

**Howey-in-the-Hills**  
**SMART Goals**  
**Update - September 2023**

**Water/Wastewater:**

- Acquire assets of Central Lake CDD.
- Wastewater Plant build/buy.
- Map Town Sanitary Sewer Grid – Assign Phases – Begin southwest Area.
- Connecting southwest quadrant of Town (S. Florida/S. Dixie) to sewer.
- Acquire the water/wastewater plants at Drake Pointe.
- Upsize Drake Pointe Plants to manage northeastern quadrant of Howey ISBA.

**Infrastructure:**

- Use Town grid to repair, resurface, etc. on regular cycle.
- Repair/upgrade roadways.
- Purchase additional right-of-way at Citrus and Camellia to reconstruct road intersection and add stop signs.

**Town Planning and Development:**

- Action Plan update (what is the status of a given development? Utilities? Etc.)
- Complete an updated survey of the Town.
- New Town Hall Campus – Design (Police-Fire-Library-Park).
- Annexation of land into Town.
- Responsible development with a focus on sustainability.
- Developers' concessions to pay for roads and utilities as needed to not burden current residents.
- Continue to provide high-quality of life for current residents and future generations, including walkable downtown.

**Sara Maude Mason Nature Preserve:**

- Repair/redesign Sara Maude Walkways.

**Community Outreach and Development:**

- Pro-actively search for grants monthly and submit a certain amount every month.
- Review existing impact fees and assess the need for new impact fees e.g. stormwater, transportation, wastewater.
- Benchmark other fees and salaries and define strategy and timelines for implementation of the target dollar amount.
- Create a Community Redevelopment Area for the Town City Center.
- Meeting at LEC/quarterly: inviting new residents, welcome them, questions, join/create committees.
- Commercial Businesses: list of businesses, talk to businesses, discussing when we have sewers.
- Engage outside firm to develop image options and conduct workshops for public input.
- Community Volunteerism: Committees per year, ask for co-chair.

**Water/Wastewater:****1. Acquire assets of Central Lake CDD:**

To achieve this goal, the Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Wastewater Liaison Councilor Miles tried to engage in negotiations with the Central Lake Community Development District (CDD) to acquire their wastewater assets. Multiple conversations were held with the CDD representatives to discuss the possibility of the transfer of ownership, financial considerations, and operational responsibilities. The Town Manager and Wastewater Liaison have been working closely with the Town Attorney to investigate possible paths forward. At this point, the acquisition seems unlikely, but the Town will continue to be open to the possibility of an agreement.

STATUS: PENDING THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT

**Water/Wastewater:****2. Wastewater Plant build/buy:**

To address the wastewater demands of the town, the Town Manager and Wastewater Liaison explored various options, including building a wastewater plant or purchasing an existing one. The FGUA performed a high-level analysis showing the feasibility of the Town pursuing solutions. At the staff level, site suitability and availability have been the primary and ongoing considerations. Through ongoing analysis, the path forward is still uncertain whether construction of a new wastewater plant, purchase of an existing plant, or cooperation with a nearby municipality is the best course of action. Although the ability to manage the Town's destiny through utilities is desirable, Council has expressed some reservations about taking the steps necessary to build an independent Town-owned facility.

STATUS: ONGOING INVESTIGATION AND CONSIDERATION

**Water/Wastewater:****3. Map Town Sanitary Sewer Grid - Assign Phases - Begin southwest Area:**

To expand the sanitary sewer system and work on the ultimate goal to connect all areas of the existing part of Town, the Town Engineer is working on creating an up-to-date plan of the existing sewer lines to be expanded. The engineer is considering the necessary infrastructure, including pipelines, manholes, and lift stations, bearing in mind factors such as population density, topography, and accessibility. This goal is unable to move any further without wastewater capacity being made available to the Town.

STATUS: CONTINGENT UPON AVAILABILITY OF CAPACITY

**Water/Wastewater:****4. Connecting southwest quadrant of Town (S. Florida/S. Dixie) to sewer:**

Building upon the previous goal, this project will involve excavation, installation of pipelines, and connection to the main wastewater treatment plant. Once completed, mandatory hook-up for affected residents is recommended, although outside funding to cover per-unit costs will be sought.

STATUS: CONTINGENT UPON AVAILABILITY OF CAPACITY

**Water/Wastewater:**

5. Acquire the water/wastewater plants at Drake Pointe:

Recognizing the need for additional water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as the importance of providing service within the Town's ISBA, staff pursued the acquisition of the water and wastewater plants at Drake Pointe. Initial attempts at meeting with the owners have proven fruitless at this time. If the opportunity occurs, the Town Manager and Town Attorney will present a proposal for Council consideration. At this time, the most that staff has recently heard from Drake Point representatives is that there may be interest in their side to utilize the Town's upcoming Water Treatment Plant #3, rather than building their own.

STATUS: PENDING THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT

**Water/Wastewater:**

6. Upsize Drake Pointe Plants to manage northeastern quadrant of Howey ISBA:

This project is contingent on the same conditions as the previous project. This project will involve increasing the capacity of the treatment facilities, installing additional equipment, and upgrading the existing systems.

STATUS: PENDING THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT

**Infrastructure:****1. Use Town grid to repair, resurface, etc., on a regular cycle:**

To maintain the town's infrastructure, the Public Works Director is developing a comprehensive maintenance plan based on a regular cycle. The department conducted condition assessments of roads, and, using this data, a prioritized schedule for repairs, resurfacing, and other necessary maintenance activities is being developed. The plan considered factors such as usage and current conditions, and is limited primarily by funding. At the current funding rate, one road in poor condition per year can be repaired using the Infrastructure Fund appropriations. With newly procured agreements, the Public Works Department has been moving forward on the schedule. The Public Works Director will be pursuing grant funding to advance the road repair cycle.

STATUS: ONGOING; PLAN ESTABLISHED

**Infrastructure:****2. Repair/upgrade roadways:**

As mentioned above, the Public Works Director is developing an infrastructure improvement plan. As part of this, the Public Works Department conducted detailed assessments of road conditions, identifying areas in need of repair or reconstruction. Utilizing a new piggyback agreement, external contractors are being utilized to execute roadwork. The repairs included pothole filling, and, on a scheduled basis, complete roadway reconstruction. The Public Works Director has coordinated with the Town Engineer to ensure compliance with design standards and best practices. Regular inspections are conducted to monitor the progress and quality of the road repairs. The Public Works Director will be pursuing grant funding to advance the road repair cycle.

STATUS: ONGOING; PLAN ESTABLISHED

**Infrastructure:****3. Purchase additional right-of-way at Citrus and Camellia to reconstruct road intersection and add stop signs:**

To improve traffic flow and enhance safety at the Citrus and Camellia intersection, staff has been collaborating with Lake County and the property owner to acquire the necessary land. Lake County has already approved the return of the right-of-way (ROW) to the Town. The next step is working with the property owner to re-survey the land and work on the dedication of part of the land to the Town, as well as the re-aligning of the right-of-way.

STATUS: ONGOING; PLAN ESTABLISHED

**Town Planning and Development:****1. Action Plan update (what is the status of a given development? Utilities? Etc.):**

Timelines regarding development status are constantly being updated. The most recent information prepared for this was the updated development projection that was sent to St. Johns River Water Management District for the Town's Consumptive Use Permit. Similarly, the Town Planner has prepared a draft action plan update to be presented to Council. After review by the Councilor that requested the action plan to make sure that it contains the expected information, the plan can be presented at an upcoming Council Meeting.

STATUS: PRESENTATION BEING PREPARED FOR UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETING

**Town Planning and Development:****2. Complete an updated survey of the Town:**

Getting a surveyor on the Town's approved list of contractors is part of the Library of Professional Services. Staff is working to get agreements from all vendors so that Council can approved the contractor list. At that time, this project can be started.

STATUS: PENDING COUNCIL APPROVAL OF CONTRACT

**Town Planning and Development:****3. New Town Hall Campus - Design (Police-Fire-Library-Park):**

To meet the evolving needs of the community, Council has discussed designing a new Town Hall Campus that would house the Police, County Fire, and (potentially) Town Hall facilities. Grant funding for the Police station was pursued through a CDBG-MIT grant, but not obtained. With the Council's potential reconsideration of the use of the available 9-acre parcel on Number Two Road and the County's reconsideration of the placement of their Fire Station, further site planning for a campus at Number Two Road seems premature at this time. As Police Impact Fees accumulate due to development and the County makes a final site determination for their Fire Station, an opportunity for the creation of a campus will develop.

STATUS: PENDING FUNDING AND THIRD-PARTY ACTION

**Town Planning and Development:****4. Annexation of land into Town:**

As part of the town's growth strategy, the Town is pursuing the annexation of adjacent land into the town's boundaries. In addition to the legal and administrative processes associated with annexation, the primary consideration is the ability to provide utility services to any potentially annexed area. Due to the utility consideration, the areas most likely for potential annexation are: Cedar Creek, Drake Point, East Revels Road (south side), and the Cypress Point area. Cedar Creek and Drake Point are part of ongoing discussions, and Revels Road recently had a mail campaign regarding annexation.

STATUS: ONGOING; VARIOUS PROJECTS IN DIFFERENT STAGES

**Town Planning and Development:****5. Responsible development with a focus on sustainability:**

To promote responsible and sustainable development practices, staff have been participating in the ongoing County-wide “Strong Towns” meetings and copies of the book have been provided to Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board to facilitate discussion. Similarly, joint workshops on the revision of the Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan have taken place, with feedback provided by Council Members and Board Members for proposed revisions.

STATUS: IN PROGRESS - ACTIVE CONSOLIDATION OF FEEDBACK FOR PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

**Town Planning and Development:****6. Developers' concessions to pay for roads and utilities as needed to not burden current residents:**

Recognizing the need for infrastructure improvements to support new developments, staff have been working with developers to contribute to the funding of necessary roads and utilities related to their respective developments. The Public Works Director has worked with developers regarding the potential development of utilities facilities on the site of their developments. The Town Planner and Town Engineer have assessed the impact of each upcoming development on the existing road infrastructure and have determined the corresponding financial obligations for developers, which was initially proposed as a “fair-share” contribution for road improvements and has been discussed with every current developer in Town. Staff are currently working with Legal to perform the necessary impact fee analysis and draft an ordinance for a Roads Impact Fee that would serve the place of the “fair-share” contribution for roads.

STATUS: ONGOING; NEXT STEP – IMPACT FEE ORDINANCE

**Town Planning and Development:****7. Continue to provide a high quality of life for current residents and future generations, including a walkable downtown:**

Staff has talked with property owners and interested builders in the downtown area. There is interest in creating pedestrian-friendly spaces and attractive streetscapes that combine commercial and residential. Although the current lack of wastewater capacity precludes immediate development, there has been a request from New Beginnings to do a presentation to the Town Council about some preliminary concepts in developing a “Bohemian-style village” with retail below and housing above. This would promote a vibrant downtown with residential, commercial, and recreational amenities within walking distance.

STATUS: NEED TO SCHEDULE PRESENTATION FOR UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETING; WASTEWATER CAPACITY ALSO A PREREQUISITE

**Sara Maude Mason Nature Preserve:**

Staff have worked with environmental experts and engineers to assess the current condition of the preserve's walkways and develop a repair and redesign plan. The team conducted site visits, evaluated the impact of weather and usage on the walkways, and identified areas in need of repair, ultimately determining that the entire boardwalk needed to be replaced. After a year, some FEMA funding has been secured for the project. Additional funds have been budgeted in the upcoming year from Parks and Recreation Impact Fees to fund the project. Construction and repair activities will be undertaken to improve the safety and aesthetics of the walkways, ensuring that residents and visitors can enjoy the preserve's serene environment and engage in outdoor activities.

STATUS: AWAITING NEW FISCAL YEAR FUNDING

**Community Outreach and Development:**

1. Proactively search for grants monthly and submit a certain amount every month:

To secure additional funding for community projects and initiatives in addition to the ongoing grants and appropriations that staff typically applies for, staff worked with Kimley-Horn to analyze the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to create an application cycle matrix for the upcoming year.

Grant/Appropriations of Note:

- State Appropriation for WTP
- LCWA stormwater grant
- FDEM lift station grants (HMGP) (pending award)
- FEMA boardwalk grant (HMGP)
- FEMA Storm debris reimbursement
- Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant (not awarded)

STATUS: ONGOING

**Community Outreach and Development:**

2. Review existing impact fees and assess the need for new impact fees (e.g., stormwater, transportation, wastewater):

Staff conducted a review of the existing impact fees and assessed the need for new impact fees related to stormwater management, roads, and wastewater services. Staff considered factors such as population growth, infrastructure demands, and the town's financial sustainability. Based on analysis, recommendations were made to create these fees for the upcoming fiscal year (FY24), ensuring that the fees accurately reflected the impact of new development on the town's infrastructure and services. After preparing growth data and preliminary cost estimates, the next step is to get legally acceptable consultants' reviews of the costs and do the legal drafting of the ordinance for Council review.

STATUS: IN PROCESS

**Community Outreach and Development:**

3. Benchmark other fees and salaries and define strategy and timelines for implementation of the target dollar amount:

As there are different kinds of fees, and salaries are a completely different discussion, these are considered separately.

Fees: The Town has recently modified all building permitting fees, based on benchmarking with local municipalities. The number of impact fee categories is proposed to increase this coming fiscal year from three to six (including wastewater, roads, and stormwater). Fees for water have been increased by the Municipal Cost Index; based on conclusions derived from a previous water rate study, adopting the maximum MCI rate every year puts the Town's rates where they should be. Other fees, such as administration and cemetery fees, have not been adjusted.



Salaries: Salaries remain the lowest (or next to the lowest) for director-level positions when compared with all other Lake County municipalities. To that end, raises that exceed cost-of-living percentage increases are recommended across the board until such time as a salary study is completed and implemented. In addition, employee benefits have been reviewed, with a proposal for a pension for non-sworn employees having been proposed to Council, and the benchmarking of the Town's contribution for premiums for health insurance budgeted for the upcoming fiscal year.

STATUS: ONGOING - STAFF NEEDS TO REVIEW REMAINING FEES

**Community Outreach and Development:**

4. Create a Community Redevelopment Area for the Town City Center:

Recognizing the potential for revitalization and economic development, staff has looked into the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) for the Town Center. Staff collaborated with Lake County Economic Development and talked with some consultants about the process. A consultant will need to conduct detailed analyses of the area, assessing existing infrastructure, economic opportunities, and potential challenges to develop a CRA plan that incorporates strategies for infrastructure improvements, business development, public spaces, and community amenities. The implementation of the CRA plan will involve collaborations with developers, businesses, and community organizations to attract investments, enhance the quality of life, and create a vibrant town center.

STATUS: NEED TO PROCURE CONSULTANT FOR "FINDING OF NECESSITY" REPORT

**Community Outreach and Development:**

5. Meeting at LEC/quarterly: inviting new residents, welcome them, questions, join/create committees:

To foster a sense of community and engage new residents, the Library Director will be organizing regular meetings at the Library's Learning Education Center (LEC) in the new fiscal year. The meetings will be designed to welcome newcomers, provide information about town services and programs, and address any questions or concerns they may have. Residents will have the opportunity to meet Town staff members and will be encouraged to participate in Town committees and volunteer opportunities. The meetings will also serve as a platform for residents to share their ideas and suggestions, allowing staff to gather valuable input for decision-making and future planning.

STATUS: SCHEDULED IMPLEMENTATION

**Community Outreach and Development:**

6. Commercial Businesses: list of businesses, talk to businesses, discussing when we have sewers:

To support the growth and development of commercial businesses, staff have engaged in conversations with business owners, seeking feedback on their needs and challenges. The discussion of the formation of a Chamber of Commerce has come up several times, but would need to be spearheaded on the side of the businesses, not the Town. One of the key topics of discussion was the availability of wastewater, as it played a vital role in business expansion and development. Staff communicated the town's plans for

providing sewer services to businesses, addressing any concerns and fostering a collaborative relationship between the town and local entrepreneurs.

STATUS: PENDING WASTEWATER CAPACITY AVAILABILITY

**Community Outreach and Development:**

7. Engage an outside firm to develop image options and conduct workshops for public input:

An initial engagement of an advising company, Allure Advising, provided a basis for logo ideas and slogans. Further consultations with residents, community leaders, and stakeholders through workshops, focus groups, and surveys to gather input and preferences regarding the town's image and branding will need to be arranged. After receiving and reviewing input, there will need to be additional workshops and open forums, allowing for further input and refining of the final image and branding strategy.

STATUS: NEED TO WORK WITH A FIRM TO PROVIDE FULL SCOPE OF SERVICES

**Community Outreach and Development:**

8. Community Volunteerism: Committees per year, ask for a co-chair:

To encourage community involvement and volunteerism, Events Committee meetings and membership have been completely opened to the public. Staff have encouraged residents to join this committee which has been engaged in planning Town Events: Easter Egg Dash, Founder's Day, Memorial Day, Oktoberfest, Halloween, Veterans Day, and the Christmas Festival. Other volunteer programs, such as library volunteers and "bump-out" maintenance groups, remain active.

STATUS: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVE AND ONGOING