



**City of St. Marys
Master Plan Steering Committee
Working Session Meeting Summary
July 7, 2016 6:00 -8:00 PM
Senior Center**

Attendees:

William DeLoughy
Tanya Glazebrook
Joseph Holler
Fred Mercier
Michael Rich
Joseph Antao
Elaine Powierski
Eric Landon (Proxy for Steve Howard)
Kenneth Lyons
Lee Walker
Jon Preble
Cyndi Birke (Ex-officio)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm, a quorum was present.

2. Approval of minutes for meeting of June 2, 2016

A motion to approve the minutes from the June 2nd meeting was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

3. General announcements and updates

- a. Presentation to City Council. Mike reported back to the MPSC on the presentation he made to City Council regarding the status of the Master Plan process at the 6/23 Council Meeting. The presentation was well received, and the City Council was pleased with the public involvement process to date.

4. Values, SWOT Analysis, Visioning and Goals

Courtney gave a short presentation on the results of the SWOT analysis and prioritization performed by the MPSC as well as the assessment of survey results related to priorities for St. Marys performed by Joe.

Joe asked how the interview data will be incorporated into the plan. He stated that Elaine spent a lot of time summarizing the interviews and that her summary offered a lot of detailed and specific information that needs to be incorporated. Courtney stated that the public input received through the surveys, interviews, and workshops will all be included in the final product, and that that information should inform the MPSC's discussions of the vision, goals, and strategies.



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Elaine offered to state where she saw differences between the SWOT analysis and the survey. She commented that in the interviews, there was more focus on economic development, and industry and jobs were a focus. Businesses thought that too much effort was being spent on downtown. There was also a common theme to address city beautification, especially the entryway down Osborne. They also discussed the importance of job training and the middle class. She commented that the Group Interviews offered a different perspective, especially those from Social Services. They identified key issues as a lack of transportation, lack of services to the underserved, and presence of food deserts. Joe stated that he wants city wide beautification, transportation, and grocery store/food desert ideas added to the lists.

SWOT Analysis Review

Courtney presented the results from the committee's Values/SWOT analysis and there were several comments/questions from the MPSC.

- There was a question as to how the rankings were developed and why only the top 5 are listed and how close #6 might be to #5. Mike said that the rankings were based on the online ballot he sent out to the committee. He said he assigned the rankings (1-5) somewhat subjectively as he assigned a number based on his opinion of how frequently it was assigned a 1, 2, etc. There was still some hesitation that without providing a score to each answer, there is no way to tell if #6 and #7 are close to #5. He suggested to give #1, 5 points, through #5, 1 point, and show the score for each.
NOTE: This analysis done using the original rankings provided by the MPSC, and included in the revised Goals Worksheet Attached here.
- One Threat listed was "Failing Infrastructure." Courtney asked if this was transportation specific, but the response was that it was infrastructure in general.
- There were strong opinions that "inclusiveness" is different from "importance of diversity of people and neighborhoods." Diversity relates to the concept that everyone respects everyone else, and inclusiveness addresses the fact that a lot of people do not feel included.
- Joe wanted to be sure that Cumberland Island, Navy Base, and Spaceport were all identified as the three items that makes St. Marys unique.
- The Navy was brought up in discussion and how it is the 2nd largest employer in the county and very important to economic development in St. Marys.
- There was additional discussion about expanding educational opportunities to include adult education, lifelong learning, speakers for retirees to expand their knowledge, and to get a technical college/ satellite college campus.
- When discussing aesthetics and code enforcement, it was stated that stores on Osborne Street dump merchandise in parking lots and it looks like a yard sale. This is a result of a lack of regulations as well as enforcement to address aesthetics.



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- One Weakness idea was “Insufficient commercial base to support local or small business.” Courtney asked the group to expand what was meant specifically about this, and they said that many small businesses depend on other larger businesses for contract work. Without these larger business that need support, the smaller businesses can’t thrive.
- There was a question related to the difference between a threat and a weakness. Courtney defined threat as something that has potential to occur in the future, and weakness is an issue that the community already deals with. After this definition, “Dependency on Residential Tax Base” which was a bolded item in threats was moved to a weakness because it already exists.
- Lee questioned the move and said he felt that “Threat” implies urgency and for something that needs to be addressed ASAP, where a “Weakness” sounds to be not as pressing and does not convey the same type of urgency. Courtney added this item back into the list but edited it slightly to be more consistent with the threat definition.

Goals Worksheet

Courtney continued the presentation to discuss the list of Suggested Community Goals from the GA DCA. Based on the discussion, Courtney suggested the addition of Inclusiveness as a new Community Goal because it was a common idea in many of the items. After this, the MPSC performed an exercise where they assigned each of the items in the Values and SWOT to the Community Goals that it addressed. The results of that exercise are attached here. Comments were recorded directly into the attached SWOT/Community Goals document. There were a few comments that could not be recreated in the table and they are included below:

- Strength (Local Hospital with easy access to top specialty medical care in JAX) – it was mentioned that this is important to address the aging population
- Opportunities (Improve food and beverage services, parking and traffic flow to make events more appealing) – there was concern that the rules are vague for drinking alcohol in the park and the rules/permits are tough/lacking for food trucks for those events.
- Threat (Moving to a high retirement based community) – this was identified as a threat because a town in Florida had retirees become so large and they didn’t want to pay school taxes any more.

Courtney will work to convert the results of this exercise into community specific Goals and Strategies and will provide that back to the MPSC for their review.



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Visioning

After this exercise was completed, Courtney read the current vision for St. Marys, and asked the group to state what they felt might be missing from this Vision based on the public input they had received. The comments included:

- Vitality.
- Inclusiveness
- The current vision reads like a bunch of “fluff” and it could be written for anywhere.
- The first statement from the vision statement as a true vision statement. The rest of the vision is more about core values.
- When people say why they move to Camden County, they say that they chose it because of the school system being excellent.
- The vision statements needs to be shorter, to the point and is specific to St. Marys.

Tonya interjected with a couple options for a vision statement that she created prior to the meeting. The first was “Envision a prosperous and vibrant small town where all citizens can enjoy a safe, healthy, and environmentally sensitive quality of life.” It was suggested to change “small town” to “coastal community” to be more specific to the coastal resource that St. Marys has.

The group decided that it would be more productive if they each tried to draft their own vision statement and then they could vote on their favorite. Courtney gave everyone “homework” to write a vision statement, and she will collect them via email. She will then send them back out to the MPSC and ask for them to choose their favorite. We will discuss the top 2 -3 at the next meeting.

Future Meetings

The MPSC discussed the future meetings that will be scheduled for August – November.

July 21st – MPSC Interim Meeting. The MPSC will meet to go over the draft Future Land Use Map, Character Area Descriptions, and Development Strategies

August 4th – MPSC Regular Meeting. The group will review the Vision statement voting results and their work on the Future Land Use Map, Character Area Descriptions, and Development Strategies.

August 15th – City Council Work Session. Dr. Evans will present the results of the Sea Level Rise Study and there will be some type of engagement activity related to the presentation.

September 1st – MPSC Meeting

October 6th - MPSC Meeting

November 3rd – MPSC Meeting



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November 14th – City Council Retreat. There will be a presentation on the Master Plan, and ideally the Vision, Values, Goals, and Strategies will be ironed out by this time. Elaine proposed that we also do some type of interactive workshop.

Within this meeting schedule, EPG and the MPSC will also need to identify when to have the following presentations/discussions. Courtney will work with the subs and get back to the MPSC with a final schedule.

- Connie will come to present and get MPSC feedback on the Zoning Ordinance Diagnostic Study.
- Rachel will come to present and get MPSC feedback on the Multi-Modal Transportation Study. The group asked to see copies of the maps that had been developed at the workshop. Courtney will work with Rachel to get the MPSC something to view.

5. Public Comment

Public comment was received during the workshop activities and incorporated into the Goals worksheet.

6. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm



VALUES			GOAL
Our environment and natural resources, climate	2	4.0	Resource management, Efficient Land Use
Commitment to the quality education of our youth	5	1.8	Educational Opportunities, Community Health
The importance of diversity of people and neighborhoods, importance of the people who live in our neighborhoods	3	2.2	Sense of Place, Community Health, Housing Options, Economic Prosperity, Transportation
The importance of family	4	2.3	Sense of place, Community Health
The importance of preserving our small town feel: civility/southern hospitality, commitment to care, help and volunteer, the importance of patriotism	1	4.8	Sense of Place, Efficient Land Use, Economic Prosperity, Community Health
Inclusiveness – Everyone feels included, everyone respects everyone else.		0.5	Transportation, Housing, Education, Economic Prosperity, Community Health, Sense of Place
Ease of mobility – Need for bike paths, connectivity, access of I-95		0	Transportation, Economic Prosperity, Community Wellness, Regional Cooperation
STRENGTHS			GOAL
Waterfront and marshes, climate	1	5.5	Resource management, Economic Prosperity, Efficient Land Use, Sense of Place, Housing Options (related development along marsh), Local preparedness
Excellent K-12 school system	4	3.0	Educational Opportunities, Economic Prosperity, Community Health, Sense of Place, inclusiveness
Small town quality of life, families	2	4.0	Sense of Place, Efficient Land Use, Economic Prosperity, Community Health, Inclusiveness
Safe city with limited crime	5	2.7	Local Preparedness, Community Health, Housing Options, Regional Cooperation (Sherriff and Fire), Inclusiveness
Navy Base as an economic driver, the importance of our relationship with Navy, opportunity for job growth and employment	3	2.5	Sense of place, Economic Prosperity, Efficient Land Use, Regional Cooperation, Local Preparedness
Uniqueness - Cumberland Island, Naval Base, Spaceport – brings tourists, Cumberland Island as a unique national park		1.3	Sense of Place, Economic Prosperity, Resource management
Proximity to I95, Road and rail access for potential business, Close to other places (Savannah, JAX, airport, JAX attractions)		0	Economic Prosperity, Transportation, Efficient Land Use, Regional Cooperation, Housing options?

Local hospital with easy access to top specialty medical care in JAX		0.5	Community Health, Regional Cooperation, Inclusiveness (related to access for everyone)
Educated and experienced populace, Well-educated retiree base, making retirement an industry		0.3	Sense of place, economic prosperity, Resource management (people as a resource)
WEAKNESSES			GOAL
Too few middle class jobs and too many minimum wage jobs	1	5.2	Economic Prosperity, Local preparedness, education, community health, housing, transportation, inclusiveness
Inadequate public transportation, lack of multi-use trails and bike paths and connectivity	5	1.7	Transportation, community health, regional cooperation, housing, inclusiveness
Limited cultural & entertainment opportunities for tourists, residents, kids and millennials, youth and adult activities and centers	2	3.3	Community Health, sense of place (arts & culture), economic prosperity, Community Vitality?, Transportation, Inclusiveness
Blight (Aesthetics) : Inconsistent code enforcement, lack of regulations to address blight, need for design standards	3	2.7	Economic Prosperity, Efficient Land Use, Sense of Place, Community Health, housing options, Local preparedness
Tax base not diversified, Dependency on residential tax base		1.0	Economic Prosperity, Efficient Land Use, Local preparedness
Limited post-secondary education, limited job training opportunities		0.8	Educational Opportunity, Housing Opportunities, Economic Prosperity, Transportation, Inclusiveness
Insufficient commercial base to support local or small businesses; need for corporate customer base		1.0	Economic Prosperity
Not perceived as a business friendly city (city procedures are complex, expensive and time consuming), need to simplify rules and regs for businesses, code revisions needed, Streamline government		1.2	Economic Prosperity, Efficient Land Use, Community Health, Local preparedness
High rents and the need for affordable rentals and single family detached housing		1.5	Housing, economic prosperity, resource management, efficient land use, community health, inclusiveness
Distance from Atlanta and lack of attention from State government		0.8	Economic Prosperity, Regional Cooperation, Local preparedness, Transportation
Confusing informational and directional signage		0.3	Sense of place

OPPORTUNITIES			GOALS
Waterfront development including Gateway property, available land and marina potential	1	5.8	Economic Prosperity, sense of place, resource management, efficient land use, local preparedness, regional cooperation
Mill site and airport available for economic development	2	4.7	Economic Prosperity, sense of place, resource management, efficient land use, local preparedness, regional cooperation
Annexation of various areas into the city to increase tax base	4	2.0	Economic Prosperity, Local preparedness, land use, housing options
Zoning changes to accommodate new ideas, e.g. tourist cottages downtown, Streamline government	5	0.8	Economic Prosperity, Local preparedness, land use, housing options, sense of place
Revitalize Mid-town	3	2.3	Economic prosperity, local preparedness, land use, sense of place, inclusiveness, housing options
Improve food and beverage services, parking and traffic flow to make events more appealing, administrative part of permitting these events		1.0	Economic prosperity, community health, efficient land use, transportation, local preparedness
Enhance the historic aspects of downtown, Make better use of our history to leverage it as a tourist draw, not just historic buildings, its also about the community history		1.0	Sense of place, resource management, inclusiveness, efficient land use
Considering the aging population, seek out health care businesses like memory care and satellite services to supplement the medical services now offered		0.5	Community health, economic prosperity, transportation, inclusiveness, local preparedness, land use, regional cooperation, housing
Be prepared for potential of Spaceport		0.2	Economic prosperity, resource management, land use, educational, regional coop, local preparedness
Eco-tourism and Eco-industry		1.5	Economic prosperity, resource management, sense of place, efficient land use,
Youth center for recreation and life skills		0.0	Community health, inclusiveness, education
RV Parks with or without associated uses like bike and golf cart rentals		0.0	Economic prosperity, efficient land use,
THREATS			GOAL
Changes in federal and state funding means fewer dollars for local projects	2	2.1	Economic prosperity, community health, transportation, housing options,
Failure to correct blight will discourage other businesses from coming to town	1	3.1	Economic Prosperity, Efficient Land Use, Sense of Place, Community Health, housing options, Local preparedness

Potential of hurricane, flooding or natural disaster	3	2.6	Local preparedness, community health, resource management inclusiveness, regional cooperation, transportation
Failing infrastructure	5	2.1	Resource management, local preparedness, community health, housing option, economic
Tax base is too dependent on residential, if it will result in increased taxes or a lack of resources of		1.4	Economic Prosperity, Efficient Land Use, Local preparedness
Drug and related crime issues encroaching from north and south		0.4	Economic prosperity, sense of place, community health, local preparedness, regional cooperation
Competing with Jacksonville & Brunswick for new business		0.6	Economic prosperity
Possibility of losing exclusive rights to Cumberland Island ferry		1.1	Economic prosperity, sense of place
Moving to a high retirement based community		0.3	Economic prosperity, education, inclusiveness
Lack of funding, cooperation and connectivity within the social service and church community will lead to further erosion of help for those in need		2.1	Community health, inclusiveness, resource management
Lack of funding will increase Bike and pedestrian safety issues		1.1	Transportation, resource management, community health