



# **The Leesburg Partnership 2017-2022 Main Street Strategic Plan**

### **The Leesburg Partnership Vision**

Main Street will be the commercial, civic and cultural center of Leesburg, providing a diverse mix of businesses, residents and public activities in an environment that is inviting, clean, safe and attractive for residents and visitors.

### **The Leesburg Partnership Mission**

The Leesburg Partnership shall restore, promote and maintain the historic character and viability of Leesburg for the enjoyment and education of residents and visitors.

### **Transformative Strategies for 2017-2022**

The framework used for developing the 2017-2022 strategic plan for downtown Leesburg emerged from the “Main Street Refresh”, a recent initiative of the National Main Street Center to improve the effectiveness of the Four-Point Main Street Approach. In essence, the “refreshed” Four-Point Approach focuses primary attention on two or three Transformation Strategies that, in turn, guide the selection of program activities. The strategies selected are based on an understanding of the regional market and on the community’s vision for the district. By focusing primarily on the Transformation Strategies, a Main Street program’s activities are more tightly and synergistically integrated, directing most of the organization’s attention and resources specifically on these transformational goals.

The Leesburg Partnership’s board of directors ultimately chose two Transformation Strategies on which to focus for the next five years:

- › **Increasing the number of workers and residents in and around downtown Leesburg. This strategy offers many potential benefits for the district, such as more fully using upper-floor spaces, expanding the “captive market” of potential shoppers for the district’s businesses, and improving the district’s overall safety through the 24/7 presence of workers and residents.**
- › **Making downtown Leesburg a vibrant cultural, entertainment, and recreational center that builds on its unique agricultural/citrus heritage and offers great, authentic experiences for both residents and visitors. This strategy helps differentiate downtown Leesburg from other shopping areas and from other historic downtowns within the region, helps boost community pride, and makes the district more appealing to both locals and visitors.**

Both strategies will help focus the Leesburg Partnership’s business development, property development, and promotional activities. And, by succinctly describing the overall economic transformations it plans to achieve, the Partnership should be able to attract new investment to the district.

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## Introduction

This strategic plan for the Leesburg Partnership was developed through a collaborative process involving many Leesburg stakeholders, the CLUE Group, and Nonprofit Management Consulting, LLC. The goals and objectives reflect the stakeholders' perceptions of Leesburg Partnership's most important challenges, opportunities and responsibilities.

A useful strategic plan must be an evolving, living document. Strategies develop and change constantly in response to a changing environment. Objectives change periodically as they are achieved or updated. An organization's goals will change very gradually over a period of many years, while its mission and vision will change only rarely, if ever.

Because of the importance of change and evolution in response to internal and external factors, this plan becomes progressively more general as it addresses longer-term objectives. While it is appropriate to have a very detailed action plan for the objectives the Leesburg Partnership will tackle in the next year, it would be counterproductive to commit to a rigid long-term path without knowing what the future will bring. New opportunities and new challenges will require the Leesburg Partnership to remain flexible while constantly adhering to its mission and goals.

This plan should be reviewed annually and updated or revised as necessary to ensure that it keeps pace with changing needs. As longer-term objectives move into focus, they can easily be used to support more detailed work plans.

## Usage Notes

- Each committee will develop its measurable objectives and strategies for the following year by December 31. Objectives and strategies should be developed and refined with an eye to how they support each committee's articulated goals. Objectives and strategies may speak to more than one goal and fall under the purview of more than one committee; in these cases, both committees should take responsibility for developing their part of the action plan and reporting on progress to the Board.
- As each committee works with its list of objectives, it should assign responsibility for each objective to a specific person on the committee. Persons assigned "Lead Responsibility" for each objective will not necessarily be the actual implementers of the objective. Those with Lead Responsibility should take an executive role in ensuring that progress toward the objective remains on track and that the implementation team is meeting performance deadlines and providing ongoing reports to the Board of Directors.
- As the committees develop their action plans to support each objective, they will break objectives down into smaller action steps and assign specific responsibility and interim timelines to assure that the objective is achieved on schedule.
- As the action plans are developed, the committee should identify resources that will be needed to complete each project. Will budget funding or volunteers be needed? These requirements should be identified early and shared with other committees to facilitate long-term planning.

| 1. Organization Committee Objectives  | Lead Responsibility  | Timeline   | Resources Needed |
|---|--|--|------------------|
| <p><b>1-A.</b> Produce an Annual Report for fiscal year. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with other committees early in year to ensure that performance measurement data is being gathered.</li> <li>• Develop format after reviewing examples.</li> <li>• Annual Report to be produced and distributed within four months of the end of fiscal year.</li> <li>• Report from all committees</li> </ul>              | <p><b>Mandy Wettstein</b></p>  | <p><b>Presented to Board Dec. 17, 2017</b><br/><b>Begin Jan. 1, 2018</b></p>   |                  |
| <p><b>1-B.</b> Develop 2018 Program Budget. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Main Street Committees submit budget requests</li> <li>• Finance Subcommittee determine realistic revenue projections for 2018</li> <li>• Finance Subcommittee develop and present proposed 2018 budget to Board for approval</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Mandy Wettstein- PR committee</b></p>                                | <p><b>Begin October 1, 2017 and report annually</b></p>                        |                  |
| <p><b>1-C:</b> Bylaws and policies/procedures review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Leesburg Partnership Bylaws and all written policies and procedures. Determine any updates/changes needed.</li> <li>• Board Member Manual</li> <li>• Present proposed changes to Board for approval</li> <li>• Board vote to ratify changes</li> </ul>  | <p><b>President Elect / Vice President- Chris Wood/ Wylie Hamilton</b></p> | <p><b>Begin 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2017</b><br/><b>Annually thereafter</b></p> |                  |
| <p><b>1-D.</b> Expand sponsorship revenue. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request proposals from sponsorship consultants to develop sponsorship strategy</li> <li>• Identify and secure budget and staff resources needed</li> <li>• Develop sponsorship plan for Bikefest first</li> <li>• Built out sponsorship strategy for all other events</li> <li>• Recruit and train full-time sponsorship staff member</li> </ul> | <p><b>Bert Boliek</b></p>  | <p><b>Begin 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2017</b><br/><b>Ongoing</b></p>             |                  |

| 1. Organization Committee Objectives (continued)   | Lead Responsibility           | Timeline  |  |
|--|-------------------------------|---|--|
| <p><b>1-E.</b> Develop updated talking points for board members that include the Transformative Strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare brief (30 seconds) statements that board members can use as their "elevator speech" to discuss the Leesburg Partnership with their friends and business contacts.</li> <li>• Identify metrics to quantify key accomplishments of the Partnership, such as dollars invested in community, economic impact of events, dollar value of volunteer hours provided. Update this list quarterly and provide to board members to use when discussing the Partnership.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Mandy Wettstein</b></p> | <p><b>Begin 3rd Quarter 2017</b><br/><b>Completion date:</b></p>                                |  |
| <p><b>1-F.</b> Expand membership; develop broader representation of the community. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop membership campaign plan and specific goals</li> <li>• Develop recruitment materials</li> <li>• Develop speaking opportunities in community</li> <li>• Each board member to recruit <b>1</b> new member- 20 for 2017-2018.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>JMatt Maddox</b></p>    | <p><b>Begin 3<sup>rd</sup> qtr- October 2017</b><br/><b>Completion date: September 2018</b></p> |  |
| <p><b>1-G.</b> Organize annual "Vision Quest" field trip for Board and stakeholders to visit Florida communities that are implementing projects aligned with Leesburg Partnership's Transformational Strategies. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out to projects in other communities to request visit</li> <li>• Conduct sign-up and arrange group transportation</li> <li>• Conduct Vision Quest trip; attendees to take notes, photos</li> <li>• Informal debrief of team immediately after visit</li> <li>• Present findings, suggestions to full membership</li> <li>• Update Strategic Plan to include promising strategies</li> <li>• Board Members to attend Quarterly Meetings</li> </ul> | <p><b>Joanie Smalley</b></p>  | <p><b>Begin Oct. 2017 and Quarterly</b></p>   | <p><b>Suggestion: Tech Incubator, upper story residential projects and Hacker House in Gainesville</b></p> |
| <p><i>Recommendation: Add your committee's ongoing list of annual activities to this plan to ensure timely completion and to develop a written record of committee responsibilities for succession planning.</i></p>   |                               |   |  |

| 2. Economic Restructuring Committee Objectives   | Lead Responsibility   | Timeline  | Resources Needed |
|--|---|---|------------------|
| <p><b>2-A.</b> Conduct a building and site inventory to understand how much space, and of what type/configuration, is potentially available for development. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify upper-floor development opportunities.</li> <li>• Identify vacant parcels that could potentially be mixed-use infill sites</li> <li>• Update Quarterly</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Jim Miller</b></p>  | <p><b>October 2017 begin</b></p>                  |                  |
| <p><b>2-B-1.</b> Identify potential barriers to upper-floor and mixed-use infill development, then find and implement solutions to eliminate each barrier. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a residential rental inspection program to raise the quality of downtown rental properties.</li> <li>• Work with City to enforce code violations.</li> </ul> <p><b>2-B-2.</b> Codes for the Encouragement of Redevelopment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with City to waive or ease on-site parking requirements for upper-floor residential units</li> <li>• Identify other potential barriers.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Frank Stivender (2-B-1)</b><br/><b>Sandy Stokes (2-B-2)</b></p> | <p><b>Begin October 2017 ER Committee</b></p>     |                  |
| <p><b>2-C.</b> Learn about who currently visits the district. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a downtown intercept survey to understand who currently visits the district</li> <li>• Conduct in-store map-based research on where the customers of a range of downtown businesses come from</li> <li>• Zip Code tracking</li> </ul>  | <p><b>DLBA Staff Social Media</b></p>                                 | <p><b>Begin October 2017 Completion date:</b></p> |                  |

| 2. Economic Restructuring Committee Objectives (continued)   | Lead Responsibility   | Timeline   |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>2-D.</b> Identify development partners, meet with them to discuss downtown development needs, and maintain contact with them to provide updates and to continue to explore opportunities for collaboration. Potential partners include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City and County government</li> <li>• Local and regional banks</li> <li>• Regional charitable foundations</li> <li>• Historic rehabilitation tax credit investors</li> <li>• Local Realtors</li> <li>• Local Commercial Lenders/ Bankers</li> </ul> | <p><b>Mike Rankin</b></p>   | <p><b>Semi-Annual Report begin October 2017 Ongoing</b></p>            |  |
| <p><b>2-E.</b> Establish and maintain ongoing communication with all property owners to update them on progress and provide information on tools and incentives available for building rehabilitation, upper-floor conversion, infill development, and tenant recruitment. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one outreach</li> <li>• Issue Based on Outreach</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Façade Grant</li> <li>• Property Owners Meeting- Annually</li> </ul>                                       | <p><b>Anita Valdea</b></p>  | <p><b>Begin October 2017<br/>Completion date: January 31, 2018</b></p> |  |
| <p><b>2-F.</b> Develop and implement a plan for attracting small knowledge-economy and creative-economy businesses. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with Organization Committee to arrange field trips to Florida communities that have succeeded in building these business communities.</li> <li>• Attend conferences, trainings, and trade shows related to this topic.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Economic Restructuring Committee: need to assign lead person<br/>Partner with Org Committee</b></p> | <p><b>Begin 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2018<br/>Completion date:</b></p>   | <p><b>HOLD until 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Year</b></p> |

| 2. Economic Restructuring Committee Objectives (continued)   | Lead Responsibility   | Timeline   |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>2-G.</b> In partnership with Promotions Committee, build partnerships with companies, agencies, and organizations interested in agriculture, wellness, and the environment. Possibilities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports marketing firms – Central Florida Sports Commission</li> <li>• U of F extension service to promote agricultural history</li> <li>• Lake Regional Medical</li> <li>• Lake County Economic and Tourism Board</li> </ul> | <p><b>Economic Restructuring Committee: need to assign lead person</b><br/><b>Partner with Promotions Committee</b></p> | <p><b>As needed</b></p>                          | <p><b>Notes: Report Fishing Tournament in March 2017</b></p> |
| <p><b>2-H.</b> Add businesses, product lines, and services to better meet downtown residents' and workers' needs and, when possible, that reinforce the district's heritage. These might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialty foods/groceries</li> <li>• Restaurants offering evening food/beverage service and entertainment</li> <li>• Personal services such as dry cleaning, day care, and health/fitness</li> </ul>                                      | <p><b>Economic Restructuring Committee: need to assign lead person</b></p>  | <p><b>During 2020 Annual Assessment</b></p>      |  |
| <p><b>2-I.</b> Augment and improve downtown Leesburg's tourism infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a downtown boutique hotel</li> <li>• Develop or recruit a bike shop/outdoor sports store</li> <li>• Attract artisans and crafts manufacturing businesses</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Economic Restructuring Committee: need to assign lead person</b></p>  | <p><b>During 2020-2022 Annual Assessment</b></p> |  |
| <p><i>Recommendation: Add your committee's ongoing list of annual activities to this plan (such as updating business recruitment package, vacancy inventory, etc.) to ensure timely completion and to develop a written record of committee responsibilities for succession planning.</i></p>  | <p><b>2-F, 2-G, 2-H, 2-I Long Term General Committee responsibility to Overview</b></p>                                 |  |  |

| 3. Promotion Committee Objectives  | Lead Responsibility   | Timeline  | Resources Needed |
|--|---|---|------------------|
| <p><b>3-A.</b> Improve planning and assessment process for events and activities. Strategies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edit the Main Street Program’s promotional calendar, trading out one or more under-performing events (or events that do not reinforce the Program’s two Transformation Strategies) and replace them with one or more promotional activities (special events or ongoing image-building activities) that target downtown workers and residents and that promote a healthy lifestyle (i.e., bike paths, walkability)</li> <li>• Define target audiences for events</li> <li>• Expand lead time for planning and implementing events.</li> <li>• Expand economic impact evaluation of Main Street events. Consolidate economic impact assessment data into a useable form for the Annual Report and other distribution formats.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Promotion Committee:</b><br/><b>Chad Peck</b></p>                   | <p><b>Ongoing starting immediately</b></p> <p><b>By June 30 annually</b></p> <p><b>*Continually Evaluate/ Determine Success/ Not, Economic Impact</b></p> |                  |
| <p><b>3-B.</b> In partnership with Design Committee , develop one or more self-guided tours of the district’s historic and cultural sites to augment and improve downtown Leesburg’s tourism infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to local history organizations to identify appropriate tour subjects that are logically or contextually linked and walkable/bikeable.</li> <li>• Develop tour brochure(s) with maps and background information</li> <li>• Implement tour kickoff event.</li> <li>• Publicize tours through local media, history organizations, museums, and tourism information outlets.</li> <li>• Walking Tour Update Quarterly</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Leah Conner</b><br/><b>Jim Miller</b><br/><b>Glorianne Fahs</b></p> | <p><b>First Read: End of 3rd Qtr</b></p> <p><b>Completion date:</b></p>   |                  |

| 3. Promotion Committee Objectives (continued)  | Lead Responsibility   | Timeline  | Resources Needed |
|--|---|---|------------------|
| <p><b>3-C.</b> In partnership with Design Committee, make Leesburg’s agricultural/citrus heritage visible downtown. Possibilities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murals of historic events, vintage postcards, etc.</li> <li>• Streetscape and wayfinding components that reflect the community’s heritage</li> <li>• Agricultural/citrus-themed marketing campaign and promotional events</li> <li>• Wellness/environmental-themed</li> </ul>      | <p><b>Maria Stefanovic<br/>Leah Conner</b></p>                  | <p><b>Begin 2nd Quarter 2018<br/>Completion date:</b></p> |                  |
| <p><b>3-B.</b> Create a set of incentives to encourage professionals to live downtown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term grants or rent rebates</li> <li>• Discounts at downtown restaurants and other businesses</li> <li>• Work with developers, media, and real estate agents to publicize program</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Sandy Stokes<br/>Chad Peck<br/>Mike Rankin</b></p>        | <p><b>Begin 4th Quarter 2018<br/>Completion date:</b></p> |                  |
| <p><b>3-D.</b> In partnership with ER committee, build partnerships with companies, agencies, and organizations interested in agriculture, wellness, and the environment. Possibilities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports marketing firms – Central Florida Sports Commission</li> <li>• U of F extension service to promote agricultural history</li> <li>• Lake Regional Medical</li> <li>• Lake County Economic and Tourism Board</li> </ul> | <p><b>Chad Peck</b></p>   | <p><b>Begin 1st Quarter 2019<br/>Completion date:</b></p> |                  |
| <p><b>3-E.</b> During peak times, offer a shuttle service to encourage use of more remote parking areas. – Bass Tournament March 2018</p>  | <p><b>Jeanne Thorpe<br/>Mandy Wettstein<br/>Leah Conner</b></p> | <p><b>2020</b></p>  |                  |
| <p><i>Recommendation: Add your committee’s ongoing list of annual activities to this plan (such as work plans for annual events or cooperative advertising calendars) to ensure timely completion and to develop a written record of committee responsibilities for succession planning.</i></p>   |   |   |                  |

| 4. Design Committee Objectives   | Lead Responsibility                     | Timeline  | Resources Needed |
|--|---|---|------------------|
| <p><b>4-A.</b> Ensure authenticity in architectural and public space design so that rehabilitation and new construction projects build on Leesburg’s design traditions while also reflecting high-quality design of the current era (“No fake façades”).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with City personnel, historical societies and architects to develop design guidelines</li> <li>• Engage in process to have design guidelines formalized and included in code requirements</li> <li>• Develop educational and awareness materials to support developers, builders, and property owners in compliance</li> </ul>                  | <p><b>Leah Conner</b></p>               | <p><b>Now<br/>Completion date:<br/>End of 4<sup>th</sup><br/>Qtr 2017</b></p> |                  |
| <p><b>4-B.</b> In partnership with Promotions Committee , develop one or more self-guided tours of the district’s historic and cultural sites to augment and improve downtown Leesburg's tourism infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to local history organizations to identify appropriate tour subjects that are logically or contextually linked and walkable/bikeable.</li> <li>• Develop tour brochure(s) with maps and background information</li> <li>• Implement tour kickoff event.</li> <li>• Publicize tours through local media, history organizations, museums, and tourism information outlets.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Chad Peck<br/>Leah Conner</b></p> | <p><b>Begin 1<sup>st</sup><br/>Quarter 2018<br/><br/>Completion date:</b></p> |                  |

| 4. Design Committee Objectives (continued)  | Lead Responsibility                                | Timeline  |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>4-C.</b> In partnership with Design Committee, make Leesburg’s agricultural/citrus heritage visible downtown. Possibilities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murals of historic events, vintage postcards, etc.</li> <li>• Streetscape and wayfinding components that reflect the community’s heritage</li> <li>• Agricultural/citrus-themed marketing campaign and promotional events</li> <li>• Wellness/environmental-themed</li> </ul> | <p><b>Leah Conner<br/>Maria<br/>Stefanovic</b></p> | <p><b>Begin 2nd<br/>Quarter 2018</b></p> <p><b>Completion<br/>date:</b></p> |  |
| <p><b>4-D.</b> Augment and improve downtown Leesburg’s tourism infrastructure by developing a wayfinding system to direct/inform visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .Strategies to be developed</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Leah Conner</b></p>                          | <p><b>Annual<br/>Review</b></p>   |  |
| <p><i>Recommendation: Add your committee’s ongoing list of annual activities to this plan (such as sign reviews or design education and consulting) to ensure timely completion and to develop a written record of committee responsibilities for succession planning.</i></p>  |  |   |  |



### **Board of Directors Survey Results – Compiled by the CLUE Group**

#### **In your opinion, what are the three greatest challenges facing downtown Leesburg?**

- Not many people live downtown
  - Parking per customers
  - Lack of restaurant space
  - Sustainable business
  - Homeless population
  - Drawing businesses downtown
  - What to do with the homeless
  - Not enough dinner choices
  - Homeless people
  - Not enough restaurants
  - Long-term tenants
  - Need for restaurants
  - Isolation – lack of multiple recognizable ingress
  - Keeping quality shops open
  - Attracting new businesses to fill vacant storefronts
  - Nothing! open on Sunday
  - Limited night life
  - Lack of main street retail space
  - Nightlife
  - Diversified community support
  - Old infrastructure
  - Lack of hotels, bed and breakfast
  - The college taking over
  - Getting more retail
- Board of Directors Survey Results

Shops not open late enough  
Foot traffic  
Stagnant growth in the community as far as young professionals and families  
Condition of several key buildings  
Keeping restaurants open  
Reputation  
Not much excitement  
Demographics  
Businesses that lack consistent hours or keep few hours  
Parking  
Politics  
Surrounding residence areas  
Struggling retail shops  
Getting residents to come downtown more for shopping, etc.  
Homeless  
Visibility from main roads  
Events have become stale  
Several properties owned by out-of-town investors  
Keeping enough restaurants open at night  
Homelessness  
Needs some signs of life on the street  
Homeless  
Variety store owners working against instead of with other shop owners  
Community investment  
Changing the mind set of old and cold ideas and actions, i.e., rolling up the sidewalks at 5:00  
Old buildings needing lots of refurbishing  
Perception of downtown being a clique  
Funding mechanisms  
Reputation of past  
Attracting the right businesses  
Attracting nightlife

**What opportunities do you think downtown Leesburg should pursue over the next decade?**

The upper floors of every building need folk living there  
More restaurants and ones that stay open later  
A nicer entrance to downtown from the east (at Canal St.?)  
Business promotion and retention  
Attract a younger professional crowd  
Infrastructure changes (i.e., technology upgrades)  
Need for overnight accommodations  
Linking to Venetian Gardens  
Refresh buildings  
Restoring old buildings  
More restaurants  
Becoming a destination  
Aggressive recruitment  
Loft apartments/living quarters  
An indoor market with fresh produce and meats  
Board of Directors Survey Results

## Marketing in The Villages

Needs continuity of design (themes) or period of time

Connect downtown with Venetian Gardens

Connecting to Venetian Gardens

Limit or coordinate Beacon College's growth

Revamp and utilize Venetian Gardens

Expansion to the west

Continue building and growing BikeFest

Bringing new businesses to our town

Nightlife

Improve quality of events

Retail incubator

Suburb of Orlando

Open air venues so excitement spills into the streets

Shops to also stay open later

Creating more nightlife

Commercial development

Clean up/finish property on 14<sup>th</sup> and Main

27/441 improvements

More advertising outside our area

Work on beautification of the area and make it cohesive

Expand and improve side streets

Common space amenities

Oktoberfest

Shuttle of some sort to encourage parking in larger lots

An "open container" ordinance to allow people to move from one space to another

Synergy with lakefront area

Irradiate naysayer mentality toward the partnership

Streetscape to enhance bicyclists and sports

Bringing in large festivals and fairs

Make use of our lake fronts by making them more inviting with businesses

Expand living opportunities in the downtown

Tie in the lakefront

Develop greater nightlife

Continue to grow Bikefest

Grow retail, restaurant, and bar business on side streets

## **What's currently working particularly well with regard to the downtown's development?**

Leesburg has several really good events, Bikefest, Mardi Gras, Chili Cook Off, Blues BBQs, etc.

Events and vision of the Partnership

It seems as though the "city" wants to see quality of life improvements and is working cooperatively with other organizations and businesses to accomplish this

Coordination between businesses and city

Beautification

Partnership and city government

Great cafes and restaurants leads to more nightlife

Ben Mosely's expansion of retail and restaurants

Board of Directors Survey Results

Having an involved Main Street manager

The administration of city, commission, local business people working together to move forward on projects

Events

Clearly moving in the right direction – city and businesses seem to be on generally the same page

Refurbishing of old store fronts

Entrepreneurial tenants

Streetscape looks good

New “look” and improvements

For the most part – support and cooperation between business and city support of new business

### **What isn't working particularly well?**

Not enough people live downtown, city needs to encourage building owners to develop apartments on upper floors

Education of general public on the vision and accomplishments of the Partnership as to how it affects the entire community

We have a homeless population that seems to be growing

Planning for commercial development

Closing time/night life

CRAs and the number of them in Leesburg

Retail shops not staying open after 4-5:00

The old buildings that need fixed are owned by people that do not live or are concerned with doing anything with buildings

Shops not staying open consistently, service

Community relations and education of what the Partnership is all about

Vacant ownership

Hope that Saturday market picks up

Difficult to get things done

Still need to get the right businesses in downtown and fill open real estate

### **Is there anything else that you think we should know?**

Our biggest competition is The Villages. They are polished, themed and directed like Disney World. We need to get on board.

Continue developing and expanding the Main Street program

School system is not an attraction for newcomers!

There is a lot of love for our city and we just need to come together to make it better

## **Group Discussion During the Board Retreat – Facilitated by The CLUE Group**

### **What are downtown Leesburg's strategic advantages?**

Proximity to the lake  
"Charming"  
Friendly  
Its location  
Cooperation between groups, organizations  
Special events  
Presence of Beacon College  
Its long history  
Heritage museum  
Town square business cluster  
Cluster of "upscale resale" businesses  
Walkability  
Development opportunities

### **What differentiates downtown Leesburg from other shopping options? From other historic downtowns within the region?**

Business owners know you.  
It's a real downtown (e.g., it includes service businesses)  
Clean  
Event space  
Defined and easily accessible  
"Home town"

### **What one big, outlandish thing would you like to have happen in downtown Leesburg if money wasn't an issue?**

Refurbish buildings  
Rail system to larger cities  
Refinish all of the storefronts  
Community center for concerts and sports activities  
Buy and refurbish the rundown buildings  
All buildings to be filled with thriving businesses  
Buildings that need remodeling get remodeled or cleaned up  
Make golf cart lane  
Find someplace else for the homeless to stay besides Main Street and Towne Square  
I'd like to see a fully operable, full-time living, shopping, dining, working, "happening", hip, walkable town!  
Performing arts center  
To be the community destination it once was in the 30s-50s-60s.  
Pool ball and lazy river  
Urban style development on east corners of US 27 and Main Street  
I don't think Leesburg is about big and outlandish, but if money wasn't an issue, I'd purchase the run down buildings/housing surrounding and make it beautiful!  
Finish the canal between Harris and Griffin. Tie downtown to lakes.  
Big round tall glass hotel – like the Peachtree Hotel in Atlanta  
Hotel downtown  
High end apt. complex  
Refurbish existing real estate  
Group Discussion Summary

Build an affordable event venue  
Parking shuttle  
Upscale downtown hotel  
Complete refurbishment of streetscape and all buildings and residences within a 5-mile radius of city center  
Class A office space  
Connect downtown with Venetian Gardens, condos, office, city recreation  
A roof top bar overlooking town square (after a few oaks are removed)  
Venetian Gardens link  
Gateway enhancements (E. Main, W. Main, Dixie corridor)  
Spread of “Main Street look” to Magnolia and Meadow Streets

**What one or two major economic development strategies should downtown Leesburg pursue over the next 3-5 years?**

Board members described essentially two strategies – one related to increasing the number of residents and workers in and around the district, and one related to providing a better entertainment and recreational experience for residents and visitors. Although the board did not develop overall descriptions of these two strategies, they used these words to help define them:

Increasing the number of residents and workers:

Mixed-use buildings  
Nice, upscale housing units  
Tech backbone/infrastructure  
Lifestyle activities  
Walkability  
Create knowledge-economy jobs  
Agricultural/green overtones  
Fitness/wellness/trails  
Culture, entertainment  
Hospital-related workers

Entertainment and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors:

Boutique hotel  
Entertainment venue  
Heritage and ecotourism  
Authenticity  
Natural resources – lakes, etc.  
Dining  
Unique shopping  
Agricultural heritage-related products  
Hospital-related visitors  
Waterfront activities