



# **Advancing BCC Strategic Focus Areas**

2023/24 – 2024/25 Budget Process



## Table of Contents

Process and Purpose of Materials	2
Overview of Employee Survey	3
Strategic Planning Update	4
Global Issues	5
Strategic Plan Overview	6
Public Services	7
Infrastructure	8
Economic & Community Development	10
Efficient & Effective Government	12

## 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 2023/24- 2024/25. The following pages summarize input from three critical sources: our citizens, our employees and our subject matter experts.

**Citizen input:** In previous cycles, a citizen survey was conducted by ICMA and the National Research Center. The National Citizen Survey is a standardized survey that uses 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. ***The aftermath of Hurricane Ian, which struck the county on Sept. 28, 2022, made this process prohibitive for this cycle.***

**Employee input:** In November 2022, we asked our employees to evaluate the organization through an online 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 previous cycles (page 3).

**Subject matter experts:** 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 Hurricane Ian we adjusted this approach and asked our colleagues to consider four alternative scenarios and the potential impact they could have on the Board's goals.***

## 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 organization's 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, 2020 and 2022.

The most significant finding of this year's survey was how little change there was from 2020. For an organization that has been through a pandemic and a recent hurricane, our scores were remarkably stable. We believe this is a testimony of the stability and resiliency of the organization and our employees.

### Strengths

Our greatest strength remains an extremely dedicated workforce. An overwhelming majority of our employees rate themselves as being "committed to doing quality work" and "understanding how to be a good team player."

High marks for our managers: "I know what is expected of me by my manager," "My manager is fair and even-handed in the treatment of employees," and "My manager cares about me as an individual" are evidence that our Management Institution program is working.

Further, employees 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." 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.

## Strategic Planning Update

Throughout 2022, we conducted a series of Board workshops to do long-range projections for each of our major funds. In those workshops, the Board was provided with a 20-year base projection based on historical patterns as well as anticipated future adjustments. In addition, we provided alternative projections based on three scenarios, with a fourth scenario added at the end of the year.

### **Accelerated population growth**

During the decade spanning 2010-2019, the population of Charlotte County grew by 16%. That growth is projected to be closer to 26% for the current decade. If growth continues at the current rate, we will add 50,000 residents to our community

### **Persistent inflation**

Inflation over the past two years has been at historic levels. The Federal Reserve has taken aggressive action and, although there are signs of tapering, this scenario considers what happens if high inflation rates continue for the next 2-3 years.

### **Recession**

There is growing consensus that we may face a nationwide recession in 2023. This scenario considers the impact that would have on our local economy.

### **Hurricane recovery**

These were the three scenarios we considered throughout the past two years. However, on Sept. 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian dramatically altered our local picture. We have included recovery as a scenario to ensure we consider both the implications and opportunities it presents.

To consider the impacts of these scenarios, we met with the management teams for each county department as well as stakeholders and partners to solicit their input. Beginning on page 7, we provide each of the Board's current goals along with the input collected.

## Global Issues

In reviewing the Board's goals, participants identified two potential gaps for the BCC to consider in updating this year's plan.

**Strengthening resiliency:** Hurricane Ian highlighted the urgency of not just being prepared but the ability to bounce back quickly. This encompasses a wide range of issues: infrastructure, evacuation, shelter, flood plain, codes, zoning, partnerships, mitigation, etc. Charlotte County has organically operated under the concept of resiliency across the organization for many years. In light of events such as Hurricane Ian, the ever-changing financial uncertainty we face and increasing threats, both natural and man-made, it is prudent to place a spotlight on resiliency across the organization and ensure every department is able to identify, mitigate and recover speedily from these challenges.

**Right sizing based on Levels of Service:** Over the past few years departments have identified Level of Service metrics, but they have remained distinct from our budget process. The one exception is Community Development. Because the linkage between activity and staffing has been clearly defined, we are able to authorize positions in advance so we can staff up quickly as demand increases. Expanding this practice to other functions would allow us to keep pace with growth rather than constantly "catching up."

### Challenges & Opportunities

Participants identified several high-level challenges and opportunities for the Board to take into consideration.

- Even if there is a national recession, Southwest Florida will likely continue to see a population influx and associated growth.
- Regardless of inflation levels, our location and the impact of Hurricane Ian ensure we will continue to see long delays in provision of goods and services.
- Affordable housing will continue to be a primary need. Hurricane Ian impacts and subsequent funding offer an opportunity to reassess how that need is addressed.
- Hurricane Ian provides an opportunity to re-envision the Cultural Center.
- Demographics of the population influx will largely determine whether we have a surplus or shortage of workers.
- Traffic flows and congestion will escalate even higher as an issue with citizens and visitors.

**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 Maintenance (LOM) by 2022**

#### **Initiatives:**

Develop levels of maintenance for facilities/assets - **In Process**

Implement enterprise asset management system – **In Process**

#### **Accelerated population growth**

Servicing growth has limited staffing available to work on maintenance

Manpower has not kept pace with growth

Re-evaluating response times for all divisions

Expanded service areas within County

Additional staging yards needed

#### **Persistent inflation**

Ability to get materials, time to get materials, and cost increasing

Increased cost impacting R&R budget

Equipment lead times increase

Pulling materials or equipment from other projects to meet needs

Substituting items based on availability may impact maintenance

Reviewing capital expansion vs. holding off — beautification, signage, dredging, mowing

#### **Recession**

Will help development to slow and allow them to catch up

Maintain at a more realistic pace

Prices will come down

Impact to rate increases for MSBUs being approved, more work getting done cheaper

#### **Hurricane recovery**

Utilities — Office space is main impact to department. Minor damages to infrastructure

Public Works — Impact to each division differently, may be able to start maintenance again in six months

## **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 2026**

#### **Initiatives:**

Maintain realistic picture of capital needs - **Completed**

Deliver 2020 sales tax extension projects – **In Process**

#### **Accelerated population growth**

Increased foot traffic leads to higher wear and tear  
More frequent cleaning and maintenance both contractual and internal  
Increased number of projects to manage  
Master plans will help manage the process  
Increased deficit in shelter capacity  
Increased evacuation times  
Need for expanded capacity – plant growth  
Shortened lifespan of equipment  
Expansion draws staffing away from core maintenance activities  
New and expanded service areas  
Capacity constraints – road options limited  
Increased focus on congestion, signalization, traffic calming

#### **Persistent inflation**

Accepting “low bid” could lead to lower quality vendors  
Material/supply shortages and disruptions  
Cost increase in contracts and supplies  
Difficult to recruit and retain staff  
Material/supply shortages and disruptions  
Contract defaults and rewrites

#### **Recession**

Lower material costs  
Better availability of vendors  
Build at cheaper costs  
Catch-up on projects and maintenance.

#### **Hurricane recovery**

Increased competition for materials and contractors.  
Restoration deterring resources from expansion projects  
Some restoration will accelerate or realign maintenance projects

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

### **Initiatives:**

Use budget process to reassess on biennial basis – **Ongoing**

#### **Accelerated population growth**

Increased demand both in quantity and quality of services  
Constrained resources as service area expands  
Increased difficulty getting qualified bids  
Entitlement community size without the funding until next census  
Staffing lags: have to demonstrate the need before creating positions  
New and expanded service areas  
Increased staffing levels for all departments

#### **Persistent inflation**

Higher costs mean reduced service levels  
Difficult to hire staff, especially at entry level  
Cost increase in contracts and supplies  
Supply shortages  
Union expectations in next contract (2025)  
Current prices already built into work programs – increased cost means reduced service  
Difficult to recruit and retain staff  
Material/supply shortages and disruptions  
Contract defaults and rewrites  
Many major revenues are elastic (ad valorem, sales tax, franchise fees)

#### **Recession**

Better availability of vendors  
Easier to hire qualified staff  
Increased need for free or price-sensitive public programs and services  
MSBU revenue secure – allows work to continue

#### **Hurricane recovery**

Increased competition for materials and contractors.  
Restoration deterring resources from day-to-day needs

## **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 200 new affordable housing units per year over next five years**

### **Initiatives:**

Define policy and processes - **Completed**

Identify potential projects and partnerships – **Ongoing**

Identify funding and financing – **Ongoing**

### **Accelerated population growth**

Cost of housing continues to increase, leaving fewer homes that are affordable  
Continued growth in service industry without increase in housing for service workers  
Statewide issue so no safety valve  
Charlotte constrained by density issues  
Demographics of growth important – age, income, etc.  
We will become an entitlement community long before we secure entitlement funding

### **Persistent inflation**

Continued increases in cost of homes and rental properties  
Increased financial pressure on low-income households  
Working class will be squeezed out of the market  
Interest rates may make mortgages unaffordable  
Can't make affordable housing numbers work (unprofitable)

### **Recession**

Housing prices may drop  
Foreclosures will increase  
Could increase number of rentals – cash buyers don't want to lose investment and begin renting  
Potential increase in unemployment  
Statewide insurance issues could impact mortgage financing

### **Hurricane recovery**

Loss of existing inventory – cost to replace prohibitive  
Insurance becomes prohibitive  
Potential increase in retirees  
Exchange of properties as investors purchase and convert to rentals  
Opportunity for multi-family housing  
Recovery funds will be made available  
Capacity of construction industry will be impacted by additional rebuild and repair

**Bold Goal: Implement One Charlotte, One Water management plan before end of FY2023**

**Initiatives:**

Create partnerships and projects — **Completed**

County-wide water quality monitoring program – **In Process**

GIS maps and data reporting tools – **In Process**

**Accelerated population growth**

More population equals more stormwater runoff

More people means more recreational pressure

New arrivals are mostly from out of state, which requires constant outreach and education on water quality-related issues

Increased environmental pressures — habitat change, shorelines, mangroves, saltwater intrusion of wells, canal systems will need better filtration

Infrastructure must keep pace — endangers focus on septic to sewer

**Persistent inflation**

Increased costs means less monitoring, sampling and outreach

Escalating construction cost endanger restoration projects

Escalating construction cost endanger expansion projects

Recreation may become unaffordable (boating), upland may see recreation increase because it is free

**Recession**

Reduction in grants and funding to partners

Slowdown in funding interrupts momentum

Reduction in outreach and education

**Hurricane recovery**

Difficult to project long-term impacts

Experienced short-term nutrient load but influx of freshwater provide a good “flushing” of the system

Emphasized the need for resiliency planning

Emphasized the need for increased coordination and communication among stakeholders

## **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:**

Implement Mission, Vision and Values outreach — **Completed**

#### **Accelerated population growth**

Being understaffed brings morale down, services to citizens are impacted  
Increased workload on county employees  
Hope that people moving here are part of the workforce  
Citizen complaints from capacity issues  
Staffing lags: have to demonstrate the need  
Increased competition and recruitment constraints

#### **Persistent inflation**

Continue inflation adjustments to retain staff  
Issues with recruitment and retention because of higher competitor wages  
Staff morale and health impacted by personal finances  
Potential talent drain

#### **Recession**

Must plan to avoid layoffs  
Allow staff and services to catch up – focus on updating  
Easier to hire qualified staff  
Potential reductions in positions  
Employee burnout — “do more with less”  
Manage employee fear of downsizing

#### **Hurricane recovery**

Improved morale, employees feel support  
Potential loss of staff due to moving away from hurricanes

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

**Initiatives:**

Implement countywide asset management system – **In process**

Standardize project management procedures – **In process**

**Accelerated population growth**

Modify processes — instead of Top 3 take Top 6 when procuring

Increase in demand for digital services

**Persistent inflation**

Requires new strategies

Software maintenance costs increases

Increase in demand for digital services

**Recession**

Rethink our growth

Increased reliance on technology

**Hurricane recovery**

Look for opportunities to streamline – as in Covid