added four colleges to its partnership efforts. In addition to holding student job fairs, the department developed a Big Brothers, Big Sisters county employee mentoring program. It is planning a "Day in Government" event this year to showcase career opportunities in government. The Economic Development Office continues to partner with CTC on its aircraft maintenance program and recruit companies to the county, especially in the bustling Enterprise Charlotte Airport Park. The Utilities Department also partners with CTC on a wastewater treatment course and will be offering up to eight post-course internship internships.

If you didn't get a chance to attend or watch the workshop, the video is available in our CC-TV archive (visit [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/CC-TV](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/CC-TV)) and on the county's Facebook page, [www.Facebook.com/CharlotteCountyFlorida](http://www.Facebook.com/CharlotteCountyFlorida).

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