



Institute for Senior Professionals
Northwest Florida State College

Strategic Plan Recommendations For Walton County

Walton County Board of County Commissioners
A Local Government

Prepared by
The Institute for Senior Professionals
Northwest Florida State College

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2022 the Chairman of the Walton County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approached the Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP) to help the County develop a strategic plan. The ISP developed and followed a project plan to guide the process.

The first major effort completed was a revision to Walton County's vision and mission statement, defining the strategic priority areas to address in the strategic plan, and defining the core values for the County work force and its elected officials. This portion of the project was completed through two public workshops and adopted by resolution.

A public survey was developed to gather public opinion on the vision and mission statement and to collect comments on the proposed strategic priority areas. It was open for comments from June to September 2022. Almost 700 public responses were received and analyzed. Results of the tourism public survey were also used by the ISP team in developing recommendations.

Using the data collected from interviews of each functional area listed and the public survey, the ISP team developed a draft report of strategic plan recommendations for Walton County to consider for adoption.

Moving forward, the document should be presented to the newly hired County Administrator and the Chairman of the BCC for their review and asking for them to appoint a team of County employees to review the recommendations. The team charter should include determining the feasibility of the recommended goals and target dates and to propose modifications and additions that will facilitate their inclusion in a strategic plan.

Once the County team completes the draft strategic plan, it should be approved by County Administrators and reviewed by the Commissioners in a public workshop. Once public commentary is addressed, and revisions are made the strategic plan can be adopted by resolution by the Board of County Commissioners.

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for Walton County asked the Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP) to review the County's mission statement and develop a strategic plan for the County. Chairman Barker's January 2022 request for assistance is presented in Appendix 1.

In recent years the County has revised its vision and mission statement and adopted new priorities and goals. On October 26, 2010, the BCC recorded a vision statement and mission statement, along with high value priorities and complimenting objectives. The former vision was "*Sustain and enhance Walton County's vitality, environment, and community character.*" The former mission statement was "*Delivery of public services that advance the County's high value priorities and improves the quality of life.*"

For Fiscal Year 2021-2022, the BCC defined eight strategic goals to help guide planning. The adopted goals represented a change to the County's mission statement. The revised mission statement was "*To provide efficient and effective government services through responsive leadership, ensuring pride, preservation and conservation for Walton County.*"

The county emblem contains the mission statement of *Pride, Preservation, and Conservation.*

The former vision and mission statement provided a baseline to help the County Commissioners revise the vision and mission statement for the County. Several of the strategic goals from Fiscal Year 2021-2022 remain valid and are integrated into the ISP's recommended strategic goals.

Project Objectives and Scope

The Chairman of the ISP formed a team of ISP members. A list of the ISP team members is presented in Appendix 2. A project plan for the effort was developed by the ISP project team documenting the following objectives.

1. Assist the BCC in defining an updated vision and mission statement.
2. Identify benchmark examples of other county strategic plans to help shape Walton County's strategic plan.
3. Provide support to the BCC in developing strategic plan recommendations that will aid in future master planning and guide budget planning in the years to come.

Project Risks

The BCC Chairman initiated his request with an Interim County Administrator. During the project, the Interim County Administrator was terminated. This resulted in another Interim County Administrator being appointed from the County's managers. The Administrative Services Manager was placed in the role of Interim Deputy Administrator. The search for a permanent County Administrator was ongoing at the time of this report's development. The instability in County Administration served as a major risk for completion of the project. The BCC chairmanship also transferred as the project interviews were completed. The original champion within the BCC, the requesting authority for the project, resigned as a County Commissioner. Ideally, the strategic plan should be developed with permanent county leadership in place.

Findings

The ISP team examined the strategic plans of Florida counties that share similarities with Walton County including Bay, Monroe, Pasco, and Collier Counties. Benchmarking pointed out several best practices which were shared with the County.

Each elected member of the BCC was interviewed separately by the team to collect their viewpoints, goal suggestions, and their vision for Walton County. Their perspective provided key words that helped refine the vision and mission statement. The Interim County Administrator and Interim Deputy Administrator were also interviewed.

In two public BBC workshops, facilitated by the ISP, the Commissioners developed a vision and mission statement that will be integrated into the end-state strategic plan. Core values and strategic priority areas for Walton County were also developed during the workshops.

Results of the workshops are presented below:

VISION STATEMENT

Be THE premier County in which to live, visit, work and play.

Walton County's vision statement is an aspirational description of what the organization would like to achieve and accomplish. The statement describes how Walton County, in an ideal state, should look like in the future.

MISSION STATEMENT

To efficiently and effectively serve the citizens of Walton County by providing a safe community and sustainable economy while preserving our quality of life and natural resources.

Walton County's mission statement aligns with the vision and communicates purpose and direction to employees, citizens, our vendors and suppliers, and other stakeholders. While the mission statement reflects the County's vision, it is more action-oriented and directive in nature.

CORE VALUES

Transparent, Service-Oriented, Integrity, Proactive, Professional, Accountable

Walton County's core values provide the guiding principles on how the County government workforce serves the public, sets expectations, and how county operations and projects are executed. These values set the stage for public service. These core values should be integrated into policy documents by Human Resources and daily management and employee actions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

- **Planned growth with sustainable infrastructure.**
- **Economic diversification.**
- **Organizational performance and asset management.**
- **Public information and communication.**
- **Workforce housing, transportation, and training.**
- **Preservation of natural resources, historical heritage, and natural beauty.**
- **Safe clean, prideful communities.**
- **Visitor experience diversification.**
- **Cultural arts, and recreational experience expansion.**

The strategic priorities are high-level categories of focus in Walton County's environment. While some of the strategic priority areas will be accomplished by other constitutional officers or other organizations, the entire picture of county-wide evolution over time should be kept in mind. Each strategic priority area influences the success of Walton County and its communities. These priority areas help shape the decisions, actions and areas of influence for Walton County.

The Walton County BCC formally adopted the new vision statement, mission statement, core values and strategic priority areas by resolution on May 24, 2022.

This provided the framework for the ISP team to begin interviewing the County's functional areas.

Using a best practice from Monroe County, a public survey was developed for the BCC and deployed by Walton County under their control. Between June and September 2022, the survey captured 687 responses that allowed the public to rank the strategic priority areas (high, medium, low) and provide comments on each area. In addition, the survey captured public comment on what Walton County does well and what the County could do better. The inputs were used by the ISP team to develop a significant number of recommendations in this report. The data from the survey could be used by the Walton County Administrator to shape management strategy and short-term actions.

Interviews with the departments were held over the course of 2022 beginning in June. All interviews were completed in December. The interviews were tailored to capture the strategic goals from the functional areas. The functional areas that were visited by the ISP team are presented in Appendix 3. A guide to help the departments prepare for the interviews was developed. In addition, a guide was developed for the ISP team members to maintain consistency in the interviews. The interviews revealed a lack of long-range strategic planning except in a couple of functional areas. Most of the planning is driven by the annual budget process.

Master plans had only been developed for solving the transportation issues facing south Walton County. The lack of using master plans hinders developing strategic goals and long-term funding needs.

Project Team Recommendations

The recommendations for strategic goals from the ISP team are incorporated into this report for consideration by Walton County Administration and the BCC.

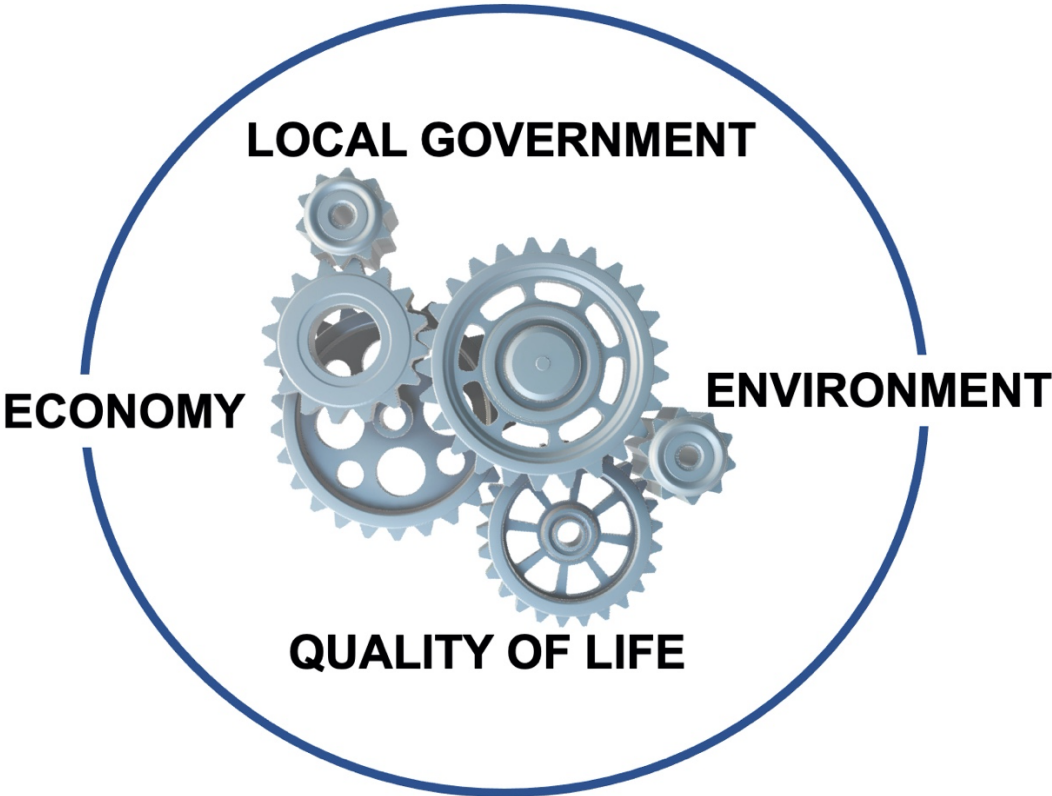
Each recommendation is accompanied with a suggested target date for completion. These suggestions for target dates are estimates by the ISP team.

On March 6, 2023, the ISP team leaders presented their recommendations for developing the strategic plan to the Interim County Administrator and Interim Deputy County Administrator. The ISP also suggested forming working groups around each strategic priority area to validate the ISP recommendations, make any modifications, and transition them into a final strategic plan owned by the County Administrators. The plan would then be reviewed in public workshops and adopted by a Walton County BCC resolution. An offer for ISP facilitation of the working groups was extended.

The County's Interim County Administrator made the decision to table the draft recommendations until a permanent County Administrator is hired and in-place.

The goals recommended for use in Walton County's strategic plan are provided in the next section of this report.

STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WALTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



ISP

Institute for Senior Professionals
Northwest Florida State College

STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WALTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

VISION STATEMENT

Be THE premier County in which to live, visit, work and play.

Walton County's vision statement is an aspirational description of what the organization would like to achieve and accomplish. The statement describes how Walton County, in an ideal state, should look like in the future. Adopted by resolution May 24, 2022.

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To efficiently and effectively serve the citizens of Walton County by providing a safe community and sustainable economy while preserving our quality of life and natural resources.

Walton County's mission statement aligns with the vision and communicates purpose and direction to employees, citizens, our vendors and suppliers, and other stakeholders. While the mission statement reflects the County's vision, it is more action-oriented and directive in nature. Adopted by resolution May 24, 2022.

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Accountable**

Walton County's core values provide the guiding principles on how our county government workforce serves the public, sets expectations, and how county operations and projects are executed. These values set the stage for our public service. Adopted by resolution May 24, 2022.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

Economic diversification; Workforce housing, transportation, and training; Visitor experience diversification; Preservation of natural resources, historical heritage and natural beauty; Planned growth and infrastructure; Safe, clean prideful communities; Cultural arts, and recreational experiences expansion; Organizational performance and asset management; and Public information and communications.

Strategic priorities are high-level categories of focus in Walton County's environment. While some of the strategic priority areas will be accomplished by other constitutional officers or other organizations, the entire picture of county-wide evolution over time should be kept in mind. Each strategic priority area influences the success of Walton County and its communities. These priority areas help shape the decisions, actions and areas of influence for Walton County. Adopted by resolution May 24, 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRATEGIC GOALS

For each strategic priority area, the ISP recommends strategic goals. Having clear achievable goals with a target completion date that is communicated to the public and the County workforce and includes the specific results local government expects to achieve. Some of the recommended goals may align with the annual budget process and follow-on budget planning beyond the current fiscal year. Some of the strategic goal recommendations may be outside the resource allocation of the County. Goal achievement may require planning outside the two-year window of current internal planning. Metrics, status reports, and key performance indicators should be established for the strategic goals. Status reports on progress or achievement of the strategic goals should be adopted. Status reporting reflects progress in achievement, helps with accountability, and improves the strength of the long-term planning effort (see Appendix 4 for an example). Most proposed strategic goals have an end note that refers to the source of the information used to develop the goal. The end notes and the referenced sources are presented in Appendix 5.

Goals for the nine strategic priority areas are organized into the following four sections:

- Economy
- Environment
- Quality of Life
- Local Government

ECONOMY

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA: ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION (EC1)

ATTRACT CLEAN, LIGHT INDUSTRY AND OTHER SIMILAR BUSINESSES TO BALANCE THE RELIANCE ON TOURISM.

EC1-1. Walton County Economic Development Alliance should Identify industry niches that align with the “clean light industry” definition and develop a strategic marketing plan for the County and our incorporated cities to follow. Such industry niches might include agile manufacturing (3D printing), polymer science technology product production, knowledge economy-based business, and information technology companies. The niches selected should come from the list of target industries (by NAICS code) qualifying for the Qualified Target Industry (QTI) Tax Refund from the State of Florida. (Suggested Target- July 2023)

EC1-2. Walton County Economic Development Alliance should provide online resources guiding citizens on how to form a business, obtain licenses, and comply with sales taxes. Consider a combined effort with STARTUP OKALOOSA (startupokaloosa.com). ¹ (Suggested Target- December 2023)

EC1-3. Walton County Economic Development Alliance should partner with Walton County and Walton County School District to convert unused or underutilized facility space into a technology business incubator for startup and early-stage companies based in Walton County. Lessons learned from previous business incubator efforts should be applied to continuously move startups from incubation to self-sustainment outside local government owned facilities. ² (Suggested Target- June 2026)

EC1-4. Walton County, the Walton County Economic Development Alliance, and each city supporting industrial park(s) should validate the infrastructure shortfalls and actions holding the industrial sites back from being “shovel ready” and develop a strategy for solving the shortfalls. ³ (Suggested Target- December 2025)

EC1-5. To attract larger business investment, Walton County Economic Development Alliance should examine the Industry 4.0 model to highlight what improvements in infrastructure must be put in place to support the digital transformation needs of industry, especially with “smart factory” capabilities. While the County has invested in high-capacity fiber optic communications, the industrial sites across Walton County lack the infrastructure to support the digital enterprise needs of modern industry. Bringing such technology investment to the sites will require effort and close work with regional

telecommunications companies such as UNITI, Cox Communications, etc. ⁴ (Suggested Target – June 2026)

EC1-6. To attract business development for industries focused on Federal contracts using direct awards, the Walton County Economic Development Alliance should work with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to determine if any Walton County areas meet the criteria for HUBZones and establish them. If HUBZones are in place, take action with SBA to avoid expiration and market them to Federal contractors. ⁵ (Suggested Target - June 2023)

EC1-7. A public survey comment suggested Walton County should consider piggybacking the Information Technology Gulf Coast organization (itgulfcoast.org) and pursue industries that are looking to relocate. High end work from home industries should be considered for economic development. (Suggested Target – December 2024)

EC1-8. Public survey inputs proposed that the County and Economic Development Alliance establish programs to attract high tech knowledge worker with incentives for relocating or starting technology companies. (Suggested Target – December 2024)

EC1-9. Recognizing that Tourism will remain the main economic engine for Walton County, the efforts outlined in the Walton County Tourism 2022-2025 Strategic Plan should be supported and nurtured, especially with the efforts to increase shoulder season performance and development of tourism in the northern portion of Walton County.

ECONOMY

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA : WORKFORCE HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION AND TRAINING (EC2)

PROVIDE THE SUPPORT NECESSARY TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN A QUALIFIED WORKFORCE FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE BUSINESSES.

EC2-1. The strong relationship and cooperation between the County, Northwest Florida State College, Walton County Economic Development Alliance, and Walton County School District should be nurtured and sustained to attract new industry. The college's proven record of innovation and delivering fast-paced development of workforce training is key to attracting new industry that can deliver family-sustainable wages and strong employment opportunities. The group effort should develop projects attractive to Triumph Gulf Coast funding decision makers to rapidly turn a variety of workforce development and education concepts into reality. (Suggested Target – June 2023 and beyond)

EC2-2. The County, the Walton County Economic Development Alliance, along with outside economic information organizations are aware of the lack of workers and low pay in the County. This is a major area for public-private engagement to improve these two factors as economy expansion is pursued. The current labor situation is unsustainable. ⁶ (Suggested Target – December 2024)

EC2-3. The retail sector supporting workforce needs is severely lacking and must be improved. Community leaders should reach out to the retail market sharing the public's concern. The public highlighted the need for competition to Wal-Mart™ and Publix™, only one home improvement store(s) in DeFuniak Springs, and the need to seek free standing pharmacies where none exist, etc. A citizen commented "Families are spending all their money on purchases in our neighboring counties." ⁷ (Suggested Target- June 2026)

EC2-4. There is public concern about our fragile food supply chain with the volatile demand placed on stocked items by our visitors. Community leaders should address seasonal stock control capabilities with local grocery outlets." ⁸ (Suggested Target- June 2026)

EC2-5. Affordable housing for the workforce is a major concern expressed by the public. The exceptional housing market has priced housing for Walton County's workforce beyond their budget affordability. This has created the situation where most employees

cannot afford to live in the county. This is placing the hospitality and service industry at risk and directly impacting critical labor availability from education to law enforcement. The County and cities should explore every option available across the entire area to create affordable housing such as zoning for affordable housing and designating areas for multi-family housing to help create affordable housing. This government leadership call for affordable housing should extend to developers as well. ⁹ (Suggested Target – Dec 2024)

EC2-6. Sustainable growth and workforce commuting is limited by a single north south highway and single east-west highway. The congestion on the major traffic arteries is dramatic and impacts the entire area. Incorporation of bypasses into the Long-Range Transportation Plan's "complete street strategy" should receive emphasis. ¹⁰ (Suggested Target – June 2026)

EC2-7. Continue to develop and implement programs for workforce transportation. The County should educate the public on its public transportation efforts. Many citizens are not aware of the effort being made to deliver public transportation. Feedback from the workforce and residents should capture their needs for public transportation to help shape changes to the current initiative. ¹¹ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

EC2-8. Walton County School District and Northwest Florida State College should expand and further develop technical education programs. This was heavily emphasized in public survey commentary. If the Walton County Economic Development Alliance defines the industry niches it will pursue, this should be shared with both the School District and Northwest Florida State College to shape their education strategies. ¹² (Suggested Target- June 2024)

EC2-9. Developers should be encouraged to explore agile manufacturing techniques (i.e., concepts such 3D printing) to deliver affordable housing. The concepts must meet State of Florida code for our area. Many architectural schools are exploring this approach. This may be an area for business development exploration by the Walton County Economic Development Alliance. ¹³ (Suggested Target- December 2024)

EC2-10. The public identified significant shortfalls in skilled trades across the trade spectrum from automobile mechanics to the construction trades such as plumbers and electricians. The ability to provide this trade education and the possibility of increasing graduate output should be addressed by Walton County School District and Northwest Florida State College. ¹⁴ (Suggested Target – December 2024)

ECONOMY

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA : VISITOR EXPERIENCE DIVERSIFICATION (EC3)

PROVIDE VISITORS ACTIVITY AND ATTRACTION OPPORTUNITIES THAT COMPLEMENT OUR EXCEPTIONAL BEACHES.

CLARIFICATION ON THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA: While diversification is desired to provide more activity and attraction opportunities for both residents and visitors, the public survey reveals a strong desire to preserve the “beach town” character of Walton County. Public sentiment also highlighted a desire to avoid a transformation into Panama City Beach or Destin. ¹⁵

EC3-1. The suggestion for large sports complexes was provided in the public survey. The County should validate the public support for establishing large sports complexes in strategic locations to enhance the economy. A business case for such investment should be developed. (Suggested Target – December 2024)

EC3-2. A freshwater water park like Beachwalk in St. Johns outside Jacksonville was proposed by citizen input for the area in the north Freeport area. Developers in the Freeport area should be approached with the idea. (Suggested Target – June 2023)

EC3-3. Expanding the walking/biking experience was proposed in the public survey. County support for such expansion should be explored. Public sentiment for trail expansion is appearing in social media. (Suggested Target – December 2023)

EC3-4. A performing arts venue was proposed by public survey input. This complements survey inputs from corporate recruiters who stated the lack of cultural arts hinders attracting professionals in the medical field to work in Walton County. County consideration of such a venue is warranted. Such a venue should complement and work with Mattie Kelly Performing Arts Center events, not compete with it. Note: The concept of an amphitheater to support music events has already received County consideration. (Suggested Target – June 2024)

EC3-5. The Tourism Development Council and Board of County Commissioners should build upon the success of the Grayton Beach Shuttle Program by expanding the shuttle program to other local beaches. (Suggested Target – June 2024)

EC3-6. Ecotourism concepts were suggested for consideration by the public. The range of ideas run from artificial underwater reefs to kayaking on waterways to agriculture-based ecotourism concepts. While these should be explored by the Tourism Department, the spark to develop ecotourism could be started with a venue that centers on sea turtles and their ecological needs. A suggested benchmark to examine the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, on Jekyll Island, GA. This would also align with the turtle nesting protection and education mission of the Ambassador program (Suggested Target- June 2024)

EC3-7. Expanded development of historic downtown DeFuniak Springs was suggested by the public. This could be aligned with historical based events such as Victorian era reenactments. (Suggested Target – June 2025)

ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA : PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES, HISTORICAL HERITAGE, AND NATURAL BEAUTY (EN1)

SET ASIDE, PROTECT, MAINTAIN, AND PROVIDE SAFE ACCESS TO AREAS OF NATURAL BEAUTY, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, AND ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE ¹⁶

EN1-1. Establish a recurring social media plan to educate the public on environmental issues across Walton County and educating citizens on solutions requiring public support. ¹⁷ (Suggested Target- June 2023)

EN1-2. Establish stewardship awards to recognize environmental improvements by citizens, businesses, and local government within Walton County. To support the award system, establish a nomination process, a reporting system to track and rank candidates for stewardship award recognition, and develop a database for the award program. ¹⁸ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

EN1-3 Expand wetland data availability in the County’s geographical information system (GIS) to address the public concern over wetland encroachment by developments in the County. County GIS data only portrays the National Wetland Data Set. Start the expansion with south Walton to educate the public on the “true picture” of wetlands. ¹⁹ (Suggested Target – December 2024)

EN1-4. Through techniques such as mediation, develop a compromise for historical preservation with those seeking the removal of historical monuments and those seeking to preserve southern heritage located on Walton County property. (Suggested Target – December 2024)

EN1-5. Work with Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance to provide the public with measurements of pollution in Choctawhatchee Bay. ²⁰ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

EN1-6. Continued County purchases of beach property and property near the beach to support parking received strong public input in the public survey.

QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA : PLANNED GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE (QL1)

PLAN THE RATE AND TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM GROWTH DESIRED AND PROVIDE THE INFRASTRUCTURE (ROADS, PARKING, TRANSPORTATION, WATER/SEWER, INTERNET. ETC. THAT SUPPORTS THE GROWTH.

QL1-1. Master plans should be developed and followed countywide, with emphasis on the entire 30A corridor due to the serious infrastructure issues to be solved. These master plans would complement the Transportation Mobility Master Plan developed to solve issues in south Walton. ²¹ (Suggested Target – June 2026)

QL1-2. Master planning for Storm Water Management across the County should receive high priority development to drive storm water management capital projects. ²² (Suggested Target – June 2024)

QL1-3. Identify a definitive, dependable source of funding for the Transportation Mobility Plan. Proportional use funding is the current approach with a recent sales tax increase defeated. ²³ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

QL1-4. Improve the quality of life in Walton County by developing a Comprehensive Water Resource Action Plan that analyzes the options for improving water quality in all water bodies in the County. ²⁴ (Suggested Target – June 2024) (Carryover from FY2021-2022 Strategic Goals)

QL1-5. With the Walton County Short Term Vacation Rental Ordinance Amendment to the Walton County Land Development Code in place, determine if the parking, trash, and noise issues are improved through performance measurements tracked through the Planning and Development Department. (Suggested Target – December 2023)

QL1-6. Continue to work with the utility industry to bring underground power to areas that are vulnerable to major storm damage. (Suggested Target – Sep 2025 and beyond)

QL1-7. Continue the development of high-speed Internet access for all Walton County citizens. (Suggested Target- Sept 2025 and beyond)

QL1-8. The number of and types of variances granted by Planning and Development should be readily visible to the community. Numerous public concerns were captured in the public survey concerning variance management. (Suggested Target – June 2023)

QL1-9. Examine options to restrict high density development on small acreages. This concern was highlighted multiple times in the public survey. (Suggested Target – December 2023)

QL1-10. Evaluate smart growth options to ensure development matches the existing infrastructure. This issue was elevated multiple times in the public survey. (Suggested Target – December 2023)

QL1-11. Examine the application of technologies and growth in digital infrastructure within the Smart City and Smart County initiatives in other parts of Florida and across the country for adoption by Walton County and the Walton County Sheriff's Office. The technologies are also needed in Walton County's rural areas. One of the Smart County technologies is telehealth. This may be a possible solution to the lack of access to health centers in north Walton County. Traffic control technologies used in Smart City designs may help the traffic congestion in south Walton. ²⁵ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA : SAFE, CLEAN, PRIDEFUL COMMUNITIES (QL2)

MAKE COUNTY COMMUNITIES GOOD PLACES TO LIVE BY PROVIDING PUBLIC SAFETY, MAINTENANCE, AND SENSIBLE REGULATION

QL2-1. Establish a waste transfer station in south Walton County to accommodate the growth in population and volume of waste. ²⁶ (Suggested Target – July 2023)

QL2-2. Establish and implement residential and commercial curb side pick-up of recyclables through the contract with Waste Management™. The call for establishing curb side pick-up of recyclables was elevated multiple times by citizen input to the County survey. ²⁷ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

QL2-3. Establish a citizen volunteer Recycling Advisory Committee to advise the Board of County Commissioners on recycling programs and provide public information pertaining to recycling of residential and commercial materials, building materials, material from demolition efforts, debris, etc. Define a position to build and sustain the recycling initiative. (Suggested Target – October 2023)

QL2-4. Walton County should work with the health industry to deliver sustainable and expanded health care access in the north part of the County. This effort must help overcome the impact of the Healthmark Regional Medical Center closure. (Suggested Target – June 2023)

QL2-5. Work with industry to establish a commercial recycling Material Recovery Facility in Walton County to enable county-wide recycling to begin. Other counties could use the capability once established or commit to use the facility to support industry capital investment. ²⁸ (Suggested Target – June 2025)

QL2-6. The County should use a Master Plan approach to address problems with parking, traffic, congestion, and mixing of low-speed vehicles in the south Walton area. ²⁹ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

QL2-7. As the south Walton citizen demographics transition to increased families, the County should address the need for youth-oriented facilities, community centers, and possibly community pools. ³⁰ (Suggested Target – June 2026)

QL2-8. Walton County School District's quality of education is rated very high by the State of Florida. Continued school expansion plans to support the County's growth projections should receive strong support from County leadership. The concern over affordable housing has a direct bearing on teacher recruitment and the ability to sustain the current education workforce. (Suggested Target – June 2023 and beyond)

QL2-9. Continued expansion of Seacoast Collegiate High School for a growing population and delivering the ability for students to pursue both Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees from Northwest Florida State College delivers a major enhancement to quality of life along with influencing industry interest to establish operations in Walton County. (Suggested Target - August 2024 and beyond)

QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA : CULTURAL ARTS, AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCE EXPANSION (QL3)

INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING, ENJOYMENT, AND PLAY BY ADDING PUBLIC INTEREST PROGRAMS, CONTINUOUS EDUCATION, MUSEUMS, PARKS, AND SPORTS COMPLEXES

QL3-1. Develop a Construction and Design Standard for County Parks and grade each park to the standard, identify shortfalls and solutions for budget inclusion. ³¹ (Suggested Target – June 2025)

QL3-2. A top input from the public survey was the need to continue the effort to improve beach access and provide expanded beach parking. These improvements should continue to be addressed by the County. (Suggested Target – September 2026 and beyond)

QL3-3. Strong support from the public was received for music, theater, and art festivals. These should continue to be positively embraced by the County and its Tourism Department. (Suggested Target – October 2023 and beyond)

QL3-4. Corporate recruiters in Walton County, especially in the medical community, have a difficult time recruiting employees due to the lack of cultural arts in the area. Previously, in the visitor diversification strategic priority area, a cultural arts center was suggested, which would work concurrently with the Mattie Kelly Arts Center.

QL3-5. Continue to create and implement beautification projects across Walton County. The planting and cultivating of wildflowers along county and State roadsides is recommended, as is done by the State of Texas. These projects may be partnered with other entities, such as seed development with Florida's agricultural and botany departments at Florida universities. Based on Texas lessons learned the wildflower effort should reduce mowing schedules with the Florida Department of Transportation and the County. ³² (Suggested Target – October 2024)

QL3-6. Partner with other cultural entities to plan, develop, advertise, develop facilities, and/or offer land space for events, festivals, and destinations of interest or historical significance. Emphasis should be on land north of the I-10 corridor, ³³ (Suggested Target – October 2024 and beyond)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA : ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT (LG1)

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND MAINTAIN CONTROL OF COUNTY ASSETS

LG1-1. The Board of County Commissioners should improve span of control and delegation ability of the County Administrator by establishing a Deputy County Administrator for Operations and Deputy County Administrator for Administration ³⁴ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-2. The County Administrator should establish a strong customer-service culture within Walton County government by developing a customer service standard. Integrate the customer service standard into each job description. Also, establish customer service metrics for each functional area. ³⁵ (Suggested Target- December 2023)

LG1-3. Human Resources should consider off-the-shelf software or an application that can use MUNIS data to develop a manpower model for County positions which projects turnover, operational project needs, seasonal manpower requirements, and applies the results to budget planning and succession planning. ³⁶ (Suggested Target- June 2023)

LG1-4. Human Resources should work with a consultant firm to conduct a compensation and classification study for all County employees and define a compensation model that addresses compensation issues such as location pay across the functional areas. ³⁷ (Suggested Target - December 2023)

LG1-5. The County Administrator should establish a template for operating procedures that can be used by all functional areas and generate process manuals for each major process. Job descriptions should be developed for each position. Job descriptions for supervisors and managers should require establishing and managing process manuals and process checklists for their areas of responsibility. Performance evaluations should grade managers on the establishment and management of job descriptions and process manuals. ³⁸ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG1-6. Develop a best value approach to purchasing practices for developing requests for proposals and invitations to bid. ³⁹ (Suggested Target- June 2024).

LG1-7. Increase the threshold for formal bids from \$50K to \$100K and increase the threshold for micro-purchases to \$5K. ⁴⁰ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG1-8. Define a road map for the County's digital transformation with the Clerk of Court. The County should identify who is the equivalent of a Chief Information Officer between the organizations and define a prioritized strategy for software purchases (such as additional MUNIS™ modules) to improve productivity and efficiency. For the current software modules purchased from MUNIS, assign application owners that champion innovative uses of the software, identify productivity enhancements, develop changes to policy and procedures to exploit the software, and control the permission settings for their application. ⁴¹ (Suggested Target – June 2025)

LG1-9. Define a Facilities Master Plan for County facilities that includes a schedule of facility revitalization/remodeling efforts for budget planning. For example, every 15 years project a facility update with a threshold of \$200,000. The master plan should identify facility shortfalls, highlight safety issues to be resolved, and propose long-range solutions for the various departmental space issues and physical constraints for departments. ⁴² (Suggested Target – February 2024)

LG1-10. Centralize the collection and management of digital as-built drawings of County facilities and update the drawings as changes are made. In addition, capital projects and major structure remodeling efforts should have a contractual requirement to deliver final drawings to the County reflecting change orders and modifications. ⁴³ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG1-11. The County initiative to centralize engineering drives the need for the County Administrator to define its approach to matrix organizational management for the engineering staff and any other function that is centralized. Defining matrix management roles and responsibilities is key to success with assigning engineers to provide expertise to projects and dedicated support to planning and development. ⁴⁴ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-12. Planning and Development should complete the review and update of the Walton County Comprehensive Plan on schedule. Areas that received negative feedback within the public survey should be addressed first. ⁴⁵ (Suggested Target – June 2025)

LG1-13. Human Resources should develop a formal succession plan process with policy and procedures that is acceptable within the boundaries of current labor law and equal opportunity requirements. ⁴⁶ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-14. The County Administrator should decide on which software applications will be used within functional areas to improve productivity and efficiency. This requires research on which MUNIS modules need to be purchased if the County continues towards the use of MUNIS. This research and decision effort must address departmental dependence on legacy applications such as ePermit™ and InterGov™ which reduces information sharing between functional areas and productivity. ⁴⁷ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-15. The signature authority for the Public Works Director should be increased to \$50,000 from the current \$10,000 level. Retaining the signature authority at the current level results in project delays due to the requirement for Board of County Commissioners approval. ⁴⁸ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-16. Reduce the number of professional engineering firms selected through the Competitive Consultant Negotiation Act (CCNA) from 12 to 6. In addition, establish strong contract management and administration policy and procedures that include task performance assessments. CCNA consultants that deliver poor scheduling, inaccurate estimates, cost overruns, excessive change orders, and/or break contract timing requirements should be addressed in formal written feedback and contractually prevented from competing for future CCNA procurement actions. ⁴⁹ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

LG1-17. Coupled with the reduction in CCNA contracted consultants, the County's in-house capabilities for design, project management, and Computer-Aided Design (CAD) support should be increased over several fiscal years. The excessive number of CCNA engineering firms supporting the County prevents public works and engineering from growing and retaining their skills and the County's CAD abilities suffer as well. ⁵⁰ (Suggested Target – June 2026)

LG1-18. Consider placement of the Veterans Services Office in a central County location within a space that is more accessible by the public. ⁵¹ (Suggested Target- June 2024)

LG1-19. Establish a standard template for intergovernmental agreements for use of County facilities. The new agreement template should provide clarity on cost reimbursement for repairs and capital improvements from other governmental tenants in County facilities. Once established, start the renegotiation process and continue until all agreements are updated. ⁵² (Suggested Target – June 2026)

LG1-20. Purchasing should pursue the use of reverse auctions for large recurring bulk procurements and other procurements that fit the reverse auction approach. ⁵³ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG1-21. Human Resources, guided by Emergency Management, should establish emergency operations tasks for employees in their job descriptions and deliver and track the training/equipment training necessary to support emergency operations tasks during declared emergencies. ⁵⁴ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-22. Emergency Management should conduct exercises before hurricane season to establish example emergency operations such as logistic support areas, provide orientation to the County employees tasked to support the emergency operations, and conduct training on disaster recovery tasks. ⁵⁵ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-23. The County should pursue an expanded Emergency Operations Center for combined operations with the Walton County Sheriff's Office to include the 911 Center. Once the new facility is on-line, the current Emergency Operations Center should be updated to support back up operations. ⁵⁶ (Suggested Target – June 2026)

LG1-24. Faced with road repair/construction costs that can be as much as \$1,000,000 per mile and an inability to pass a sales tax for road improvements, the County should conduct a feasibility/cost-benefit study to determine if a County road repair/construction function should be established. This function would be comprised of road construction personnel along with the equipment suite normally used by road construction contractors. If established, county roads could be repaired/improved at much less cost and enterprise fund support could be offered to cities during periods of idle time. ⁵⁷ (Suggested Target – June 2026)

LG1-25. The Chief Financial Officer should develop a County budget document that meets Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) standards ⁵⁸ (Suggested Target – October 2023)

LG1-26. Pursue an on-site MUNIS consultant effort across all areas to identify training gaps, areas where software use must be improved, and areas where business rules in the software are not exploited for improved efficiency and productivity. ⁵⁹ (Suggested Target- August 2023)

LG1-27. Capture requirements and define a project plan for all Walton County facilities to be upgraded to the mandates of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) ⁶⁰(Suggested Target – June 2026)

LG1-28. Examine alternatives for organizational placement of the Beach Ambassador Program by considering fully funding the program by an annual grant from the Friends of South Walton Sea Turtle not-for-profit organization. The grant would cover expenses now paid by directly hiring County employees and associated operational expenses. (Suggested Target – July 2024)

LG1-29. The Tourism Development Council should refine their marketing and advertising program with the goal to raise the Average Daily Rental Rate for all 17,000 rental units. (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG1-30. Each County department should develop a mission statement which aligns with the new Walton County Mission Statement. (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-31. Provide training to all managers and supervisors on how to develop simply phrased, measurable, easy to track, specific, and time-bound (SMART) goals. In addition, the training should include how to identify or develop metrics, key performance indicators, and key result indicators for their area of responsibility. ⁶¹ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-32. Human Resources should establish a system to track employee training that can build in-house online training courses. (A MUNIS module may be available for tracking training). This should receive high priority emphasis for knowledge preservation, building skills and tracking regulatory requirements. (Suggested Target-June 2024)

LG1-33. Develop a risk management function that is responsible for safety management, management of worker compensation claims, and insurance claim management. Immediately update the Walton County Safety Manual to include environmental compliance (priority to waste stream management and hazardous waste management) and health regulation compliance to cover annual hearing tests for employees exposed to high decibel equipment, hazardous communication, and exposure to blood borne pathogens. Initial and annual hazardous communication and blood borne pathogen training should be developed, deployed, and tracked. As part of the revitalization of the safety program, assign safety management additional duties to key employees in each department. For field operations, consider adopting an internal quality control program that uses quality assessors to performing assessments of proper work procedures and safety and regulatory compliance. (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG1-34. Develop a litigation status summary document that is updated monthly for controlled use by the County Commissioners and County Administrator. The summary should include a presentation of legal costs to date for each case. (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG1-35. Develop policy and procedures to capture costs for each capital project from the MUNIS workorder system, to include labor costs, fringe benefit costs, equipment use costs, leased equipment costs, material costs, etc. The use of project codes to capture MUNIS inputs and accounting entries is recommended. (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG1-36. Continue the momentum to develop a multi-year budget forecast coupled with a five-year capital improvement budget. (Suggested Target – Feb 2024)

LG1-37. Develop a better approach to determine the millage allocation to the Walton County Sheriff's Office. Instead of a percentage allocation consider using a per capita budget allocation. (Suggested Target – October 2026)

LG1-38: Develop and implement a departmental annual reporting system to manage and evaluate department successes of goal achievements, actions accomplished, and improvements needed during an annual meeting that includes all departments. See Appendix 1 for an example of a suggested report format to provide consistency between departments.⁶² (Suggested Target – October 2023)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA : PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION (LG2)

KEEP THE PUBLIC INFORMED IN WAYS THAT THEY WANT TO RECEIVE INFORMATION

LG2-1. Develop, publish, and distribute educational pamphlets or brochures that define how County sales taxes and bed taxes are used in the Walton County budget process. Postal mailings following the County Property Appraiser example should be considered for distribution. ⁶³ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

LG2-2. Walton County should consider expanding its Geospatial Information System (GIS) role to incorporate the GIS support for each city using an enterprise fund approach or intergovernmental agreements. This will solve the GIS information gaps between the county and cities and reduce competition for expertise. ⁶⁴ (Suggested Target – June 2026)

LG2-3. The County should institute formal training for public record management and Florida in the Sunshine Law training for all County employees, its elected officials and contracted personnel serving in an inherently government function. In addition, a strong ethics code should be deployed for all County employees and elected officials. ⁶⁵ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

LG2-4. The County should transition the current Geospatial Information System to Next-Gen 911 (NG911 standards that will incorporate road centerlines, address points, and other critical data). ⁶⁶ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG2-5. The public survey suggested that the County Commissioners should complete quarterly tours of the County to address issues with the entire community. Additional public survey comments suggested Commissioners should hold town hall style meetings in their districts for information sharing. ⁶⁷ (Suggested Target – June 2023)

LG2-6. A public survey input proposed the County develop a builders permit package addressing requirements from beginning to end with residential customers in mind. ⁶⁸ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

LG2-7. The County Administrator should consider a master information center for access by the public that provides insight to project status, business permits, development orders, etc. Additionally, the County should leverage technology to capture public comment on Board of County Commissioners agenda items for consideration before the Commissioners vote on an issue. ⁶⁹ (Suggested Target – June 2024)

LG2-8. The County should examine the full capabilities and potential of the Everbridge Emergency Notification System. Area targeting can be used for announcements from the system. The system can be used to improve communication with citizens for a multitude of topics. A formal campaign to register citizen households to receive Everbridge notifications should be executed by the County Public Information Officer and Emergency Management. ⁷⁰ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

LG2-9. Strive to improve communication between members of the Tourism Development Council (TDC) and the Board of County Commissioners by going beyond having one County Commissioner sit on the TDC. ⁷¹ (Suggested Target – December 2023)

LG2-10. The Tourism Development Council (TDC) should improve their communication with the citizens of Walton County concerning TDC Strategic Plan goals and objectives. ⁷² (Suggested Target – December 2023)

LG2-11. To ensure that County public communications are compliant with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements, build formal checklists of required actions for completion by the Public Information Officer and Emergency Management. Many counties have already developed these and some have automated them. (Suggested Target – May 2023)

LG2-12. Coordinate with the Walton County Sheriff's Office during their procurement of next generation communications technology to identify County department requirements and budget costs. (Suggested Target- June 2023)

APPENDIX 1

Request Letter from Walton County Board of County Commissioners

WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
Board of County Commissioners

Boots McCormick, District 1
Danny Glidewell, District 2, Vice-Chair
Michael Barker, District 3, Chair
Trey Nick, District 4
Tony Anderson, District 5



P.O. Box 1355
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435
Phone: (850) 892-8155
Fax: (850) 892-8454
www.co.walton.fl.us

January 6, 2022

Institute for Senior Professionals
Northwest Florida State College
4173 Whitetail Circle
Niceville, FL 32578

Dear Mr. Edenborough:

Please be advised that the Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, during their regular session on October 26, 2021, unanimously approved to proceed with developing a strategic plan for Walton County. The Board realizes the need for such a plan which will aid in future master planning as well as be a guiding document during the budget process for years to come.

We are requesting the assistance from the Institute for Senior Professionals to expound upon the Pride Preservation and Conservation Mission Statement and develop a strategic plan for Walton County.

Your assistance in this endeavor would greatly be appreciated. If you so choose to help with this task, you may contact Mrs. Dede Hinote, Deputy Administrator, she will be the point of contact for the County regarding this project. Mrs. Hinote may be reached at 850-951-3706 or by email hindedede@co.walton.fl.us.

Thank you for your consideration and we await your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Barker".

Michael D. Barker, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
Walton County, FL

APPENDIX 2

Institute for Senior Professionals Project Team Members

ISP Member	Expertise Areas
Mike Dwyer	Governmental relations, economic development
Don Eames	Transportation
Neville Edenborough	Quality systems and engineering
Philip Hoge	Disaster recovery, economic development, public works
Jill Hogle	Local government environmental program management, environmental protection, research, and analysis
Richard Kunkel	Program evaluation, policy development
Randy Powers	Public policy analysis, state legislature analysis, state governmental relations, higher education advocacy
Richard Schoditsch	Legal
Wayne Smith	Strategic planning, organizational improvement, performance management
Ted Spring	Higher education, community and technical college management
David Underwood	Operations management, organizational development, shared services management

APPENDIX 3

Functional Areas Interviewed by the ISP Team

County Administrator	Interim County Administrator and Interim Deputy County Administrator
Administration	Technology/Media Manager
	Public Information Specialist
	Special Projects Manager
Human Resources	Human Resources Director
Purchasing	Purchasing Manager
Tourism Development Council	Director of Tourism
Beach Operations	Director
Mosquito Control	Mosquito Control Manager
Facilities Maintenance and Custodial	Facilities Director
Emergency Management	Director
Environmental Services	Environmental Manager
Solid Waste	Solid Waste Director
Engineering	County Engineer
Planning & Development	Planning Director
Public Works	Public Works Director and Engineering
Building Department	Building Official
County Shop and Fleet Maintenance	Fleet Manager
Office of Management and Budget	Chief Financial Officer
Parks and Recreation	Director
Code Compliance	Director
Geospatial Information Systems	GIS Manager
Housing & Urban Development	Housing Director
County Probation	Probation Manager
Library	Library Director
Veteran Services	Veteran Services Manager

APPENDIX 4

Recommended Status Reporting

The Institute for Senior Professionals recommends adoption of a process for annual reporting of achievements and measured accomplishment of each Department's written goal(s)

Department Name		
Goal #1		
Measurable Action	Measured Outcome	Status

The "Status" column may be simplified to:

X (colored green) indicates the Goal's action has been met (as demonstrated by the measured outcome(s))

X (colored red) indicates measured outcome(s) not met

P (colored blue) indicates "in process" (example: a plan has been developed but not yet approved or implemented)

Hypothetical Example:

Department Name: Human Resources		
Goal #1 Define and develop a compensation model that addresses the variety of compensation issues such as location pay across functional areas		
Measurable Action	Measured Outcome	Status
Conduct a compensation and classification study with at least four other governmental entities.	Four studies completed with governmental entities.	X
Conduct a compensation and classification study within 5 departments within Walton County in 90 days	Studies completed with 3 departments. Extension of the suspense date required.	X
Develop a compensation model that addresses the variety of compensation issues.	Compensation model completed but not yet approved by management.	P

APPENDIX 5

Recommendation Sources

Provides the sources of information used to develop the recommended strategic goal (Interview, public survey, ISP recommendation, subject matter expert, professional books or publications, etc.)

- ¹ Recommendation based on ISP comparison of economic development capabilities and deployed resources of Walton County and Okaloosa County.
- ² Recommendation based on ISP member observations of business incubator development across Florida and in other states.
- ³ Recommendation based on ISP comparison of industrial park development to “shovel ready” status across local counties. ISP noted two Walton County Strategic Goals for FY2021-2022 which were very similar. First, *“Move to complete the required infrastructure, execution of a target market analysis for the property located within the Opportunity Zone.”* Second, *“Move to complete the required infrastructure needs to promote business opportunities along Highway 90.”*
- ⁴ Recommendation based on ISP knowledge of smart factory concepts used in the military, across the United States and in Europe following the Industry 4.0 model.
- ⁵ Recommendation based on ISP business experience and the SBA Preview HUBZone Map effective July 1, 2023.
- ⁶ The ISP referred to the Walton County Economic Development Alliance report, “Baseline Economic Profile”, (October 2022) conducted by The Balmoral Group.
- ⁷ The comments were highlighted in multiple inputs to the public survey conducted by the county and the ISP.
- ⁸ The comments were pulled from multiple inputs to the public survey conducted by the County and the ISP.
- ⁹ Lack of affordable housing was a top concern addressed in public responses to the County survey.
- ¹⁰ This suggested goal is a summation by the ISP of multiple inputs from the public through the survey and examination of the Long-Range Transportation Strategy.
- ¹¹ Citizen feedback within the County and ISP survey highlighted the lack of public education on the County’s efforts to establish public transportation. Based on observations of the current public transportation effort and random sampling of where

south Walton workers travel from, the ISP recommends seeking worker input to help shape public transportation needs.

¹² Public input to the County and ISP survey was very heavy in favor of vocational training and trade school expansion and development.

¹³ ISP recommendation based on discussions with the Housing Department, exploring the initiatives underway by architecture schools such as Auburn University's Rural Studio concept housing (ruralstudio.org) and other university 3D dwelling project research.

¹⁴ Multiple inputs on trade and technician shortfalls were highlighted in the public survey. The ISP interview with the County Facilities Department also pointed out the difficulty in acquiring talent in the trades needed to sustain the large number of County facilities.

¹⁵ The public declaration to retain the "beach town" character of Walton County and to avoid transformation into the equal of Panama City Beach or Destin was recorded through multiple inputs captured with the Walton County and ISP public survey on the strategic priority areas.

¹⁶ ISP noted a Walton County Strategic Goal for FY2021-2022 stating, "*Continue to preserve and enhance the physical environment of Walton County.*"

¹⁷ ISP recommendation from observation of other County public environmental awareness efforts.

¹⁸ ISP recommendation following best practices within the local government environmental community.

¹⁹ Recommendation from wetland data presentation discussion with GIS and public survey comments on wetland encroachment concerns.

²⁰ Respondents to the public survey expressed concern about the pollution of Choctawhatchee Bay. The public is not informed of the Bay's pollution levels. The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance takes recurring measurement of bay water and analyses it for pollution. This information should be offered to the public, perhaps via the GIS system.

²¹ ISP recommendation based on examination of approaches to solving major infrastructure challenges by other counties or cities. The ISP noted other governmental organizations use master plans for transportation; city redevelopment; sustainability; parks, recreation, and open spaces; airports, and facilities.

²² Recommendation captured in interviews with County departments and environmental management. ISP noted a Walton County Strategic Goal for FY2021-2022 to "*Continue to develop a Stormwater Master Plan for the County.*"

²³ Recommendation documented in interviews with Planning and Development. ISP noted a Walton County Strategic Goal for FY 2021-2022, “Continue to develop and monitor a county-wide transportation system through a comprehensive Mobility Plan.”

²⁴ During the ISP interviews, this strategic goal was not mentioned by anyone. Thus, we are assuming it was not worked on.

²⁵ ISP recommendation based on examination of Smart City and Smart County initiatives across the United States. Tag recognition technology is deployed by the Walton County Sheriff’s Office. Telehealth is being embraced across the country for rural areas.

²⁶ Recommendation captured in interviews with Solid Waste and Beach Operations. This should be a high priority strategic action to improve collection of waste reduce transportation of the collected waste.

²⁷ ISP recommendation based on the public survey inputs and discussions with Solid Waste.

²⁸ Recommendation captured during interview with Solid Waste along with discussion on what other Counties in the region are doing to address recycling. The public survey of the strategic priority areas attracted multiple comments on the public’s desire for recycling beyond the recycling trailers currently used by the County.

²⁹ The top concerns expressed by the public in the public survey for the safe, clean, prideful communities’ strategic priority area were parking, traffic, congestion, and low-speed vehicles.

³⁰ In the public survey, multiple inputs addressed the need for enhancements driven by the transition to more families in south Walton. The public suggestions included youth-oriented facilities, community centers and community pools.

³¹ ISP recommendation based on the interview with the Parks and Recreation Director. The County has a multitude of parks of different sizes and types. There is no standard to ensure consistent park development and sustainment.

³² ISP recommendation based on member environmental expertise at the State level.

³³ ISP recommendation from summarizing the public commentary on tourism development in north Walton County.

³⁴ Recommendation by Interim County Administrator and Interim Deputy County Administrator, addressed in interviews.

³⁵ ISP recommendation based on interview with Board of County Commissioners Chair and Interim County Administrator. To develop a customer service culture, the ISP recommends the book, *“The New Gold Standard: 5 Leadership Principles for Creating a Legendary Customer Experience Courtesy of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company”*, (2008), by Joseph A. Michelli, McGraw-Hill.

³⁶ ISP recommendation based on interviews with Human Resources and Interim County Administrator.

³⁷ ISP recommendation based on interviews with Human Resources and Interim County Administrator. A compensation study was initiated by the County to help establish pay equity with other governmental entities. However, a compensation model is still needed to help define where employees should be percentile-wise in the model based on years of service, knowledge, certifications, etc.

³⁸ ISP recommendation based on interviews with Interim Deputy County Administrator and Human Resources. With an aging workforce, knowledge preservation should be elevated as a priority. The ISP recommends supervisor/manager evaluations grade process documentation development and sustainment.

³⁹ ISP recommendation based on interview with Purchasing. While Walton County has a solid invitation to bid approach and tailors each request for proposal to the need, best value procurement practices are not used. The National Institute for Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) shares guidance on use of best value purchasing and template examples for legal review.

⁴⁰ ISP Recommendation based on interview with Purchasing and comparison of threshold values used by peer counties across Florida. This will enable agility and quicker purchasing response to Walton County needs. Micro purchase practices have been refreshed by Walton County to enhance internal control setting the stage for increasing the threshold.

⁴¹ ISP Recommendation based on interviews throughout the entire organization. A list of software being used for County operations and a roadmap of modules needed to enhance productivity and efficiency is lacking. Individual departments are examining the various capabilities of MUNIS modules which would enhance operations. Legacy applications and islands of information exist throughout the county. The lack of software strategic planning is hindering the digital transformation of the County.

⁴² ISP recommendation based on interviews with the Facilities Department and other County departments. The lack of facility master planning results in ad hoc decisions for space allocation. By integrating a master schedule of remodeling or revitalization projections, a capital budget for facility improvements can be projected beyond two years. ISP noted a Walton County Strategic Goals in FY 2021-2022 to *“Develop a more in-depth Capital Improvements Plan including County building facilities and future growth needs.”*

43 ISP recommendation from discussions with facility management on organization and control of facility drawings.

44 ISP recommendation based on Operational Inspector Report and interviews with Engineering and Planning & Development. Insight to developing matrix management processes and policy can be found within *“Leadership in Project Management: Leading People and Projects to Success”*, (2013) by Mohit Arora and Haig Baronikian, Leadership Publishing House.

45 ISP recommendation based on interview with Planning and Development. The public survey by the County and the ISP identified multiple areas of concern with the comprehensive plan.

46 Recommendation from ISP based on observation of an aging workforce and lack of action to preserve employee knowledge. Interviews revealed that succession planning was addressed but the County’s approach seems non-standardized, informal, and ad hoc in nature. A formal process for succession planning is needed which is legally acceptable within current labor law and equal opportunity mandates.

47 ISP recommendation based on interviews with multiple areas where MUNIS was addressed along with ePermit and Intergov.

48 Recommendation captured within functional area interviews and examination of Public Works processes.

49 ISP recommendation based on interviews with Purchasing, Engineering and Public Works. Since CCNA procurements are unique to Florida, benchmarking should be accomplished with other Florida counties to capture adopted contract administration and management policies and procedures, along with CCNA contract language to prevent poor performing CCNA firms from competing for future CCNA procurements.

50 ISP recommendation aligned with CCNA consultant reduction which is based on interviews with departments on current capabilities.

51 The Veteran’s Services office is hidden from the public with access controlled by another department. The office has experienced unstable office relocations in the past. Relocation with a stable, dedicated space to the Freeport area in the center of the County should be considered.

52 Based on ISP interviews, intergovernmental agreements for County owned facilities used by other governmental organizations are not standardized and have significant differences due to negotiations. Repairs or improvements that probably should be paid for by the tenant or executed at the request of the tenant may not be reimbursed.

53 The use of Reverse Auctions to drive vendor pricing downward is a developing procurement practice in other County governments. Use of the process will require legal

and Board of County Commissioners approval. ISP recommends examining the reverse auction tool offered for free by Public Purchase.

⁵⁴ ISP recommendation based on interview with Emergency Management and examination of Emergency Management strategic goals. In a disaster recovery, employees will be asked to support a variety of operations such as logistics support areas. This will require training on equipment and certain skills. The assignment of such emergency duties should be documented in the job descriptions and one-time and recurring training tracked by Human Resources. This will help define mission essential positions as well.

⁵⁵ ISP recommendation based on interview with Emergency Management and lessons learned from hurricane recovery in southwest Florida in FY 2022-2023.

⁵⁶ ISP recommendation based on member understanding of Okaloosa County's Emergency Operations Center as a benchmark.

⁵⁷ Conceptual suggestion from the ISP based on the recent denial of the one-cent sales tax for road improvements. The ISP noted the Walton County Strategic Goal for FY2021-2022, *Continue building confidence in Walton County government through sound financial management including the development of cost/benefit options for road maintenance and clarifying and enhancing the policies of the county, including a review of current policies to ensure they are enforceable.*

⁵⁸ Based on interview with the Walton County Chief Financial Officer

⁵⁹ Recommendation based on ISP experience with public sector software and from interview questions on how MUNIS was implemented within the County.

⁶⁰ Recommendation for making County buildings ADA compliant was received as a citizen input through the public survey.

⁶¹ An ISP recommendation for developing Key Performance Indicators and other metrics for measuring success is the book *"Key Performance Indicators: Developing, implementing and using Winning KPIs,"* (2010), David Parmenter, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ.

⁶² ISP recommendation based on strategic planning best practices and experience in other governmental organizations.

⁶³ ISP recommendation based on multiple public survey comments highlighting the public's misperception of how sales taxes and bed taxes can be applied to the Walton County budget.

⁶⁴ Based on interview with the GIS functional area and examination of GIS data available to the public by the County and the cities within Walton County. One of the needs voiced in the public survey was the inability of citizens to go to one site to obtain

the total picture of projects by the cities and the County. Centralizing GIS operations under the County could solve this citizen issue since project data for the County is available on its GIS maps.

⁶⁵ The public survey highlighted the public's call for enhanced transparency and accountability. In addition, the public survey inputs suggested adopting a strong ethics code and enforcing it.

⁶⁶ The transition of the current GIS system data to Next-Gen 911 (NG911 standards) was addressed by the GIS staff in the interview with the ISP.

⁶⁷ A public survey input suggested one way to bridge the divide between north and south Walton County is for County Commissioners to complete quarterly tours of the County to address issues with citizens.

⁶⁸ A citizen input from the public survey stated "Walton County is the most exhausting Florida county to build in." The survey input suggested a complete builders permit package from beginning to end for residential customers.

⁶⁹ This is an ISP recommendation based on public survey respondent comments on communication from the Board of County Commissioners to the public.

⁷⁰ This ISP recommendation was developed based on public comments within the public survey that citizens are not receiving information about things such as controlled burns, flash floods, etc. Citizens can no longer depend on radio communications due to lack of local stations, and television due to lack of station focus on Walton County. This issue is a critical area for the north portion of Walton County.

⁷¹ From interviews with Tourism Department.

⁷² From interviews with Tourism Department.