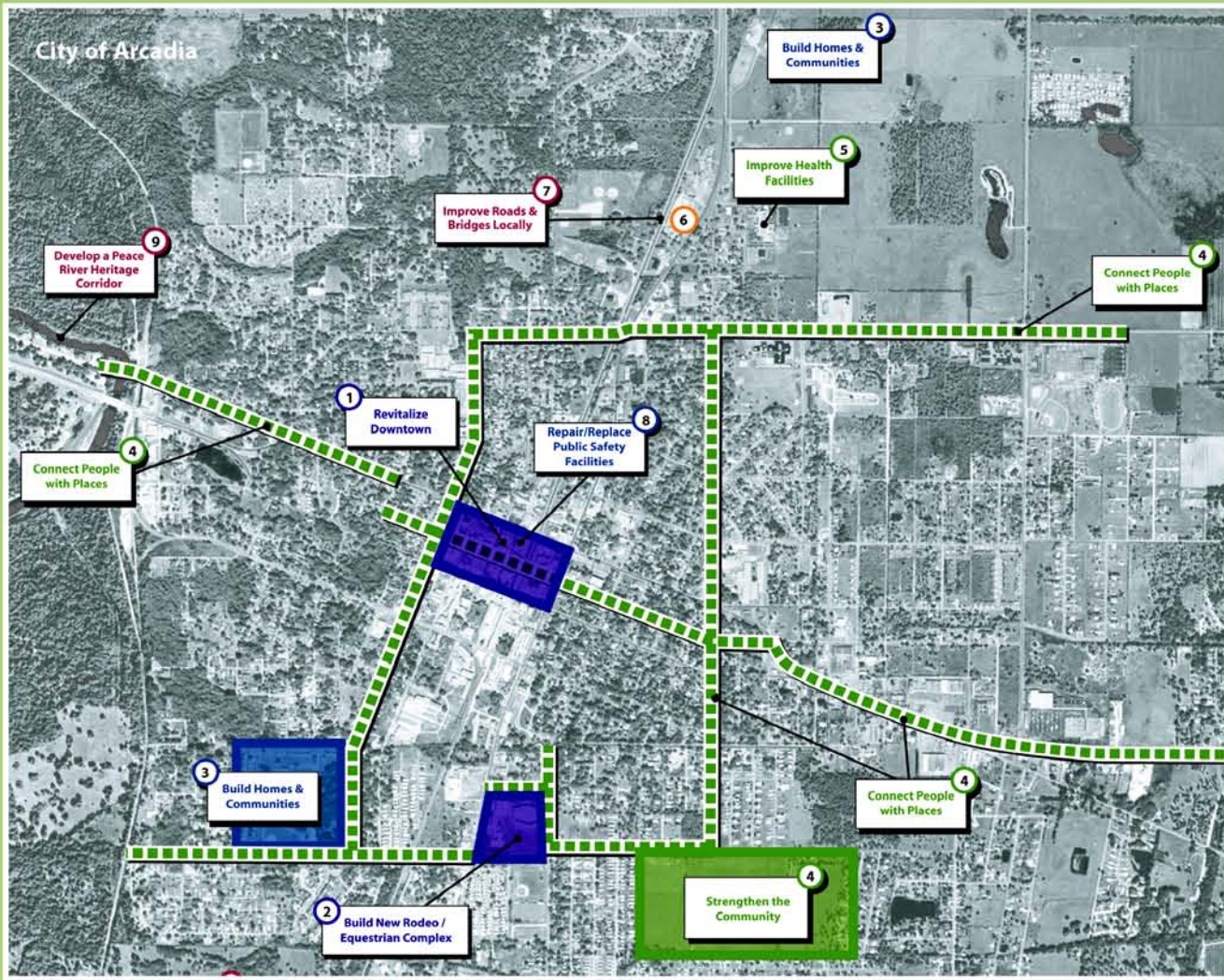


DeSoto County

Long-Term Recovery Projects



7 Improve Roads and Bridges
Expand and improve vital roadways within DeSoto County to improve mobility, increase the capacity of evacuation routes, and promote commerce.



5 Improve Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Systems
Make improvements to existing infrastructure, such as replacing the lime softening process used by the water treatment plant with an ion exchange process. Prepare plans that factor in future growth.



8 Repair/Replace Public Safety Facilities
Repair and/or replace buildings housing police, fire, emergency medical services, and emergency communications operations as joint or separate facilities that can serve as shelters.



4 Update/Develop Shelter and Evacuation Plans
Update and develop the existing Hurricane Evacuation Plan and Comprehensive Shelter Plan to consider recent growth and changes to infrastructure and demographics.



9 Promote Higher Education and Training Opportunities Locally
Identify emerging or unmet educational needs. Offer additional courses or training programs for high schools, technical centers, community colleges, and regional universities.



9 Increase Tourism: Develop a Peace River Heritage Corridor
Develop a Peace River tourism plan and marketing strategy. Establish a Peace River Heritage Association. Enhance eco-tourism and rural tourism options with property acquisitions and facility improvements.



4 Connect Regional Water Supplies
Connect member counties in the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority in a loop to increase efficient water transfers and ensure emergency water needs are met.



9 Update Local Mitigation Strategy
Reach out to community members, groups, and government agencies to prepare a new LMS, identifying potential hazards, analyzing vulnerabilities, and specifying measures to reduce future losses.



4 Assess Water Quality and Environmental Issues
Undertake an environmental assessment of the tri-county area to examine water quality, the potential environmental impact of significant projects in the region, and other key environmental issues.



9 Reinstate Tri-County Mobile Health Clinic
Reinstate Care-A-Van through a collaborative partnership with county health departments, hospitals, physicians, dentists, optometrists, volunteers, and social service agencies.



9 Reduce Wildfire Risks
Use proven mitigation techniques, developed in coordination with the Florida Department of Forestry and other partners, to reduce overall wildland fire risks and vulnerabilities.



9 Launch 2-1-1 Helpline, Website, and Volunteer Resource Center
Create a 2-1-1 Helpline and Website to provide a point of contact for needed services. Establish a comprehensive Community Volunteer Center to match volunteers and donations with agencies.



9 Develop Agricultural Water Conservation Programs
Provide incentives to increase participation in the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) programs by citrus growers to ensure water supply for future generations.



COMMUNITY VISION

Any plan should have a vision that forms the foundation for its recommendations. The various projects contained in DeSoto County's "Long-Term Recovery Plan" are based on common threads that wove their way through the discussions and meetings held over an eight-week period. The projects are included in the plan based on their long-term recovery value to the community. Hundreds of individual and group discussions were held over these several weeks, and the first community meeting brought out approximately 500 residents who provided their input on the issues affecting DeSoto County and the City of Arcadia and on what kind of future they wanted for the city and county. Many issues were raised and discussed during these meetings. The community told us that they want the City of Arcadia and DeSoto County to be:

- A progressive community that respects its historic past and agricultural economy.
- A community that understands the need for a variety of different housing types in order to meet the needs of a varied and changing population.
- A community that desires to provide opportunities for their young people in the way of jobs, education, and recreation.
- A community that recognizes the importance of the natural environment and balances the need for growth and economic development with the need to maintain and improve the quality of its natural features.
- A community that is proud of its appearance and desires to enhance and maintain its small town character.



1 Revitalize Downtown Arcadia
Promote residential housing downtown and make improvements to roads & gateways, facades & sidewalks, and connections to other neighborhoods in order to attract new businesses and economic development.



1 Implement a DeSoto County Community Redevelopment Area



1 Create a Downtown Development Plan



1 Allow and Develop 2nd Floor Housing Downtown

1 Enhance Community Appearance

1 Improve Linkages to Downtown



2 Build a New Rodeo/Equestrian Complex

Rebuilding the existing rodeo or constructing a new facility at a different location will allow the Rodeo to build on existing economic success. An equestrian center could also be added.



9 Develop a County Economic Development Strategy

Prepare a strategy to build on existing strengths such as tourism to bring more visitors to the area and encourage the creation of new jobs and businesses.



3 Build Homes and Communities
Build a variety of housing options to appeal to diverse community members, including seniors, agricultural workers, people with special needs, and low- and moderate-income residents.



3 Plan for Housing Development



3 Create Housing



4 Strengthen the Community
Identify community focal points within existing neighborhoods. Encourage development of new neighborhoods that feature a mix of housing types and price, commercial areas and community facilities. Create links between neighborhoods.



4 Connect People with Places



4 Develop Parks and Promote Recreation



5 Improve Health Facilities
Upgrade and/or replace the DeSoto Memorial Hospital and the DeSoto County Public Health Department buildings with larger, up-to-date facilities that will also serve as shelters during weather-related emergencies.



6 Improve Regional Transportation Connectivity
Expedite completion of US 17 Improvements, and create a development plan for the highway. Evaluate upgrading existing east-west highways. Create a Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RPO).



6 Improve Telecommunications and Internet Access
Develop a Telecommunication Plan and Implementation Strategy. Improve links within Florida's High Technology Corridor. Work with government agencies, utilities, and local businesses to identify telecommunications upgrades.

Recovery Value Indicators

- High
- Moderate
- Community Interest