

THE CITY OF COCONUT CREEK
INTERVIEW RESULTS



VISION 2030



[Vision 2030 Community Engagement]

Vision 2030 is the long-range strategic plan for the City of Coconut Creek. As part of the overall community engagement, several approaches were used to gather feedback:

1. Initial community survey in 2020
2. Initial community interviews in 2020
3. Gathering of feedback at the 2020 Butterfly Festival
4. Ongoing social media posts
5. Website engagement
6. A 2021 community survey
7. Community interviews in 2021
8. Two Community Meetings
 - a. Visioning session
 - b. Plan Review session
9. Meetings of a volunteer Advisory Group to guide the plan
10. Public Commissioner meetings for updates and adoption

[Interview Process]

The City of Coconut Creek identified twenty-four (24) individuals to be interviewed, creating the list to ensure inclusion and diversity across a broad range of determinants. The City Manager sent a specific email invitation to each person on the list. After that point, each person was sent five reminder emails and received two personal phone calls to remind them to participate in the interview. Sixteen (16) individuals were a part of the process.

[Personal Interview Overview]

For every strategic plan, it is helpful to get feedback from partners, community members, clients and patrons of all ages, people who have had direct interaction with Coconut Creek, and others in the community. That broad range of thoughts and feedback can inform areas of the Strategic Plan such as the Key Areas of Focus, Goals, Outcomes and priorities for the future.

This is a summary of the personal interviews that were conducted with community members selected because of their unique relationship with the Coconut Creek.

The interviews were conducted virtually, by phone, and through email. There were a standard set of questions:

1. What are you most *proud* of when you talk with friends or family about the City of Coconut Creek as your home, your place of work, your schools, quality of life, etc.?

The most common answers were the amazing parks, the great recreation programming, family events such as the Butterfly Festival, the Promenade, and the casino development.

2. What would you say are the top 1-3 major accomplishments or “big wins” for Coconut Creek, as your community?

The Promenade, light industrial buildings/jobs, new hotels, and the casino development were also high on this list.

3. How is the City of Coconut Creek specifically unique and different than surrounding cities?

Answers included the green open spaces, the welcoming and friendly staff and government, the cleanliness of the City and the safety.

4. What are some services or approaches that Coconut Creek, as an organization, does NOT offer, may not want to offer, or is not willing or able to fund but maybe we should consider?

The interviewees were all aware of the Downtown/Main Street concept and strongly supported the idea of creating a downtown for Coconut Creek that was friendly, welcoming, and pedestrian oriented.

5. What is the collective “culture” of Coconut Creek as a community (government) like? What practices or group norms do you notice? Is the culture shifting/transitioning? What are the challenges with those shifting norms?

Positive feedback to this question indicated that the government is very easy to work with, and forward thinking in the areas of sustainability. The staff is considered very professional. The only concern expressed was that the Commissioners may not accurately reflect the community demographics.

6. Looking ahead to 2030, what is it that you would like to see in the community? What role do you see the City of Coconut Creek playing in accomplishing that wish? What do you see as the biggest obstacles to making that happen?

The answers in this category can loosely be organized into a sense of cultural opportunities: amphitheaters, museums, a creative collective of galleries and functions.

7. Based on that vision for the future, where would you recommend that the City focus their resources and time? What are those biggest opportunities or priorities moving forward? (Big picture areas or ideas, strategic goal level is fine)

Smart growth that is thoughtful and developed to allow the sense of a small town to flourish was a common theme in the answers to this question. It does appear that the community wishes to keep the single-family development approach as the main goal for housing, although some concerns were expressed about the cost of housing

not allowing new families to move to Coconut Creek. The Main Street development was consistently mentioned. Technology with a view to the future was another common theme.

Because the interviews are by nature conversations, each answer led to more in-depth conversations and questions. When information was offered, follow up questions to gain more detail, suggestions and thoughts were asked.

This report focuses ONLY on the results from those interviews, which does mean that this is a very small segment of the overall information. However, it is also the most detailed and informative, since the interviews took place in person, on the phone and via email allowing for more in-depth conversations and follow up questions.

All the conversations were completely confidential, so the information in this report has been compiled into the most common themes, and often the language was adapted to have context and make more sense in the written form. These are NOT recommendations, nor are they suggestions.

[Key Themes]

The key themes in the interviews echo the themes in the community survey as well as the themes from the community visioning session. There is a strong continuity of what people that live, work, and play in Coconut Creek want to see in the future, and some very specific ideas about how that might be accomplished. In total, the interviews align with the community feedback.

[Theme One: High Performing Organization]

Recognition of the professionalism and high quality of staff was a common theme in the answers. The police department was often mentioned for their positive and community-based approach, and the value of the communications team was also mentioned. The government was viewed as easy to work with, welcoming and open across all categories – from developers to business owners to residents.

[Theme Two: Value Open and Green Space]

Often mentioned was the designation as a Tree City as well as the preservation of the open space, which is a unique feature for Coconut Creek. The respondents often cited the amazing parks (both in number, quality, and amenities) as their favorite part of the City.

[Theme Three: Value Small Town Feel]

This is a constant theme in Coconut Creek. It was expressed in three main ways:

1. That people are diverse, welcoming, and friendly
2. That the City feels small in terms of the built environment (no multi story skyscrapers, for example)
3. That the City neighborhoods are strongly connected and in some cases are safe to walk and bike.

The concerns expressed here fell into the category of traffic as well as the growth in population and potential housing developments that may change the look of the City as well as the feel.

[Theme Four: Concern for Smart Growth]

This is an overarching theme that ties into the rest of the key themes. There was no specific issue identified other than the concern, and that zoning would be beneficial to support intentional, deliberate, and smart growth in the future. A sub theme here was the desire to limit growth by purchasing more open space to limit development.

[Theme Five: Housing Needs and Issues]

The interviews brought out the issue of housing, and single-family housing was clearly the preferred development approach. There is a realization that single family housing is more expensive (not only to purchase as a consumer but for the City to service) but the respondents stated that there were enough other types of housing (both within the City and immediately adjacent) to address affordable housing needs. The concept of single-family housing seemed to tie strongly to limiting growth in population, restricting traffic issues, and keeping the small-town quality of life.

[Theme Six: Sustainability as a Focus]

In addition to the value of open/green space, the respondents stated that the recycling program was important as was a view to the future of sustainability: electric vehicles and solar/wind power as alternatives.

[Summary]

Again, it should be noted that **this is one part of many types of feedback and opinion**, and that interviews do offer far more in-depth opportunities to communicate than some other options. The information was offered confidentially to help the City of Coconut Creek improve strategically over the coming years.

For questions or comments, please contact Sheryl Trent at SBrand Solutions: sheryl@sbrandsolutions.com or (970) 208-6633.