

Central



Maryam Ghyabi is leading a group that is studying the area's infrastructure.

A task force is meeting weekly to research what made the city special in the past, speaking with old-time residents and museum workers, says Jack White, a real estate redeveloper who co-chairs the group with John Guthrie, vice president of business development and partnerships for Daytona Beach International Speedway. Meanwhile, Maryam Ghyabi of engineering and planning firm Ghyabi and Associates is leading a group that is studying how the city, county and state could improve the area's infrastructure.

The task force wants to capitalize on the village concept in urban areas, where people live, work and play in the same neighborhood.

Finding one theme for the entire area will be tricky, Guthrie says. The city has been famous for Speedweek, Spring Break, Bike Week, Black College Reunion and other events that made it a hot spot for revelers. Is that enough to make people want to visit — or better yet, move there and seek employment?

"When they say Nashville's the music city, it's very clear what you're going to get when you go there," Guthrie says. "What is Daytona Beach's real identity? We're finding out through history it's always been driven heavily by events. What we're trying to do is find an identity for the area that everybody can feel a part of."

REDEVELOPMENT

Transformation

With a 10-year goal of creating 10,000 jobs and a cohesive image for Daytona Beach, business leaders are joining forces to transform a 5-by-2-mile area along International Speedway Boulevard between I-4 and State Road A1A.

The challenge: Coming up with one message that will resonate with residents, businesses and tourists.

"The vision, while not yet fully defined, is jobs, transportation and sustainability in a way that redefines, elevates and distinguishes Daytona as a special place," says Larry McKinney, president of The Chamber, Daytona Beach-Halifax Area. "Cooperation among all affected stakeholders is important."