

**MINUTES
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND VISIONING SESSION
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 16, 2023
CITY HALL ANNEX COUNCIL CHAMBERS
8:30 AM**

The Council of the City of Destin met in regular session with the following members and staff present:

Destin City Council

Mayor Bobby Wagner
Councilmember Kevin Schmidt
Councilmember Terésa Hebert
Councilmember Torey Geile

Councilmember Dewey Destin
Councilmember Jim Bagby
Councilmember Johnny King

Destin City Staff

City Manager Lance Johnson
City Clerk Rey Bailey
Parks & Recreation Director Lisa Firth
Deputy Parks & Recreation Director Ryan Reed
Finance Director Krystal Strickland
Grants/Project Manager Jeffrey Cozadd
Dep. Code Compliance Director Danny Sullivan
Deputy Public Works Director JT Hart
Community Dev. Director Louis Zunguze

Deputy City Manager Webb Warren
City Engineer Ryan Scott
Principal Planner Steve O'Connor
Human Resources Manager Jamie Dittmer
Public Information Manager Tamara Young
Library Director Wen Livingston
Public Works Director Michael Burgess
City Attorney Kyle Bauman
Land Use Attorney Kimberly Kopp

Facilitator

Buz Eddy, FCCMA Senior Advisor

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bobby Wagner called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM; followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The City Manager and lead facilitator Buz Eddy provided a brief overview of the workshop, discussed its overall objective, and reinforced what needs to be accomplished during this time.

A) The Importance of Prioritization and Focus

- Productivity is a process which centers on assessing one's priorities and then acting on them.

- Strategic Planning ---- Prioritization ---- Focus
- Strategic Planning Cycle
 - ❖ Annual Visioning Session with city council, staff and the public
 - ❖ Adoption of plan by the council
 - ❖ Development and adoption of next fiscal year budget
 - ❖ Staff executes current fiscal year plan

2. **CURRENT STRATEGIC PLANNING FOUNDATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A) Core Values: Guiding principles and traits used to reach the vision

- Transparency
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Stewardship
- Respect

B) Vision: What we want Destin to look like in the future

**“DESTIN IS A FAMILY-ORIENTED BEACH AND FISHING COMMUNITY
WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY AND WHERE
VISITORS ARE WELCOMED TO RESPECTFULLY ENJOY OUR
COMMUNITY AND ITS RESOURCES.”**

C) Key Customer Groups: For prioritizing resource allocations

- 1) Year-round Residents
- 2) Destin-based Businesses
- 3) Visitors

3. **WHERE ARE WE AS AN ORGANIZATION - "A YEAR IN REVIEW"**

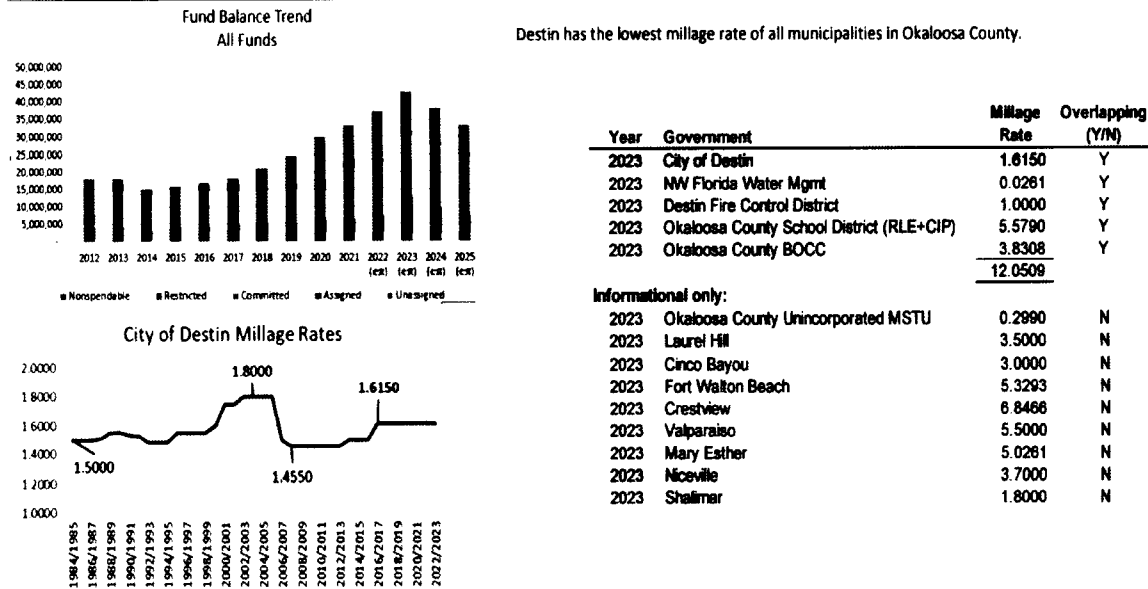
A) Mission: Major Strategic Goals (Pillars) required to work toward achieving the vision.

Strategic Goals (Prioritized)

- 1 – Financially sound city providing service excellence
- 2 – Enhanced quality of life and safety for families
- 3 – Economic development and revitalization
- 4 – Effective, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing infrastructure
- 5 – Improve mobility and connectivity
- 6 – A green and sustainable environment

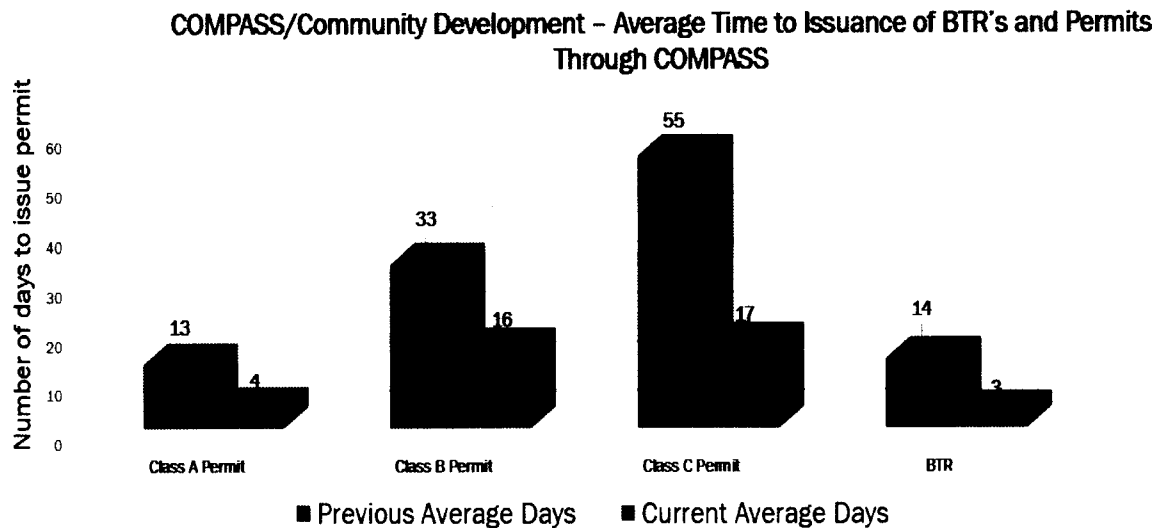
Accomplishments

I. Financially Sound City Providing Service Excellence



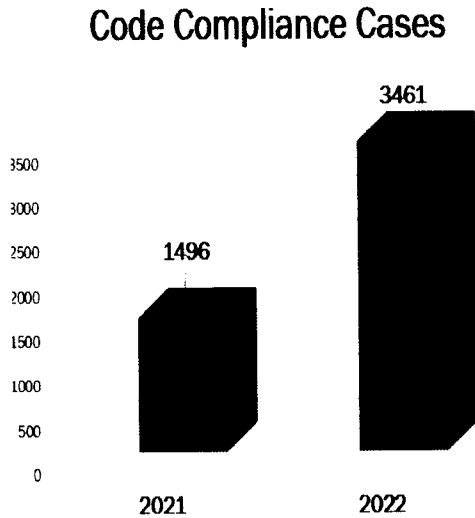
Accomplishments

I. Financially Sound City Providing Service Excellence



Accomplishments

I. Financially Sound City Providing Service Excellence



Other Major Activities

Short-term rental registrations – 893

Long-term rental registrations – 145

Pay-to-Park – 871 Citations

Accomplishments

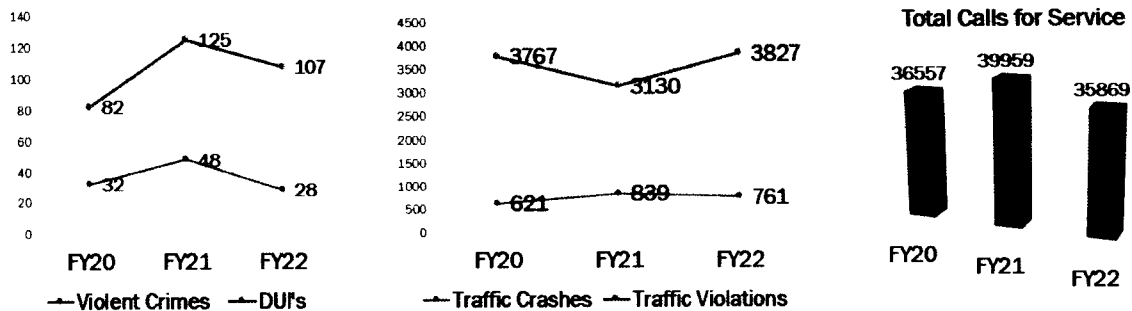
I. Financially Sound City Providing Service Excellence

- Finance staff worked with CRA members and consultants to raise over \$30 million in commitments to underground utilities.
- Partnerships with BOCC/TDC, State Representatives Office, DEP, FDOT, and others have resulted in \$24 million in FY23's budget.
- New Human Resources and Finance staff has undergone training for the new MUNIS financial system upgrade.
- Alignment of account coding with Florida Uniform Accounting Code.
- Established a building fund and started an Impact Fee Study.
- Distinguished Budget Award
- Legal team prevailed in a multi-million dollar lawsuit brought on by the Destin Fishing Fleet.
- A new Human Resources Manager was hired and filled a new full-time HR Specialist position.
- Expanded Finance Department to meet growing demands.
- Organizational Compensation Study and Implementation
- Created Resident Paid Parking Pass System and issued 1,231 passes.
- Launched the Recreation's CivicRec Program
- National Citizens Survey completed
- IMLS Grant and providing RFID services for library
- Clerks Department reduced codification timeline from 45 days to approximately 14 days

- Migration of COMPASS and MUNIS Systems to the cloud and most modern platform is underway
 - ❖ New modules and functionality will be implemented in 2023 within the new version
- 85,005 paid parking transactions in FY22

II. Enhanced Quality of Life and Safety for Families

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department



Accomplishments

II. Enhanced Quality of Life and Safety for Families

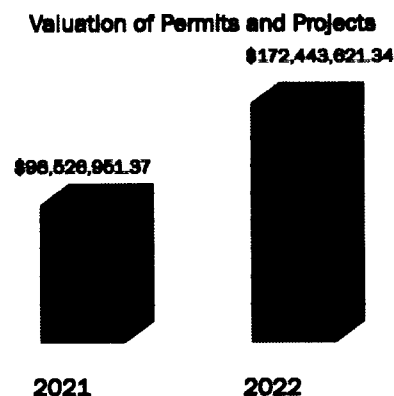
- Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department Launched the AQUA ALERT system (council initiated)
 - ❖ This council-supported initiative came to fruition from OCSO, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners, Mayor Jarvis and city staff working together to implement the system.
 - ❖ Aqua Alert Act was passed as part of the National Defense Bill, pending President's approval.
- Morgan Sports Center – summer is fully booked for tournaments and leagues are at capacity
- New Library Programs – Game and Craft Nights and Family Outdoor events.
 - ❖ Program attendance is up from FY2021 with an increase of 36% for adults, 5% for teens and 20.5% for children
- Airport Road curve safety upgrade
- Issued 723 Henderson Beach Passes saving residents \$21,690
- Provided DAVID system access to Code Compliance management
- The Destin High School opened August 2021. Field space for all their outdoor sports has been scheduled at Morgan's and the Destin Sports Complex (Destin Elementary)
 - Expanded City of Destin's Beachfront Parks by over linear 450'
 - Norriego Point Park project – upcoming construction of amenities and boardwalk
 - Clement Taylor Park renovation – updating design
 - Royal Melvin Heritage Park at 95% completion

- Joe's Bayou complex and park renovation
- Council requested staff to work with strategic partners to implement a text-based beach flag safety notification program
- This council-supported initiative came to fruition through efforts from the Destin Fire District, city staff, TDD and the Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners
- Beach safety has been enhanced through the installation of deck boards with engraved messaging at beach accesses
- The City continues to provide crossing guards for the Destin Elementary School
- Destin Fire District
 - ❖ 462,128 public contacts
 - ❖ 126,205 preventive acts
 - ❖ 214 rescues

III. Economic Development and Revitalization

Community Development Activity

- Reviewed 5,617 Permit Applications
- Issued 3,298 Permits
- Completed 7,772 Inspections
- Provided 1,180 Lien Searches,
- Issued 1,746 Business Tax Receipts
- 73 Development Orders or Projects



Accomplishments

III. Economic Development and Revitalization

- Land Development Code Rewrite
- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Both CRA master plans are being updated

Accomplishments

IV. Effective, Efficient and Aesthetically Pleasing Infrastructure

- Undergrounding Utilities - the city is working with a consultant and FPL to finalize the design for Phase 1 of this effort
 - ❖ Construction could begin late 2023
- FDOT HWY 98 Landscaping project from Marler Bridge to Airport Road
- Contracted out facilities assessment program and received deliverables

- Land Development Code / Design Manual
- Repairs to Joe's Bayou docks and boat ramp
- Repairs to Harbor Boardwalk – replacing with “wear deck” material
- Re-striped Benning Drive, Azalea Drive, Luke and John Avenue, as well as several city parking lots
- Performed annual assessments of roadways, sidewalks, streetlighting, road striping and drainage systems

Accomplishments

V. Improve Mobility and Connectivity

- Crosstown Connector and associated park project are in progress
- Linear Park and 98 Palms Extension to S. Mattie M. Kelly Blvd
- Beach Acquisition project is adding parking and improving access to beach parks in the Crystal Beach area
- Zerbe Street and Sibert paid parking lot redesign
- County pedestrian pathway project will link Okaloosa Island to Destin
- Other Community Development projects in progress or under review
 - ❖ Mobility Plan to replace the current multi modal transportation
 - ❖ Stahlman Ave/Hwy 98 Intersection
 - ❖ South Mattie M. Kelly Blvd
 - ❖ 1st & 4th Street
 - ❖ ADA Transition Plan

Accomplishments

VI. A Green and Sustainable Environment

- Implemented new Solid Waste Contract for FY2022 to include continued recycling services
- Expanded Partnership of “Leave No Trace Initiative” to Okaloosa County
- TDD and Okaloosa County's artificial reef program – Joe's Bayou is often utilized for this initiative
- Joe's Bayou/FDEP Project
- Working with FP&L on a proposal for City Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations
- Partnered with Destin Water Users on installation of a subsurface reclaimed water disposal system at Morgan Sports Center with new sprinklers and sod.
- Established Water Quality Fund
- Harbor Pump
 - Underwent overhaul
 - Cycles 14.4 million gallons of low nutrient gulf water into the harbor daily (during season)

Current Project Commitments

Review of Council Objectives – FY22-FY23

- **Critical Priority** – An objective that must be successfully accomplished within a specified amount of time.
- **Important Priority** – A priority that can have a significant impact on performance. Resources are fixed and the variable is either time or the objective.
- **Desirable Priority** – A priority where both resources and time are variables. The organization desires an outcome but cannot absolutely commit specific resources over any specifiable time period. Resources are fixed for all critical and important priorities; therefore, it may become necessary to transfer resources from DESIRABLE priorities to CRITICAL priorities.

FY22 Critical 1.1 - Offer livable wages & benefits to attract and maintain high caliber, qualified staff.

(FY 2023 - 1.1 Critical)

- Compensation study was performed in FY22 and presented to the council
 - ❖ Staff implemented those results to non-senior leaders in April 2022
 - ❖ Senior leader compensation was implemented in January 2023 (FY23)
- Council approved one-time FY22 Longevity award for long-term employees
- FY22 COLA was approved for 5%. Merit up to 2%
- FY23 COLA was approved for 2%. Merit up to 4%
- Enhanced recruiting tools
- Update to Employee Manual
 - ❖ Additional retention strategies are being developed and implemented

FY22 Important 1.2 – Complete Two-Lane Crosstown Connector

(FY 2023 - 1.3 Important)

- Since 2004, the city has worked on an alternative to highway 98 for citizens to access city amenities within Destin. Atkins North America completed the road design in December 2022. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has budgeted financial support for right-of-way purchases. The voluntary acquisition process to secure ROW is ongoing. Grant funding for ROW acquisition is in place through December 2023. The city anticipates support from Okaloosa County for construction.

FY22 Important 1.3 – Public Beachfront Acquisition Initiative

(FY 2023 - 1.4 Important)

- Purchased 340' linear feet (lf) of waterfront at Tarpon Beach for a future park (approximately 50,000 square feet of white sand beach area)
- Purchased 117' of additional waterfront near the Shore at Crystal Beach Park (approximately 14,000 square feet of white sand beach area)
- Sites will be accessible for beach use for 2023 season
- Design is underway with plans to be presented to Parks and Recreation Committee and city council in spring of 2023
- Construction is planned for spring 2024

FY22 Important 1.4 – Underground Utilities

(FY 2023 - 1.5 Important)

- The city is working with a consultant and FPL to finalize the design for Phase I of this effort. Construction may begin later in 2023.
- Undergrounding utilities improves resiliency (reduce storm damage) and adds beauty to the city by removing overhead electric, telephone, and cable lines.
- Council has assigned 60% of the Okaloosa ½ penny local discretionary surtax towards this endeavor. Utility franchise fees and debt will round out the primary sources of long-term funding.
- Franchise agreement was finalized November 1, 2021.

FY22 Important 1.5 – Zerbe Street/Calhoun Avenue Phase II – Design Pedestrian Pathway Under Marler Bridge

- On March 6, 2022, city council voted to table this project until further notice

FY22 Desirable 1.6 – Work with stakeholders to pursue the Destin City Center (Phase 1 Feasibility Study), (II, III)

(FY 2023 - 1.2 - Critical)

- Original FY22 objective was Research Viability of Multi-use Conventional/Sports/Community Center
- Defined vision and location is requested for this objective
- \$50,000 allocated
- RFQ for Site Master Planning and Landscaping to be released February 17, 2023.

FY22 Desirable 1.7 – Annexation of unincorporated enclaves

(FY 2023 - 1.7 Desirable)

- Staff has distributed to council a draft annexation policy
- Staff is researching the business case for annexation – revenues vs. potential expenditures for necessary infrastructure in enclave areas

FY22 Desirable 1.8 – Transit/Trolley System

(FY 2023 - 1.8 Desirable)

- Staff is reaching out to Okaloosa County and Walton County TDD about their trolley system and public/private partnerships
- Staff is requesting that future transit infrastructure located at paid parking lots be funded in part from paid parking funds (Parking Fund Resolution)

FY22 1.9 – City Marina

(FY 2023 – 1.9 Desirable)

- Perform Phase I Feasibility Study to determine available options in the future as funding allows
- \$75k budgeted in FY 2024

FY22 1.10 – Improve Parking, Explore Options

(FY 2023 – 1.10 Desirable)

- Parking fund established in FY22 from paid parking revenue
- Improvements and additional spots to be added to the Zerbe-Sibert parking lots in FY23
- Additional parking to be provided at Shore of Crystal Beach and Tarpon Beach

FY22 1.11 – Beach Renourishment, Planning and Scheduling

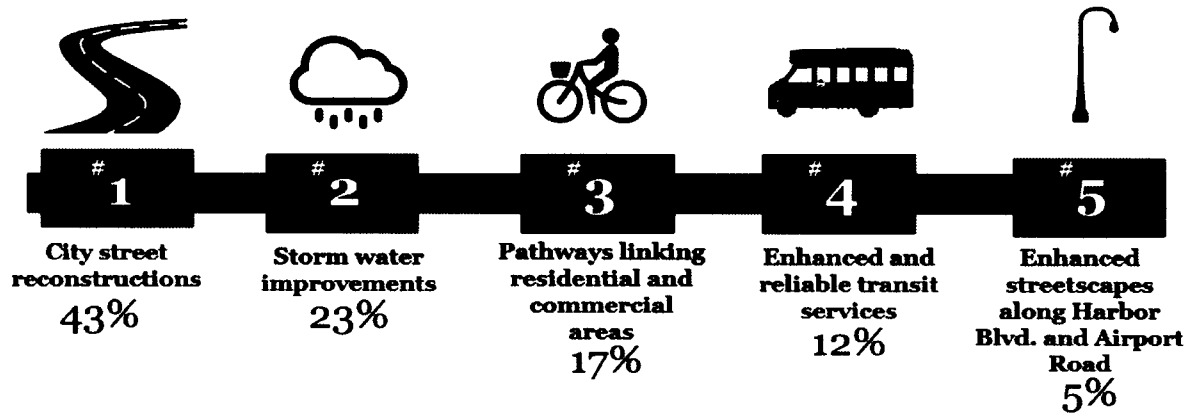
(FY 2023 – 1.11 Desirable)

- Beaches are monitored by the TDC
- TDC and BOCC are monitoring beaches and is in regular communication with city administration

Citizen Survey

2017 Citizen Survey Results

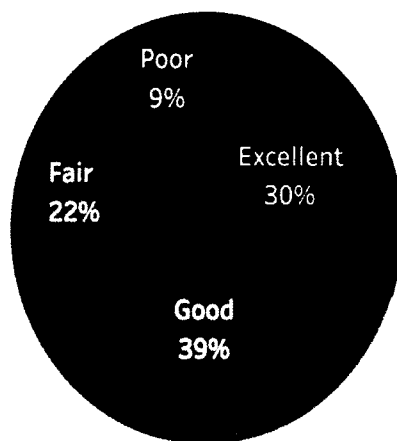
Top Opportunities for Improvement in 2017 Citizen Survey



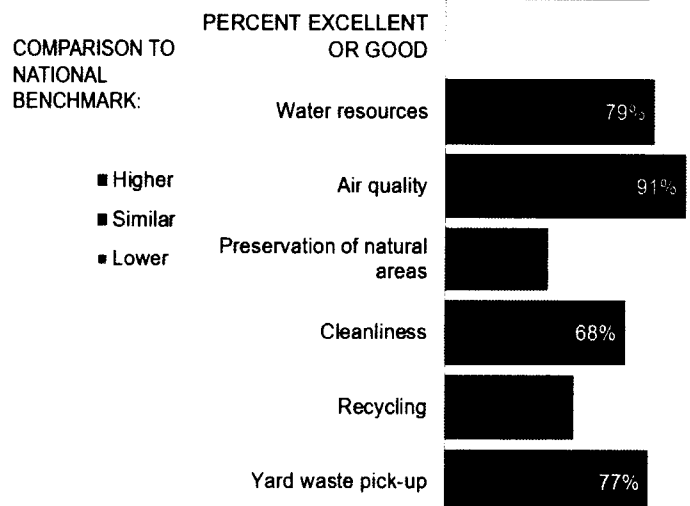
The Natural Environment in Destin



Overall quality of natural environment in Destin, 2022



Please rate each of the following in the Destin community:

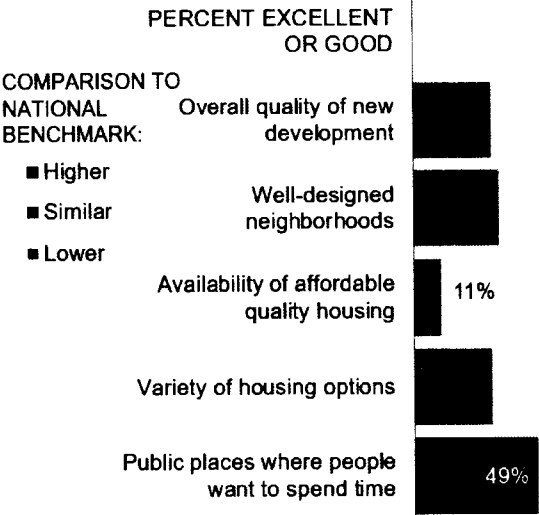


Community Design in Destin

Overall quality of natural environment in Destin, 2022

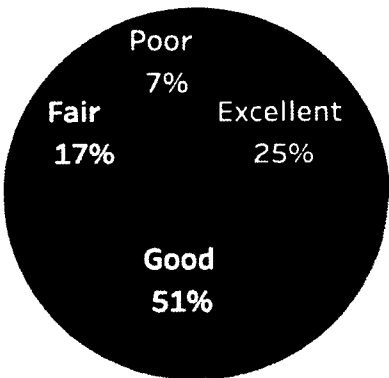


Please rate each of the following in the Destin community:

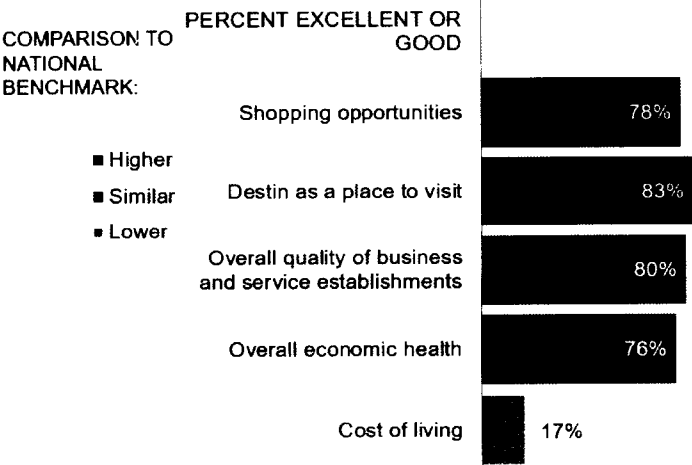


The Economy in Destin

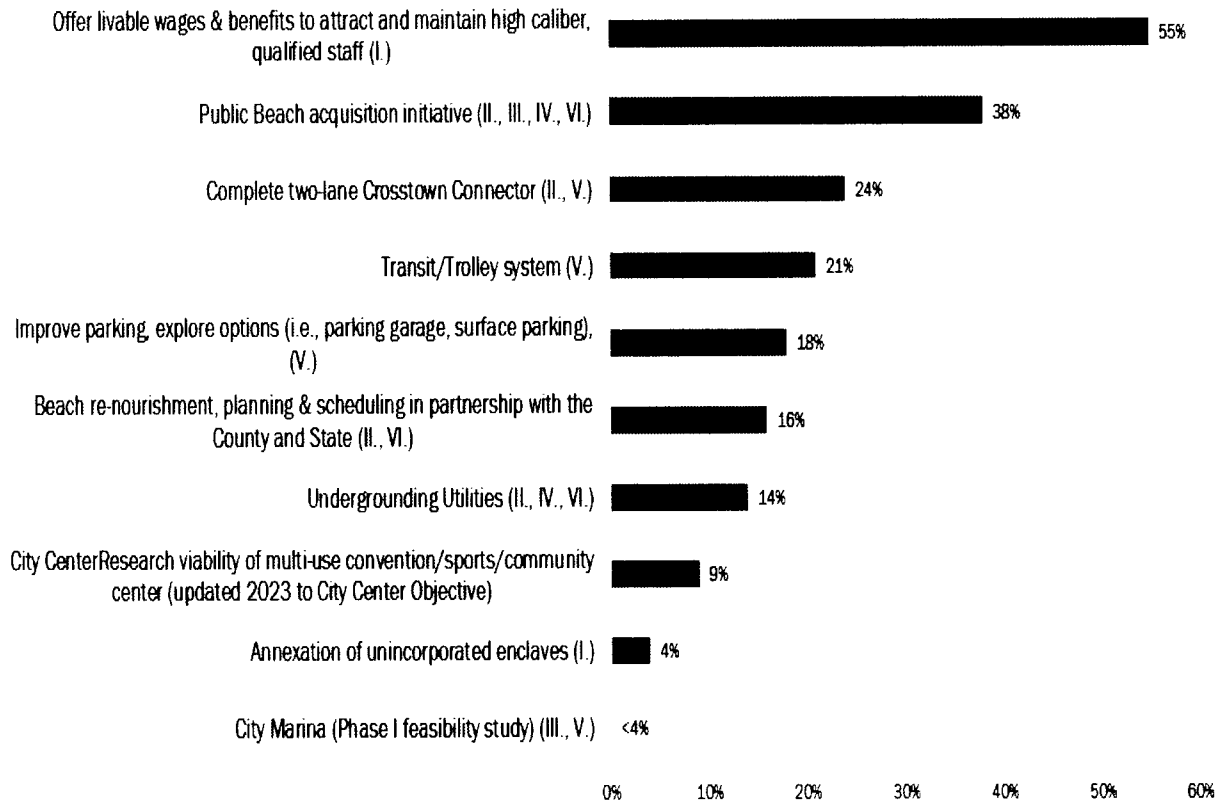
Overall economic health of Destin, 2022



Please rate each of the following in the Destin community:



Citizen Pick 2 Priorities



4. **KEY PARTNERSHIPS**

A) Destin Water Users (DWU) – Ms. Monica Wallis, Operations Manager for DWU

- Provide water, wastewater, and reclaim water to a service area that is greater than the City of Destin's boundary – from the north side of US Hwy 98 to Danny Wuerffel Way, and the south side of US Hwy 98 to the county line.
 - Started providing drinking water in 1963, wastewater in 1972, and brought on reclaim water in 1985.
- Pumped 1.7 billion gallons of water (4.7 million gallons per day) into the area in 2022.
- They have a 6-million-gallon wastewater treatment plant located off of Airport Road on Industrial Park Lane.
 - Averaged 3.4 million gallons wastewater treated in 2022.
- They will be drilling a new well later in 2023 next to their tower on Calhoun Avenue.
- They are in the process of embarking on their 5-year master plan. They create a master plan of their entire system every 5 years.

- They plan to bring drinking water and wastewater to the crosstown connector.
- They house the beach trash collection from the county behind DWU's main office on Main Street.
- They have leased some property to the county to build their communications tower for better safety across the entire county.
- They purchased the property next to Destin Airport to be used for reclaimed water disposal.

B) Destin Fire Control District – Mr. Joseph D'Agostino, Destin Fire Control District Beach Safety Division Chief

- They have come a long way since June 8, 2003, when they lost 8 people in a single day from rip currents. Lifeguard services have expanded quite a bit since then.
 - Starting March 2023, they will have 9 lifeguards on roving patrols.
 - The City of Destin will have two public beach trails – June White Decker and Shores at Crystal Beach – covered with lifeguard chairs.
 - Services will expand this summer. They have planned on having 24 lifeguard chairs, expanded hours and roving patrols.
 - They will cover areas from Norriego Point to the Walton County Line, with no gaps in coverage.
- In terms of contract, they are diligently working with the county and making a lot of progress.
 - They receive \$100,000 annually from the city, and they are asking for the city's continuing support in that regard.

C) Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office – Capt. Jason Fulghum, District 3 Chief

- Okaloosa County broke down into 3 districts: City of Destin is district 3.
- Sheriff's Office Goals for the City of Destin:
 - Partnership
 - Great partnership so far and continuing to grow.
 - Crime reduction
 - Have not had many violent crimes committed in the city. The biggest problems are thefts and burglaries.
 - Safety of citizens
 - One of the biggest issues with the city is communications.
 - There are numerous places throughout the city where law enforcement officers were unable to reach their dispatch for an emergency call.
 - The radio towers the county plans to build in the city behind DWU facility will solve this problem.
- Utilizes intelligence-led policing approach - data collected by multiple agencies (local police, FBI, and detectives). This information is then analyzed and turned into intelligence to locate smaller and more serious crimes that could potentially be committed and to intervene with the potential perpetrators of the crime.

- Traffic issue. Put together a grant proposal with the city to the Department of Transportation for federal funding for overtime pay for officers focusing on traffic enforcement and DUIs.

D) Destin Chamber of Commerce – Mr. Shane Moody, President and CEO

- Great partnership with the City of Destin
 - Excellent support given to the Destin Forward Class annually by both city employees and city council.
 - Several city employees have been members of the Destin Forward Class.
 - Lots of positive things the city council and staff are doing for the city.
- There is great culture in the organization.
- There are parking and traffic issues in the harbor. They strongly suggest the city look to build a parking garage at the Marler Parking Lot and behind McGuire's Restaurant.
- Workforce housing is necessary.
 - Public-Private partnership for 3 story garage and 3 story housing is doable.
- Partnership between the Destin Chamber of Commerce and the City of Destin to come up with economic initiatives.
- City Center – It is imperative for the city to meet with the property owner of the future site for the new Publix Shopping Center to discuss a possible partnership that would allow the city to use part of the land. Creating a city center would be transformational and generational.

E) Destin Charter Boat Association – Capt. Gary Jarvis, Association President

- In 2014, the charter industry received sector separation and received their own allocation of fish and Red Snappers.
 - Season went from 9 days to last year's 82 days.
 - They are working on sector separations in some of the other key fisheries that are important to the Destin Charter Fleet.
 - Amberjacks, Red and Gag Groupers, and Trigger Fish.
 - The Fleet is trying to get their historical participation to the level that will ensure they get their proper allocation of fish.
 - He has put in his application for membership to the Gulf Council to represent the City of Destin and the charter for hire and recreational industry.
- Another challenge facing the Fleet is parking on the harbor for customers.
 - Most property owners are going to paid parking and some are planning on raising the paid parking fees.
 - There is more demand for parking than there are parking spaces.
 - Building parking garages is important. They will also serve as a great source of revenue for the city.
- A city marina will enhance the Fleet and it will also be a great funding source for the city.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Several residents of Ridge Wood Circle in Destin spoke about recent issues with parking and parking citations they received. They provided the following comments:

- Neighborhood residents are suddenly receiving citations due to parking violations.
- The driveways in their neighborhood are fairly small and barely fit a car length. Most residents either have vehicles that do not fit on the driveway without partially covering the sidewalk or have more than 2 cars.
- There are no places to park cars that do not violate city ordinances.
- They do not know what to do with their visitors or extended guests with regards to parking.
- There are areas within their neighborhood that do not even have sidewalks.
- There is no affordable housing in Destin, and there are many houses in the neighborhood that are used by multiple families.
- They are asking for support from the city in regard to the reasonableness of the situation.

Mr. Shane Moody recommends having a city center with as little multi-family residential as possible, and with no short-term rentals. He continued that since the possible future property owner wants foot traffic, they could generate a lot of foot traffic if they design the city center the right way. They could include as many city facilities in there as possible and would still be able to have some high-level commercial spaces. This could generate more foot traffic than having multi-family housing. He added this possible site for the city center is the gateway to both the Harbor CRA and the Town Center CRA which could regenerate redevelopment on the west side and north side of the city.

Capt. Gary Jarvis stated that having a city center will be both transformational and generational and will enhance the quality of life for the community. It will also be very expensive, especially with the crosstown connector and the city's beach buy-back initiative. They have to be innovative in how they plan to fund a project of this magnitude. He continued that he has a conference call scheduled with a prominent attorney in Pensacola who has been one of the lead legal representatives for a group that changed the face and footprint of the City of Pensacola. He sent them a copy of the city's master plan from 2014, the content of which fits exactly with the intent for a city center. His discussion with the Pensacola lawyer will center around the proposed city center and the master plan. He will then report this information back to the council at their next regular city council meeting.

Mr. Jason Belcher, Destin Chamber Board Chairman, stated that the vision for the Chamber is to be a good community member. Their commitment is not only to foster a strong economic community but also a strong community. The Destin Forward group that met with the city's elected officials and department directors is just an example of their effort to stay connected with the city and be a good representative for all the city council's priorities. He stated that a city center would be a phenomenal asset for this community. It is something that could be transformational for a long period of time. It would be a huge economic boom for the City of Destin. One of his goals as the Chamber Board Chairman is to get all the board members involve with city government. To attend the city's volunteer committee meetings, participate if possible, and thank the volunteer members for their service to the city.

6. DEPARTMENTAL / DIVISION UPDATES: PRIORITY PROJECTS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

A) City Manager – Lance Johnson

- The city has a good strategic plan. They are ahead of most municipalities of their size. They have to take it further as they continue to grow and face new challenges.
- They have to adapt to the new changes that are happening and deal with them accordingly.
- One of his top priorities is getting the right people in the right position in light of all the turnovers they have had lately to get directors and division chiefs away from the front-line work and concentrate on managing staff and help implement the goals of the city council.

B) Finance – Krystal Strickland, Finance Director

- The Finance Department is going through a major overhaul.
- The city's budget has gone from \$15 million a year, which it has been for quite a while, to over \$30 million a year a few years later, and now stands at over \$75 million.
 - These are mostly cost reimbursement grants, and so they have had to match every invoice that they pay to a cancelled check to submit them for reimbursement.
- The department's workload has been tremendous.
- The city has just started with brand-new auditors.
 - They are educating them about all the city processes.
- They have just gone through a major software conversion to resolve all the long-standing issues the city has been experiencing.
- She is training a brand-new full-time staff member as well as two part-time staff members.

C) Human Resources/Risk Manager – Jamie Dittmer, Human Resources Director

- Even before her hiring a few months ago, employee recruitment and retention were a high priority.
- They have been giving their recruitment plan a hard look and how they could get high quality employees to come to Destin.
- A big part of their recruitment plan is their retention plan. They are currently working on projects to invest in their employees.
 - More vacation time and sick time
 - Professional development – training and certification.
 - Succession planning
 - Wellness platform – implement wellness into their culture.
- A huge software upgrade that will not only impact on the city but the committee as a whole.

- Working on having more money to invest in their employees.
- Working on policy that will help protect their workplace culture.
 - Updating employee manual

D) Community Development – Louis Zunguze, Department Director

- Land Development Code rewrite.
- Creation of a mobility plan. The plan to enhance connectivity within the community and neighborhoods.
 - Plan to be submitted to the council around mid-2023.
 - The plan will contain a litany of projects staff have identified as key to making sure connectivity within the city works.
 - The council will be asked to prioritize the projects identified in the plan as they cannot be done all at the same time.
- CRA Redevelopment Plan – Master Plan updates
 - These plans are the vehicles for guiding development projects within the CRAs.
 - The timing of these updates is critical.
- He has been director for 4 years and has not had a full complement of staff.
 - There is a ton of projects they have to accomplish, and a shortage of staff could jeopardize completion of some of those projects.
 - Hiring and retention is key. Need full support from the city council, City Manager, and Human Resources Manager.
- Accomplishments despite staff shortages:
 - Reviewed over 5,500 development applications in 2022.
 - Completed over 7700 inspections in 2022.
 - Completed 73 development projects in 2022.
 - Total value to the community of over \$173 million which is economic development for the City of Destin.

E) Code Compliance – Lance Johnson – Administrative portion

Danny Sullivan, Deputy Director – Operational portion

- Director has been hired and will report for duty in April 2023.
 - Director has over 20 years' experience in law enforcement and code compliance
 - The director will immediately tackle 3 major priorities: Code updates, officers training, and council's code enforcement top priorities.
- Things are now running smoothly since major software updates (i.e., taking pictures and uploading them into the system quickly).
- Main goal is educating the citizens of Destin with regards to code compliance matters.

Councilmember Schmidt asked whether parking fines have been levied against residents of Ridgewood Circle that received parking citations.

Mr. Sullivan noted that everyone who was in violations only received warning citations and have been educated on how they could adjust their parking to avoid future citations. No monetary fines have been issued.

F) Public Works Department – Michael Burgess, Director

➤ Challenges:

- The department has had two vacancies for an extended period of time even with the salary adjustment being implemented. These are vital positions.

➤ Priorities:

- Pavement management. Have been unable to pave easements due to the volatile nature of asphalt, as well as their availability and price.
- Sidewalks renewal and replacement.
- City-wide safety improvements program. The council approved an allocation of \$100,000 for this year.
- Purchase and implementation of Asset Management Software in conjunction with recent Matrix study for all city facilities.
 - They should be able to project with some level of certainty their replacement and renewal costs for the next several years.
- The Public Works Department would like to explore the idea of a new building next to the existing building for their new vehicles and equipment.
- In terms of emergency management, they will be updating their disaster preparedness plan this spring.
- Capital purchase for FY 24, they would like to consider purchasing a generator for the Destin Library and Destin Community Center. They would like to be able to use these facilities as a public meeting place for FEMA and other entities in the event the city is struck with a natural disaster.
- Stormwater Floodplain Management Program Update
- Budgetary needs:
 - Invest in cleaning the storm service system.
 - Embark on a very aggressive rehabilitation of storm service system at the Indian Bayou Subdivision replacing the corrugated metal pipes used in the 1980s which are subject to fail.
 - Obtain a software package called Forerunner that could assist in ensuring a 100 perfection on all of the city's elevation certificates and avoid errors that would nullify these elevation certificates.

G) Grants/Projects – Jeff Cozadd, Grants/Project Manager

➤ Undergrounding project

- FPL has completed a preliminary design showing equipment locations.
- Next step: Secure easement for those locations.

- Complete the design and deliver a binding cost estimate to the city around the May 2023 timeframe.
- The city could then begin procurement to have a contractor in place to perform the work.
- Targeting the summer to have the procurement done and select a contractor to begin work around fall 2023.
- Funding requested from FDEM, a statewide application. If approved, the application goes to FEMA for funding. If funded, it would offset a lot of cost with Phase 1. The allocation requested was in excess of \$10 million.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - Received an award of \$1.5 million from ARPA.
 - ARPA pays for a lot of the city's software migrations mentioned earlier (over \$400,000).
 - The rest of the funding will be used for stormwater projects. Staff will bring a list of projects to the council for their consideration.
 - The city will also secure a continuing services contractor and bring the proposed firm to the council for approval.
- Submitted appropriation request to Representative Maney's Office in excess of \$2 million. If approved, the money will be used for undergrounding (phase 1) and auxiliary harbor pump.
- It may be beneficial to have some external assistance securing larger grants funding to help larger capital projects such as the undergrounding and crosstown connector move forward.
 - Request to include in next year's budget some money to hire a lobbyist.

H) Information Technology – Deputy City Manager Webb Warren (Acting IT Director)

- Huge migration and implementation of MUNIS, COMPASS/ENERGOV projects.
 - Finance, Human Resources, Code Compliance, and Community Development Departments spent most of the previous month training on the new system.
 - The city is now at the newest version of MUNIS and COMPASS/ENERGOV systems.
 - They have a lot of modules to implement. The city is actively recruiting an IT Director to implement those modules.

I) Public Information – Tamara Young – Public Information Manager

- As a newly hired staff member, some of the things she had the privilege to announce through a huge media blast were the city's multi-million-dollar lawsuit win against the Destin Fishing Fleet and the Tarpon Beach Expansion Renovation.
- The city will really be focused on strategy this year, which will be critical as the city has been operating in a very reactive capacity as opposed to proactive.

- They are starting with a huge environmental scan looking at 12 to 15 comparable cities and focus on what they are doing well with their websites, social media, and other aspects.
 - They will be benchmarking the best and taking the necessary steps to get there.
- Will spend some time on media policy, making sure the information they are providing to the public is accurate and has clarity.
- The Public Information Department is a one-person department.
 - May need some staffing help in the future.
 - Will have a number of communication channels to push forward information to key stakeholders.
 - Social media is important as it is a profound way for many of the residents, business owners, and tourists to get their information.
 - Reached 98.7% more accounts the last two weeks than the entire 2022 on Instagram.
 - Engagement on Facebook is at 93% in the last 2 weeks than the entire 2022.
 - The public is very interested and paying a lot of attention n what the city is doing.

J) Parks & Recreation

- Constructing a maintenance facility shed at Morgan's Sports Complex to hold and protect equipment.
- Constructing restroom facility and little pavilion by the soccer field on the west side of Morgan's Sport Complex.
- Constructing restroom facility at Buck Destin Park.
- Challenges:
 - Fixing the Destin Community Center. Will meet with a local contractor in a week to discuss window replacement with impact glass, as well as stucco and sheet rock replacement.
 - Morgan Sports Center renovation.
 - Three fields have been re-sodded.
 - Multi-use field to be sodded.
 - Replacing the lighting with LED lights.
 - Fencing
 - Working on a playground replacement at the children's park at Morgan's Sports Center.
 - Will be gaining extra park facilities.
 - Will be requesting two additional maintenance staff to help with the upkeep of these facilities.
 - Will request re-classification of two full time staff positions to a supervisory position to manage staff working night shifts.

- Request taking away crossing guard duties at the Destin Elementary School from city staff and putting it under the Sheriff's contract.
- Discussing sun-shading options for baseball fields with different vendors to come up with the right concept.

K) Library – Wen Livingston, Library Director

- Library building is 20 years old. The Destin Library's 20th anniversary celebration is on March 17th.
 - The building needs an update on the design and technology.
 - Working with the Community Development Director and Grants/Project Manager to come up with a new plan to get the library up to the current standards.
 - The city received an RFID grant that put new technology in the library. There is a plan to repaint the interior of the library. Carpet replacement is on the schedule.

L) City Clerk – Rey Bailey

- Public Records Request increasing in volume and complexity.
 - Email correspondence
 - Social media
 - Text messaging
 - Social networking - Facebook
- Received 522 PRRs in 2022; 20% increase from the previous year.
 - Responded to each request within 3 workdays 97.2% of the time in 2022.
- Provided administrative support and attended and recorded 108 meetings of the city council and the city's standing committees and boards; totaling 272 hours.
- Transcribed and distributed minutes of meetings within 10 days 94% of the time.
- Minutes approved by the collegial body with challenges and corrections 98% of the time.

7. Code Compliance – Prioritization of functions to better direct staff in the allocation of available resources.

Councilmember Hebert stated that there needs to be some sort of uniformity and clarity in terms of the rules and regulations so that consistency is maintained in responding to code violations and the type of actions being taken by the code officers.

Councilmember Bagby recommends developing a list of 3 to 5 priorities for the Code Compliance Department to focus their efforts on and the areas in the city on which to be proactive. He would like to see the following issues on this list of priorities: Signs in the rights-of-way, parking in the rights-of-way, short-term rental violations, and trash violations.

Councilmember Destin stated that with regards to parking, the code officers will need some discretion and judgement. He recently drove through a couple of neighborhoods on Azalea Road and observed hundreds of vehicles in violation of the city's parking code. He continued that they need to build in discretion and common-sense attributes into their code enforcement rules and regulations; otherwise, these code officers will have to write thousands of citations throughout the city which is impossible to do in terms of the manpower point of view. It can also be viewed as harassment to their citizens. If the violation involves public safety, a citation should definitely have to be written; otherwise, the officer should be allowed to make a judgment call. They also need to provide a list of priorities for the code enforcement officers to adhere to. They also need to put up "no parking" signs on the areas in the city where they truly want to prohibit parking so they can be easily enforced.

Councilmember Geile stated they need to have language in the code leaning to the side of public safety and which mandates the specific minimum space necessary for somebody to safely navigate around a vehicle and the area.

Mayor Wagner stated that a fair compromise in his view would be to keep the sidewalks clear at all costs and allow vehicles to park parallel partly on the road in the rights-of-way especially if there is no place else to park.

Community Development Director Louis Zunguze noted that in the LDC rewrite, one of the options being considered is making clear distinction between the northern side of Destin where it is mostly residential and the southern end where there is a lot of change related to short-term rentals. The city engineer has been tasked to come up with a standard that addresses the conditions that exist on the northside and the trends that are taking place on the southside. They will make some adjustments in the new code that will provide the ability to have discretions and also set minimum safety standards.

According to Councilmember Schmidt, they need to be cautious in prioritizing several of the code enforcement issues and allowing discretion to be used at times; adding that they have a written code and prioritizing how staff should enforce the code is micro-managing. If they leave it up to the code officers' discretion or judgement as to which part of the code to enforce at any given time, they will fall back to the issue of selective enforcement. He continued that some of the violations are not being reported because neighbors do not want to complain against their neighbors and to be on record as the complainant. They are hoping that city staff will follow the code and take appropriate actions. He also stated that to consider that one neighborhood is more important than the other is unfair, and that it only takes one distracted driver to run over a child or any person trying to get around a parked vehicle even in a non-busy street.

Mr. Buzz Eddy stated that one way to incorporate discretion into the code is to consider the street classification – collector roads vs. neighborhood streets. A road with 10,000 vehicles per day should be placed in a different category from another with 1,000 vehicles per day. The

code could be amendment to absolutely prohibit parking along the sidewalk on a collector road; or parallel parking is allowed on neighborhood streets but not on collector roads.

Councilmember Schmidt maintained that quality of life for residents needs to be taken into consideration. Being able to walk safely through a neighborhood, regardless of its location is an important priority.

According to the Land Use Attorney, the Code Compliance Department has functioned largely as reactive and complaint-based, but they also have the ability to be proactive. They put together a list of 8 issues, not in any particular order, that the department either gets complaints about or faces every day in the city, especially during tourists' season. They were hoping for some guidance from the council as to which items are their priority that they can focus on and spend a significant amount of time especially during tourists' season because they have limited resources. The LDC is outdated in a lot of places. Not all of the issues they are facing now are there when the code was written. It is currently being rewritten, but in the meantime, they are looking for direction from the council.

The mayor stated that from the quality of life for the community, his top priority is the short-term rentals. They need to work with their community partners and short-term rental business owners to educate their visitors not only on the city code but also on the safety issues, from rip currents to parking in the rights-of-way.

Councilmember Bagby stated that his priorities are the short-term rentals, the rogue vessels, rights-of-way parking south of US Hwy 98, trash, and signs in the rights-of-way.

Councilmember Schmidt inquired as to the next step in establishing a written policy from the council regarding this issue as they are not allowed to have actionable items at this visioning session.

According to the City Manager, staff could bring back a proposed written policy in a resolution format for council's consideration based on tonight's conversation.

8. COUNCIL DISCUSSION - Priorities

A) Councilmember Schmidt

- The city should do whatever is necessary to assist the lifeguards to secure support from Okaloosa County TDC for the beach safety program. Safety on the beaches is of the utmost importance.
- Sheriff's Department Posse – the city making it a priority to get a posse member to do certain things for the city, possibly to handle parking violations.
- Explore parking garage options to improve parking. Place workforce housing on top of parking garage.
- Joe's Bayou for rogue vessel operators (pay twice the fee) with proper permits and BTR
- Extend access to Henderson Beach State Park – east end entry

B) Councilmember King

- Likes the idea of a city marina – great revenue generating project.
- Public beach (land acquisition)
 - 250' at base of Marler Bridge

C) Councilmember Hebert

- Make priority 1.4 Public “Waterfront” Acquisition.
- Obtain property at base of Marler Bridge – secure help from the TDC
- Empower staff to engage the owner of the new Publix to secure part of land for city center.
- Review city fees for parking
- Increase fees for boat launch at Joe’s Bayou

D) Mayor Wagner

- Ferry system to move waterfront traffic city to city.
- Obtain property at the foot of the Marler Bridge/possible location for the city center.
- In support of public waterfront acquisition.
- Lock in Critical Priority 1.1 as higher priority.
- Looking at attainable workforce housing (possibly on top of parking garage).
- Make the permitting process faster and easier.
- Construction of pickleball courts at the Destin Aquatic Center.
- Annexation.
- Connectivity between agencies, stakeholders, fiber
- Crosstown connector
- No left turn lanes on US Hwy 98 until there is an intersection that allows U-turn. For safety reasons. Coordinate with FDOT.

E) Councilmember Bagby

- They could address more than half of their objectives if they explore the possibility of locating the city center on the property at the base of the bridge.
- Possibly placing the marina at Joe’s Bayou.

F) Councilmember Destin

- Support of the lifeguard and public safety personnel should be a top priority.
- City center – explore other options other than just the Publix Shopping Center property. The city already owns 6-8 acres of property.
- Expediting and making the permitting process faster and easier.
 - This would help generate revenue.
- Acquire property at the base of the Marler Bridge. This would help address a lot of the city’s other issues/priorities.

G) Councilmember Geile

- Concentrate more on benefits for residents as they move forward with their priorities.
 - Focus on beach acquisitions to benefit residents.
 - In placing a city marina at Joe's Bayou, let the businesses pay dock fees.
- Increase parking fees and permit fees substantially higher.

9. **PRIORITIZATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2024 INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS.**

Mr. Eddy noted that all the added objectives that the mayor and council have identified have been listed on the board. There has been no change to the Strategic Objectives 1-1 through 1.11. Each elected official is provided 4“dots.” Red – 4 / Green – 3 / Yellow – 2 / Blue – 1. He asked the Council to select their priority objectives for implementation by placing one or more dots for each objective they wish to support.

The results of the voting are as follows:

Section 1: Adopted Council Objectives FY 2023

Critical Priorities:

- 1.1 -- Offer livable wages and benefits to attract and maintain high caliber, qualified staff (I)
- 1.2 -- Work with stakeholders to pursue the Destin City Center (Phase 1 Feasibility Study) (II, III)

Important Priorities:

- 1.3 -- Complete two-lane crosstown connector (II, V)
- 1.4 -- Public waterfront acquisition initiative (II, III, IV, VI)
- 1.5 -- Underground utilities (II, IV, VI)
- 1.6 -- Stahlman/US 98 pedestrian and vehicle improvement in cooperation with FDOT (II, V)

Desirable Priorities:

- 1.7 -- Annexation of unincorporated enclaves (I)
- 1.8 -- Transit/Trolley System
- 1.9 -- City Marina (Phase I Feasibility Study) (III, V) (Funding in FY 2024)

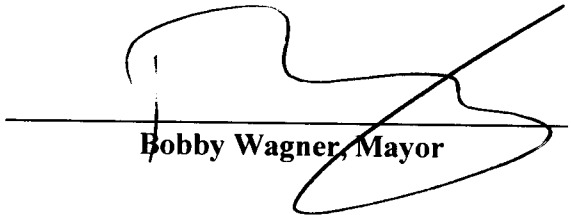
- 1.10 -- Improve parking, explore options (i.e., parking garage, surface parking (V))
- 1.11 -- Beach renourishment, planning and scheduling in partnership with the county and state (II, VI)

- Lifeguards – secure support from Okaloosa County TDC
- Sheriff's Department Posse – for parking
- Parking garage – **3 pts**
- Joe's Bayou for livery vessels
- Task staff with city center concept plan – **1 pt**
- Pickleball at Swim Center – **3 pts**
- Annexation – **6 pts**
- Connectivity
 - Between agencies
 - Stakeholders
 - Fiber (dark capacity)
 - Expand access to Henderson Beach State Park – east end
- Safety improvements – US 98 – left turns – FDOT
- Public beach (land acquisition) – **17 pts**
 - Public waterfront that adds value – 250' at base of bridge – secure help from TDC
- Add arena amphitheater at base of bridge – **3 pts**
- Engage with Publix on city center – **10 pts**
- Review city fees, parking – **4 pts**
- Increase fees for boat launch
- City center at base of bridge property – **8 pts**
 - Garage
 - Marina
 - Pedestrian improvements

- City marina at Joe's Bayou
- Crosstown connector
- Connect municipal surface parking to garages with housing – 1 pt
- Expedite permitting – 4 pts
 - Minor – faster
- Focus on beach acquisitions to benefit residents – 3 pts
- Ferry system to move waterfront traffic city to city
- Lock in 1.1 as higher priority - 5 pts
- Workforce housing

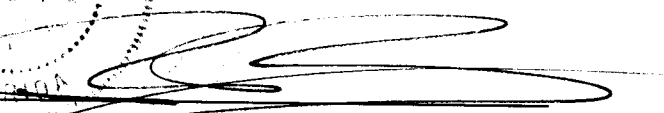
ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.


Bobby Wagner, Mayor

ATTEST:

SEAL


Rey Bailey, City Clerk