

1. Business & Finance

Goal: Revitalize Newtown's economy by supporting existing businesses, working with the City and other economic development groups to attract new investments, and foster a culture of entrepreneurship.

Recommendations:

- Implement a Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP) to support existing businesses and promote their continued success.
- Develop or connect to existing websites and online listings that identify and share resources on grants, tax breaks, and incentives for small and medium-sized businesses.
- Develop entrepreneurial support programs, including workshops, mentorship, and access to funding.
- Collaborate with the city and other stakeholders to attract retail and service businesses, thereby strengthening the local economy and creating jobs.
- Engage with developers, regulators, and funders on the redevelopment of the Marian Anderson site for mixed-use development, including medical facilities, office space, and light industrial warehousing and light manufacturing.
- Collaborate with the Newtown Community Redevelopment Agency to improve the MLK Way based on approved and recommended overlay district guidelines and through streetscape improvements that embrace alternative retail (i.e. pop ups, open markets, etc.), mixed-use development, and increased density but maintain traditional neighborhood character.
- Conduct business and vacancy surveys to inform development strategies and inform decisions.
- Explore the establishment of a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) to increase access to capital to finance local development.
- Address parking availability to support businesses, offices, and retail customers.

Business & Finance: Action Assignments



Newtown Business Council (NBC)

Lead the implementation of BREP, conduct business surveys, support entrepreneurial programs, and advocate for business development.



City of Sarasota

Provide grants and incentives, streamline permitting processes, develop the Marian Anderson site, and improve the MLK Way.



CareerSource Suncoast

Partner in providing workforce development programs and entrepreneurial support.



Financial Institutions

Explore Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) opportunities that empower local developers to engage in incremental development. Collaborate with the Newtown Business Council and other organizations, including local community-based groups and faith-based organizations, to provide financial literacy programs.

Best Practices:

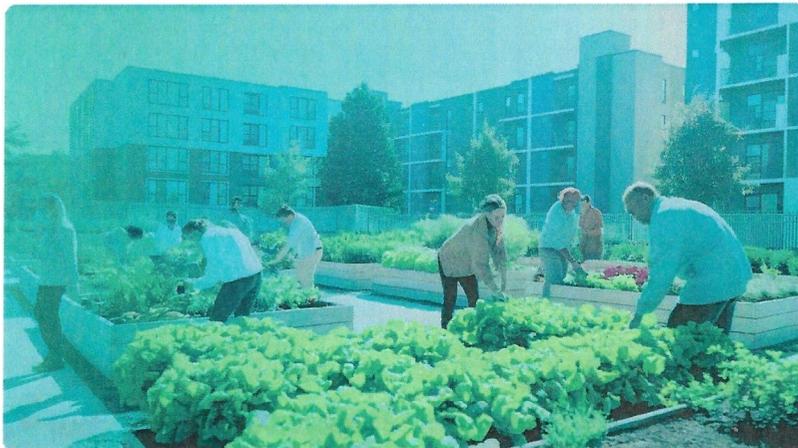
- Engage local businesses in the planning and implementation of economic development initiatives.
- Provide technical assistance and mentorship to small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Incentivize development that aligns with the community's vision and preserves its cultural heritage.

2. Health and Wellness

Goal: Improve the health and well-being of Newtown residents by increasing access to healthcare, promoting healthy lifestyles, and creating a supportive environment.

Recommendations:

- Establish a Wellness District with a focus on holistic health.
- Support the development or upgrading of a clinic in Newtown.
- Promote public health programs and affordable healthcare services.
- Develop community agriculture programs and gardens.
- Provide nutrition resources and education.
- Incorporate green spaces, farmers' markets, and community centers that offer fitness and nutrition education.



Community-Based Health Initiatives

The Wellness District concept focuses on creating accessible health resources within the neighborhood, reducing transportation barriers and increasing regular participation in health-promoting activities.

Community gardens not only provide fresh produce but also serve as educational spaces where residents can learn about nutrition and sustainable growing practices while building community connections.

- Incentivize development that aligns with the community's vision and preserves its cultural heritage.

Health and Wellness: Action Assignments



City of Sarasota

Lead the development of the Wellness District and support infrastructure for health and wellness.



Sarasota Memorial Hospital

Partner in providing healthcare services and workforce training.



Newtown Business Council (NBC)

Promote health-related events and initiatives, and support community agriculture programs.



Community Organizations

Implement public health programs, provide nutrition education, and establish community gardens.

Best Practices:

- Integrate health considerations into all aspects of community planning and development.
- Promote a farm-to-fork initiative among urban farmers and local dining establishments.
- Consider a food hub, recycling, and distribution center on the Marian Anderson site.
- Address health disparities and ensure equitable access to healthcare and wellness resources.
- Promote community engagement and participation in health initiatives.

3. Arts and Culture

Goal: Celebrate Newtown's rich cultural heritage, promote artistic expression, and develop cultural tourism.

Recommendations:

- Expand Sarasota's Public Art Program and integrate art into community spaces.
- Placemaking strategy
 - Develop a branding campaign to highlight Newtown's cultural identity
 - New Gateway signage at key intersections along MLK, potentially at MLK and Atkins Parks.
- Support cultural events and festivals.
- Establish the Newtown Arts District to promote cultural arts and attract visitors.
- Expand the Newtown Alive Trail to connect historical landmarks and promote heritage tourism.
- Partner with Ringling College and other institutions to foster collaboration and artistic development.
- Create artist housing programs to support the arts community.

Arts and Culture: Action Assignments



City of Sarasota

Implement the Public Art Program, support the development of the Newtown Arts District, and promote cultural tourism.



Newtown Business Council (NBC)

Lead the branding campaign, organize cultural events and festivals, and partner with arts organizations.



Arts Organizations

Develop and implement arts programming and collaborate on community arts initiatives.



Ringling College of Art and Design

Partner with arts-based education organizations to provide artistic resources. Encourage local youth participation in community arts projects.

Best Practices:

- Engage local artists and community members in the development of public art and cultural programs.
- Preserve and celebrate Newtown's unique cultural heritage.
- Utilize art to address and overcome systemic community issues, thereby enhancing community identity, encouraging more civic engagement, and setting the stage to create a more welcoming community that attracts visitors.

4. Youth, Education, and Mentorship

Goal: Invest in Newtown's youth by providing access to quality education, mentorship, and opportunities for personal and professional development, including on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and small business innovation.

Recommendations:

- Develop workforce training programs and apprenticeships for high-demand industries.
- Expand youth entrepreneurial programs and pitch competitions.
- Provide internship and mentorship opportunities.
- Develop a youth center and resource hub.
- Provide civic engagement training and youth leadership initiatives, such as youth councils.
- Address social media impacts, gun access concerns, and youth violence prevention through partnerships with public health agencies.

Youth Development Pathway

A comprehensive approach to youth development includes educational support, mentorship, career exploration, and leadership opportunities that build on each other to create a pipeline of engaged, skilled community members.



Youth, Education, and Mentorship: Action Assignments



City of Sarasota

Partner with schools and organizations to expand educational opportunities and develop youth programs.



Sarasota County Schools

Collaborate on workforce training and mentorship programs.



Newtown Business Council (NBC)

Develop youth leadership initiatives, provide civic engagement training, and address youth-related concerns.



Community Organizations

Offer after-school programs, mentorship, and youth development activities.



Boys & Girls Clubs

Provide entrepreneurial and workforce development programs.

Best Practices:

- Engage youth in the design and implementation of programs that cater to their needs and allow them to have a voice in developing a community built with them at the forefront rather than as an afterthought.
- Provide access to technology and digital literacy training.
- Provide access to mental health wellness and violence prevention strategies.
- Connect youth with positive community-based role models and mentors. Establish, launch, and maintain cross-generational listening sessions and convenings to foster open dialogue and understanding among diverse groups.

5. Safety & Resilience

Goal: Ensure a safe and secure environment for residents and businesses and enhance community resilience to disasters and other challenges.

Recommendations:

- Improve pedestrian safety, streetscaping, and traffic calming measures.
- Enhance street lighting.
- Implement community policing initiatives.
- Develop disaster preparedness and recovery plans.
- Improve stormwater infrastructure.
- Address the perception of crime and safety.

Safety & Resilience: Action Assignments



City of Sarasota

Implement infrastructure improvements, develop disaster preparedness plans, and work with law enforcement on community policing.



Law Enforcement

Collaborate on community policing initiatives and crime prevention strategies.



Newtown Business Council (NBC)

Facilitate communication between residents, businesses, and law enforcement, and participate in disaster preparedness planning.



Community Organizations

Implement neighborhood safety programs and promote community engagement.

Best Practices:

- Use a data-driven approach to identify and address safety concerns.
- Involve residents in the development of safety and resilience strategies.
- Promote collaboration between government agencies, community organizations, and residents.