

Downtown Sarasota SWOT Analysis

Community and Economic Development Requirements	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1. High Quality Physical Environment	A beautiful bayfront location A warm , sunny climate A highly walkable downtown Relatively safe and clean Five Points Park The round-about at Five Points Park and Ringling Payne Park Island Park	Some major streets that are not pedestrian friendly Lots of low quality architecture Lots of low quality storefronts Dirty sidewalks Mid Main Street Low quality routes/gateways into downtown Poor quality county government center Weak landscaping, limited maintenance	Relocate the post office and create a center for mid Main Street A pedestrian street or city square More fountains More flowers Better storefronts	Hurricanes Oil Spills
2. High Connectivity and Easy Accessibility	An easily accessible airport with unused capacity Easy access to the Interstate (though Fruitville needs work) A bus station Whole Foods Parking Garage The new Palm Avenue Parking Garage	Lack of connectivity with the bayfront (a state hi-way that divides downtown) Some major streets (Fruitville, Mound, Washington) that inhibit connectivity with nearby neighborhoods Limited management of on-street parking Lack of a wayfinding system Lack of good, frequent public transit	A new transit hub (Circulator , SCAT , BRT) A downtown circulator BRT A parking garage at State Street New roundabouts on Ringling from Orange to Links eliminating stoplights and creating a pedestrian friendly Main Street by-pass New round-about on 41	Loss of airlines
3. Diverse and Abundant Lifestyle Opportunities	Downtown residents	Limits on residential density	Expand density limits Develop more housing downtown, more housing options (target 1,000 new units) Expand the Pines	
4. Diverse and Abundant Work and Business Opportunities	A strong downtown employment base in government, finance and legal services County government offices City government offices A court house <i>Visit Sarasota</i> offices and visitors center Strong tourism sector	Loss of government jobs and diminished government services with loss of tax base due to recession Loss of real estate jobs due to recession Lack of large stable private employers Over-priced property inhibiting redevelopment	Recruit new businesses / jobs and encourage expansion of current businesses targeting finance, legal services and real estate Recruit more entrepreneurs A better business climate	
5. Diverse and Abundant Shopping and Entertainment Opportunities	Lots of restaurants Lots of outdoor dining An easily accessible beach Downtown supermarkets - Whole Foods and (2) Publix Some longtime local retailers Some high quality national retailers A highly successful , 52-week/year Farmers Market A bayfront park with two eating places Two downtown movie theaters Annual special events Main Street Art and Craft shows Hotels – Ritz Carlton , Hyatt , Indigo , Ranola A performance venue – Van Wezel A marina A boat launch A post office		A new conference center A 7-day fresh food market An entertainment zone A new aquarium More street music More events More venues for young people An outdoor performance venue(s) A new downtown hotel Pineapple Square A central, walkable drug store Create a set of small storefronts downtown for Ringling Museum, Mote, Cowley, etc. More sports venues (beach volleyball center for US?) Bring back minor league baseball Create an offshore cruise ship facility	Competition from Town center at 75 and Fruitville Competition from University Parkway Mall
6. Diverse and Abundant Enrichment Opportunities	Many arts destinations Sarasota Opera Sarasota Orchestra Florida Studio Theater Players Theatre Golden Apple Theater Selby Gardens Municipal Auditorium GWIZ Science Museum		Leverage the historic district Create a branch of USF , New College , Ringling or SCF downtown Create a Center for Urban Studies downtown Create a small rowing facility downtown , a branch of Benderson Park A new University of Florida branch A new downtown venue for WBTT The highly walkable Ringling Bridge	

	A Florida State branch downtown Six large downtown churches Lots of art galleries A culture of strong support for non-profit organizations (2) Downtown Schools (SMA, SSAS)		A downtown Library An historic district Expand Opera facility Create a world class Master swimming venue Locate Institute of the Ages Downtown Strengthen our arts organizations Expand/complete Payne Park – recreation and wellness center	
7. Stability, Predictability and Leadership	A CRA A BID	Fragmented government leadership Fragmented and weak downtown organizations Non-constructive conversations between pro-growth and no-growth folks A CRA that will expire in 4 years Height limits Lack of focus on Downtown from County Government Continued North/South Divide	Extend the CRA Expand city limits – east, south, Siesta Key Functional consolidation of government services Better government	Downtown vagrants Crime in Newtown Elimination of Administrative Approval City finances The impact on city operating budget with sunset of CRA (salaries of some police and planning staff paid by CRA) Loss of infrastructure investment and economic development funds with sunset of CRA. (Money left for First Street Improvements and Ringling and Main Roundabout, etc., but future opportunities such as were used for Whole Foods, Herald Tribune Building, etc. will be lost.)