

Weaknesses (351)

- Infrastructure (128 – 36%)
 - Parking (42)
 - Traffic (42)
 - Poor Public Transportation (9)
 - Water Supply (7)
- Planning & Development Issues (64 – 18%)
 - Downtown Development (18)
 - The Beach (14)
 - Affordable Housing (8)
 - Codes (7)
- Facilities (60 – 17%)
 - Marinas (7)
 - No Arts District (6)
 - No Museums (5)
 - No Movie Theaters (4)
- Social & Community Issues (46 – 13%)
 - Senior Activities (7)
 - Scientology (6)
 - Neighborhood Issues (6)
 - Homeless (5)
- Administrative Issues (24 – 7%)
 - Council Communication (5)
- Financial & Economic Issues (22 – 6%)
 - High Taxes (6)
 - Lack of Jobs (5)
- Environmental & Aesthetic Issues (7 – 2%)



Analysis

Three primary categories dominate the list of perceived Weaknesses. Just as **Infrastructure** received kudos as a perceived Strength of the community, it was also perceived as a dominant weakness, accounting for nearly two-fifths (38%) of all the listed items. Within this category, the primary areas of concern relate to automobiles, both in motion and at rest. **Traffic** and **Parking** each received 13% of the total votes as a perceived weakness within the community. Concerns about Traffic are spread about the entire community, while concerns about parking focus primarily on the Downtown and Clearwater Beach.

Planning & Development issues were the second highest concern among the listed Weaknesses, accounting for almost one-fifth (18%) of the listed items. Not surprisingly, issues related to the **Downtown** (6% of total votes) and the **Beach** (4% of total votes) dominated this category. The Downtown is seen as lacking many needed and desired amenities such as movie theaters, restaurants and boutiques, while the Beach is perceived as being over-developed and increasingly congested. The lack of **Affordable Housing** (however that might be defined) and the enforcement (or lack) of **Buildings Codes** were also seen as key issues.

The lack of **Facilities** was a dominant third ranked item, with 17% of the votes. The over-whelming concern was with the lack of what might be perceived as “Leisure-Time” facilities as defined in the category of Strengths. Chief amongst there were the lack of Marina facilities (recreation) and the lack of cultural facilities such as museums, as well as the lack of downtown dining.

Social & Community Issues were ranked fourth, with 13% of the votes. Concerns included the lack of activities



and facilities for seniors, the presence of the Church of Scientology in the downtown, and the presence of the homeless within the community as a whole.

No other item received more than 7% of the votes. Among Administrative Issues, there was concern about lack of communication between the City Council and the community. Among Financial & Economic issues, the two primary concerns related to high taxes and the absence of higher-wage jobs.

On-line Survey

Once again, Infrastructure dominated the list of perceived Weaknesses, accounting for nearly one-third of the votes (32%), with traffic and parking issues leading the way. Social & Community issues were slightly higher in the on-line survey, coming in second with 23% of the vote. Concerns about the Church of Scientology topped this category, with eight of the 29 votes.

Planning & Development issues came in third, with 19% of the votes, again lead by concerns about the growth, the Downtown and the Beach.

Summary

Summarizing the Weaknesses, one sees a community that is concerned about Infrastructure, particularly as it relates to Transportation, both in terms of vehicle Traffic and the availability of Parking. Neither of these concerns is unusual, particularly in a community that is growing and redeveloping. Nonetheless, their primacy on the list of perceived Weaknesses indicates that this is an area that needs to receive attention from City leadership.

In keeping with Clearwater's on-going growth and redevelopment, residents are concerned about issues relating to Planning and Development. In general, these concerns focus on two key areas of the community – the Downtown and the Beach. The former is seen as under-developed and somewhat stale; the latter is seen as over-developed and less and less accessible to full-time residents. This perception is reinforced by the map of Composite Weaknesses that shows a wide range of small-scale weaknesses scattered throughout the City, with significant concentrations in both the Downtown and on the Beach.

The stated concern about the lack of Affordable Housing deserves to be probed further, if only to clarify both the reality of the housing markets in Clearwater and the nature of the term "affordable." While Pinellas County, in general, is more expensive than any of the counties that lie adjacent to it, the city of Clearwater tends to include a wide range of housing prices, ranging from extremely expensive Gulf-front or Bay-front properties to much more reasonable tract houses in post-war subdivisions.

Even as the respondents fully understood the City's wealth of leisure-time options, cutting across all forms of recreation and culture, the perception exists that there are still areas where additional facilities are needed. Primary amongst these is the desire for more public marinas; this appears to be a very real concern as it becomes increasingly difficult to get permits to build new marina facilities, and many formerly-public marinas are being sold or converted into private facilities. In addition, there is concern over the absence of those facilities that might traditionally fit into an urban downtown – museums, restaurants, boutiques, etc. To this degree, this concern dovetails with the aforementioned concern about Planning & Development in the Downtown.

In general, respondents at each of the SWOT workshops tended to respond positively about the social aspects of life in Clearwater. Nonetheless, in aggregate, 13% of the respondents listed concerns that reflect the perceived lack of opportunities for seniors, the increasing presence of the Church of Scientology in the Downtown, and the increase in the number of homeless people within the community. These concerns were highlighted further in the on-line surveys. These issues all merit further investigation inasmuch as perception can outweigh reality; if the community feels that these subjects are issues, they automatically become issues, regardless of the statistical evidence one way or another.

