



Hardee County Visioning

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., working in concert with Hardee County staff facilitated the Steering Committee kick-off and review of the comments received during the County-wide kick-off on January 25, 2011. Based on a review of the comments noted below and those received at the Steering Committee meeting, the Committee recommended amending one focus group category from "Housing" to "Quality of Life" which would include health care, housing, recreational opportunities and those factors influencing and impacting resident's way of life. As amended, the community focus topics include:

- Land Use/Recreation/Open Space/Environment,
- Economic Development (Agriculture/Industrial/Commercial),
- Quality of Life (*revised 02-08-2011 from Housing*),
- Infrastructure, and
- Education/Workforce.

As noted during the Steering Committee meeting, the comments below have not been edited or otherwise modified to allow for review of all comments and topics on an equal and unbiased basis. Where comments and/or topics overlap, those items have been noted.

COMMUNITY CONCEPTS, IDEAS AND COMMENTS

Land Use/Recreation/Open Space/Environment

- (Re)develop an RV park at Hardee Lakes (utility hook ups/development)
- Provide public hunting and fishing opportunities & expansion (parks and recreation)
- Lakes – develop recreation and RV opportunities
- Baseball – develop a spring training facility (*see also Econ Dev*)
- More urban – less country/rural
- Develop regional sports complex - indoor/outdoor (*see also Quality of Life*)
 - Baseball
 - Basketball
 - Football
- Develop a recreational facility destination for state/region (*see also Econ Dev*)
- Need for overall code enforcement (*see also Economic Development*)
- Develop Hardee Lakes – RV Park with utilities
- Diversify Hardee Lakes uses
- Agriculture (*see also Economic Development*)
 - Loss of way of life with loss of ag land
 - Preserve and enhance
 - Backbone and future of community
 - Prevent loss of agriculture to mining
- More recreation for youth



Hardee County

Sustainable Hardee - Visioning for the Future

- Youth centers
 - After school programs
 - Pool
 - Theater
 - Hands-on (playground equipment)
- Peace River
 - Tourism
 - Hiking-camping
 - Fishing
 - Eco-lodge
 - Wayfinding points
 - Historical context
- Land use
 - Develop downtown (Arcadia as an example)
 - Save historic context and facades
 - Clean energy – solar farms and infrastructure
- New development in and out of downtown core
 - Need infill of abandoned spaces
 - Not too dense
- Need more 55+ communities
- Need pedestrian connectivity across county
- County-wide trails system
- Develop a Hardee Lakes RV Park with dump stations, water and electricity
- Community garden
- More activities for youth
- Environmental
 - Wetlands protection
 - Habitat
 - Post-mining scenario
- More youth activities
- Phosphate/post phosphate (*see also Econ Dev*)
- Zoning should match comprehensive plan
- “do changes now vs. later” when someone is looking to locate in the community
- Lack of parks (*see also Infrastructure*)
- Need code enforcement (*see also Economic Development*)
 - Improve visual appearance of community
- No regional garbage dump
- Need more/better walkable community
- Reduce vehicle miles travelled to services/employment/retail (*see also Infrastructure*)
 - Small town rural character (like)
 - County stealing property rights
 - County – if code does not allow, you can’t do and too many interpretations (planning/zoning)
 - Lack of consistency



Hardee County Sustainable Hardee - Visioning for the Future

Economic Development (Agriculture/Industrial/Commercial)

- Build a movie theater/Cineplex (economic development)
- Develop a landfill/incinerator (garbage issue) – economic dollar generator (other communities pay to use the facility) (*see also Infrastructure*)
- Reduce overall taxes from (by using) mining funds (increase return rate on mining taxes back to Hardee County)
- Develop industrial economic zones
 - Bring in mid size companies
 - Livable wages/medical benefits
 - “Control” mines – develop good policy/regulations , not have to rely on litigation
- Provide more industry/tax incentives
- Solicit industry/industries – provide development/ incentive packages
- Keep Phosphate mining in Hardee County
- Re-appropriate mining funds back to the community – more severance tax from state for recreation and utilities
- Baseball – develop a spring training facility (*see also Land Use/Rec*)
- Need more employment opportunities
- Existing business assistance – keep what we have and make it prosper
- Recycling center/separation (*see also Infrastructure*)
 - Privatize and create jobs
- Keep children in Hardee Co
 - Options for education
 - Options for work
 - Options for employment
 - Sustainable jobs/economy
- More retail opportunities
- (County) Grow with people/jobs/businesses
- Develop a recreational facility destination for state/region (*see also Land Use/Rec*)
- Hardee County is an agricultural county – keep agriculture nature
- Need clean industry
- Agriculture (*see also Land Use*)
 - Loss of way of life with loss of ag land
 - Preserve and enhance
 - Backbone and future of community
 - Prevent loss of agriculture to mining
- Protection of mining in the southeast corner of the County
 - Protect for future growth
- Mining lands – what happens to the mines when done digging/mining?
- Higher dollar/square foot in the downtown (rents too high)
- Create industry opportunities related to agricultural land
 - Citrus processing
 - Ethanol – use from citrus and bio-fuel
- Develop a farmer’s market (*see also Quality of Life*)
 - Community garden
 - In downtown
- Lack of restaurants – need more (*see also Quality of Life*)



Hardee County Sustainable Hardee - Visioning for the Future

- Spend our money in Hardee
- Need clean industry
- Need phosphate industry
- Growth: jobs, entertainment
- Competition for foreign citrus, ease strain from foreign goods
- Future of agricultural business
- Local preference for county businesses
- Good jobs
- Light industrial
- Government help/environment to support jobs
- Better environment for jobs
- Increased tourism
- Agriculture is key
- Phosphate/post phosphate (*see also Land Use*)
- Need Jobs/clean industry
- Spend Hardee County dollars in Hardee County
- Economic development – jobs creation
 - Salary increases
 - Promote tourism
- Keep and retain farmers
 - Farm worker housing needed
- Don't do a backwards approach now – not build field of dreams in hopes they will come
- Issue: lack of jobs
 - Phosphate will end; agriculture decreasing
- Need for job development and economic development
 - Can create opportunities
- Make room in codes and regulations for various uses and new business opportunities for downtown Wauchula
- More entertainment activities (*see also Quality of Life*)
- People work here but live elsewhere (spend money in other communities)
- Keep Hardee County citizens in Hardee County
- Lack of government accountability
- Privatize any governmental services
 - Reduce county employees pensions (not person who put life on the line – police/fire)
- Keep children in Hardee Co (*see also Econ Dev*)
 - Options for education
 - Options for work
 - Options for employment
 - Sustainable jobs/economy
- Need for overall code enforcement (*see also Land Use*)
- Stop wasting taxpayer's money
- Lack of accountability and follow thru (i.e., FEMA Plan)
- Want local control, not outside influence on Board/community
- Top County employees take a pay cut during recession/down times – not firefighters/police (life on the line personnel)



Hardee County Sustainable Hardee - Visioning for the Future

- No retirement funds for Commissioners
- Consistency and fair services
- County spending on some things with less to show for it ("efficiency")
- Keep kids in Hardee County – make dollars from chargers to use, outside companies fee/use dollars
- Need code enforcement (*see also Land Use*)
 - Improve visual appearance of community

Quality of Life

Includes Housing, Recreation, Healthcare

- ☑ Use foreclosed homes to provide migrant workers with opportunities for housing
- More housing
- Foreclosures are high
- Help with banks (cut-red tape)
- Extend to farm help including farm workers
- Housing:
 - Foreclosures
 - Affordable
 - Diverse
- Lack of quality, affordable housing
- Grants for residential rehab county-wide (more money for Habitat)
- Need safe places for kids (other than the YMCA)
- "Pretty lady in an ugly dress"
- Keep children in Hardee Co (*see also Econ Dev*)
 - Options for education
 - Options for work
 - Options for employment
 - Sustainable jobs/economy
- Issue: healthcare and school needs (*see also Econ Dev*)
- Better access to health care
 - Needs community support
 - Specialty health care needed
 - Veteran's and retiree health care needed
- Build a movie theater/Cineplex (*see also Economic Development*)
- Develop regional sports complex - indoor/outdoor (*see also Land Use/Recreation*)
 - Baseball
 - Basketball
 - Football
- More entertainment activities (*see also Economic Development*)
- Develop a farmer's market (*see also Quality of Life*)
 - Community garden
 - In downtown
- Lack of restaurants – need more (*see also Quality of Life*)
- Great place to grow up
- Get Washington DC's ear
 - Education
 - Crime



Hardee County Sustainable Hardee - Visioning for the Future

- Teen issues
- Like:
 - Youth deaths/crime is down
 - Family here
 - Community values
 - Geographic location
 - Friendly – “never eat alone”
 - Culture
 - Local sense, know who you are dealing with
 - Churches and family environment
 - Small town atmosphere
- Lack of activities (after work hours)
- Improve public welfare/Hardee County (opportunities for assistance/needs)
- Opportunities to keep families in Hardee

Infrastructure

- Develop community transit – for the elderly and less mobile (these groups lack transportation)
- Develop a landfill/incinerator (garbage issue) – economic dollar generator (other communities pay to use the facility) (*see also Econ Dev*)
- Revitalize infrastructure/improvements (i.e., roads)
- Recycling center/separation (*see also Economic Dev*)
 - Privatize and create jobs
- Better road maintenance – pave dirt roads
- Lack of parks (*see also Land Use*)
- Increase fire hydrants/fire protection throughout county (better insurance rates)
- Improved lighting and sidewalks (Safe Routes To School)
- Improved lighting will lead to less crime
- Need recycling program
- Recycling program (county/regional)
- Reduce vehicle miles travelled to services/employment/retail (*see also Land Use*)
- Future development/services
 - Services not segregated
 - Segments of community ignored

Education/Work Force

- Education needs to be better – “Quality Education”
- Improve funding for schools
 - Supplies/sources
 - County wide improvements
- Supplemental education opportunities
 - High school (vo-tech), college
 - Programs (sylvan)
 - Government/community funds to support
- Education
 - Ease teacher meetings/business day-to-day (too much besides just teaching)



Hardee County Sustainable Hardee - Visioning for the Future

- Allow teachers focus on students more
- Individual family contributions (tax dollars) are not paying for/ not meeting the demands placed on school system
- Develop a charter school
- Develop a Vo-Tech High School
- Jobs, skills training
 - Night school for adults
- Improve education system
- Education facilities are fine
- Keep/improve agricultural education
- Vo-Tech opportunities
 - Not just computers/more skills
- Improve education
- Skills training/Vo-Tech
- Education improvements
 - Trade School/ Vo-Tech
 - Both higher and lower education
- Need higher education center
- More education choices (i.e., charter school)
- Issue: healthcare and school needs (*see also Econ Dev*)
- Need safe placed for kids (other than the YMCA)

Other

- Have a balanced steering committee for interest
- Concern over whether this will be implemented
- All involved/represented
- Constitution and eminent domain; make sure this plan and everything is in compliance with US Constitution
- lack of diversity on committee and process (increase representation)
- Do the plan and everything