

**MINUTES  
WORKSHOP  
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL  
MAY 4, 2023  
ANNEX COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
5:30 PM**

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

**Destin City Council**

Mayor Bobby Wagner (Virtual)  
Councilmember Terésa Hebert  
Councilmember Torey Geile

Mayor Pro Tem Dewey Destin  
Councilmember Jim Bagby  
Councilmember Kevin Schmidt

**City of Destin Staff**

City Manager Lance Johnson  
Records Specialist Sharon Gardner  
Community Development Director Louis Zunguze  
IT Specialist James Lauria  
Land Use Attorney Kimberly Kopp

Deputy Clerk Kim Montgomery  
Senior Planner Daniel Butler  
City Engineer Ryan Scott  
Engineer Assistant II Joe Bodi  
Code Compliance Director Troy Williams

**CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Pro Tem Dewey Destin called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. He called for a moment of silence followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Claude Perry, a Destin resident recommends that the council considers commissioning the HAAS Center to conduct an economic impact study. He stated that the HAAS Center is available to conduct the study for a reasonable amount of \$20,000. He continued that the firm will be able to update the study that they conducted several years ago. He added that the harbor is the economic engine for Destin and so the financial impact of the study to the city and to the harbor capacity is vital.

Mr. John Stevens, a Destin resident and livery operators, stated that he is also a member of the Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee and that one of the committee's recommendations is getting staff to review the water sports coalition's pontoon traffic safety video. He stated this may not be necessary as they received confirmation from the City Manager that their script looks good.

**WORKSHOP**

**A. Harbor Capacity Study Final Report**

Community Development Director Louis Zunguze stressed the 3 main objectives of the Harbor Capacity Study which are as follows:

1. Promote Safety and Enjoyment of Local Waterways.
2. Promote Environmental Health of Harbor and Surrounding Waterways.
3. Promote Economic Development of Businesses Operating Along the Harbor.

He also stated that the tasks that is before the council going forward to review and discuss the findings from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as well the recommendations from the city's Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee; and then to implement policies and regulations addressing issues that have been identified. The overall goal of these policies and regulations should be to ensure that Destin Harbor remains the world class location for both the residents and visitors.

USACE representatives provided the following presentations:

### **Carrying Capacity Study Scope**

1. Identify the Carrying Capacity of Destin Harbor
2. Identify the uses of Destin Harbor
3. Identify the existing and future conditions of Destin Harbor at appropriate PAS level scope
4. Develop recommendations under Strategic Objectives:
  - Promote Safety and Enjoyment of DH and surrounding waterways.
  - Promote Environmental Health of DH and surrounding waterways.
  - Promote Economic Development of businesses along the DH.

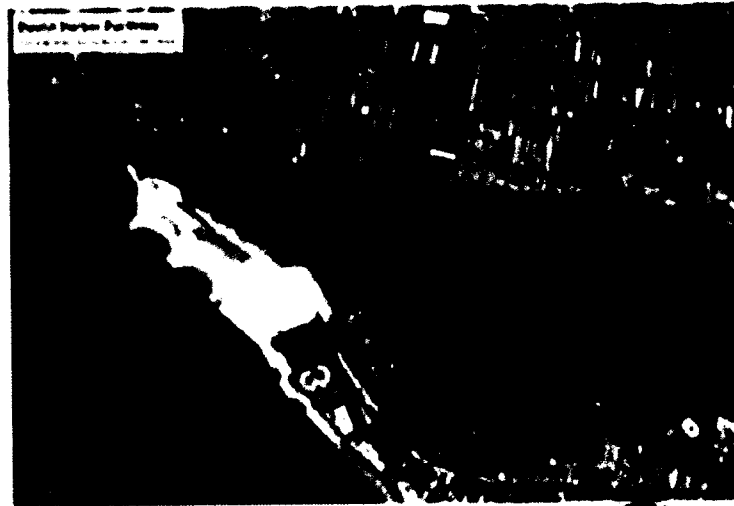
### **Study Timeline**

- November 2021 – Project partnership agreement was signed
- January - April 2022 – Scoping
  - Done collaboratively with city staff
  - Agreed upon study scope was determined by some specific constraints and objectives
  - One of the key drivers of the schedule or timeline was the length of the livery vessel moratorium
  - Objectives were developed within the constraints laying out the charge of a technical assistance
    - To identify the carrying capacity of Destin Harbor
    - Formulate recommendation to support distinct objectives
- May – February 2022 – Field Data Collection
- June 2022 – February 2023 – Analyses & Recommendation Formulation
- March 2023 – Draft Report Completion
- April 2023 – Presentation to Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee
- May 1, 2023 – Final Report Handover
- May 4, 2023 – Presentation to City Council

## 4. CARRYING CAPACITY APPROACH

### DATA COLLECTION DESIGN

- 1 Vessel Traffic at Harbor Entrance
- 2 Harbor Slip Occupancy
- 3 Vehicle Parking Lot Occupancy
- 4 Boat Trailer Parking
- 5 Focus Groups
- 6 Perception Surveys



### Spatial Carrying Capacity

Zones	Usable Acres per Vessel (Peak)	Usable Acres per Vessel (Average)	Usable Acres per Vessel (Low)
Zone A	0.54	1.4	8.9
Zone B	0.41	1.1	12
Zone C	0.98	2.4	12

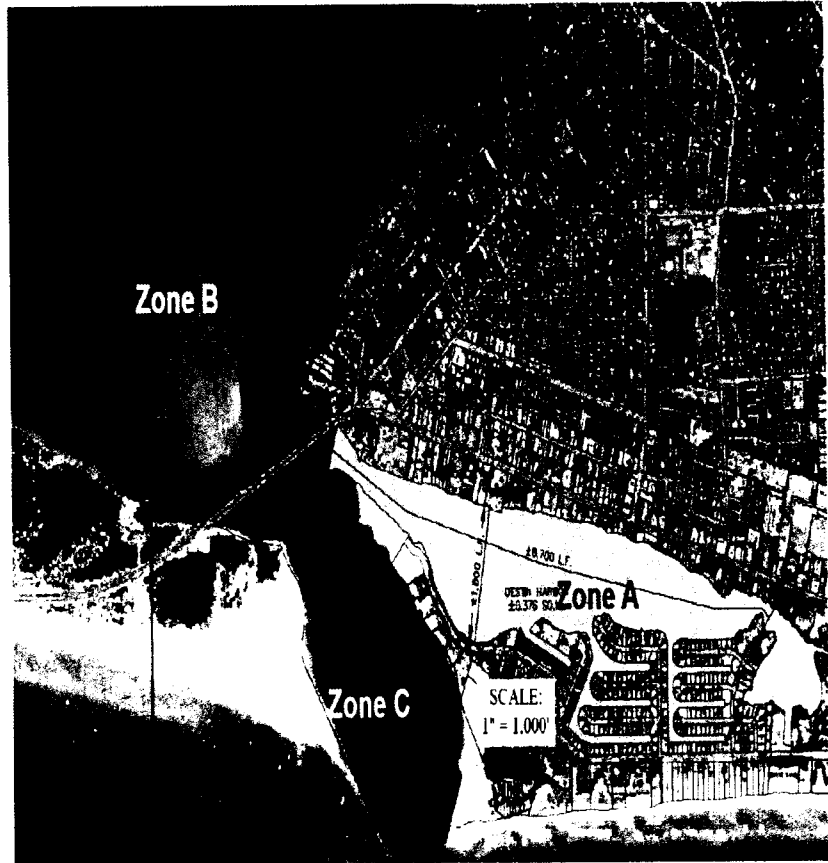
Zone A - Inside the Harbor

Zone B - Crab Island

Zone C - East Pass

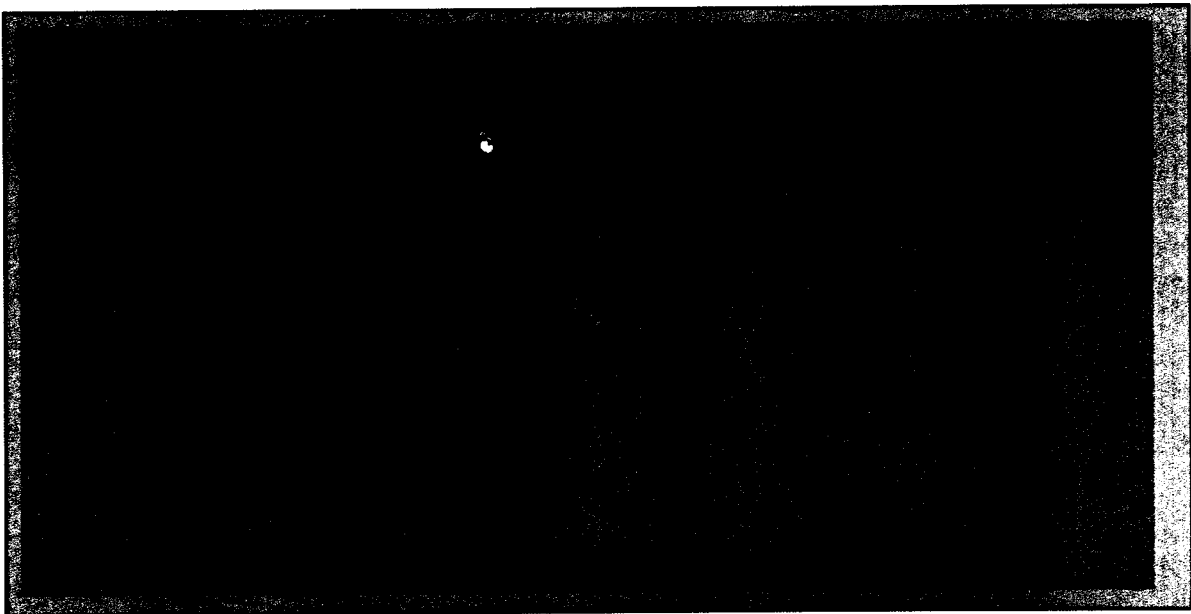
### Spatial Carrying Capacity

- Acres of usable surface water
- Vessel Activity
- Peak use density



## RANGE OF REASONABLE BOATING CAPACITY COEFFICIENTS

### Water and Land Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WALROS)



## **Carrying Capacity Approach**

### Data Collection Design

1. Vessel Traffic at harbor entrance
2. Harbor slip occupancy
3. Vehicle parking lot occupancy
4. Boat Trailer parking
5. Focus group
6. Perception surveys

## **Perception Survey Results**

Sample size: 1,200

Response Count: 229

Response Rate: 19%

How other boaters affect enjoyment of Destin Harbor and surrounding waterways:

- 7% -- added
- 35% -- neither added not detracted
- 21% -- Somewhat detracted
- 19% -- Moderately detracted
- 19% -- Extremely detracted

## **Summary of Findings**

### Spatial Carrying Capacity

Zone A – Inside Destin Harbor  
Zone B – Crab Island  
Zone C – East Pass

### Carrying Capacity

Capacity exceeded  
Capacity exceeded  
Capacity exceeded

### Social Carrying Capacity

Full capacity

### Facility Carrying Capacity

Full capacity

Harbor slips: Harbor District  
Parking lots: Harbor District  
Boat/Kayak launch /Capt Leonard

Average 90% capacity  
Average 80% capacity  
Average 80% capacity - weekend use

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Objective 1: Promote Safety and Enjoyment of Local Waterways

1. A1. Install better defined channel markers equipped with "NO MOORAGE" signs

2. A10, A3. Regulate livery vessel traffic operations to ensure each livery vessel is properly registered. Concurrently identify pre-existing, appropriate City Action Plans to leverage and promote the shuttling of visitors to primary destinations around the Harbor via water taxis and/or tour boats as an alternative to livery vessels.

3. A9, A10. Revisit regulations on issuing vessel permits to minimize over issuance, in combination with regulating livery vessel traffic operations to ensure each livery vessel is properly registered.

4. A1, A6, A7. Install better defined channel markers equipped with "NO MOORAGE" signs, in combination with the creation of a Destin safety video to cover boating, traffic safety, and boating under the influence, in combination with an increase in law enforcement presence to avoid BUIs on vessels and jet skis.

5. A6, B8. Create a Destin safety video and implementation strategy to cover boating, traffic safety, and boating under the influence, in combination with the Coast Guard Auxiliary/Nonprofits conducting vessel inspection trainings.

### Objective 2: Promote Environmental Health of Harbor and Surrounding Waterways

6. B9. Incorporate a more robust water quality monitoring system in the Harbor.

7. B10. Conduct a hydrographic study to optimize pump usage.

8. B11. Study the current effectiveness of the pump system to gather baseline data that could then inform decisions regarding changes to the pump system and its operations.

9. B7. Conduct a comprehensive water quality study (CWQS), including a hydrographic flow study on the pump, to provide baseline data and optimize pump usage.

**Objective 3: Promote Economic Development of Businesses Operating Along the Harbor**

**10. C5. Optimize slip configurations in the Harbor based on user demand and improving slip usage efficiency.**

**11. C7. Implement Comprehensive Parking Strategies to reassess existing parking lot usage to optimize current available parking.**

**Multi-Objective Recommendation: Meets all three strategic objectives**

**12. This recommendation cuts across all three strategic objectives of public safety, environmental health and economic development of the study area. Throughout this technical assistance study, measures of navigational improvements were raised during public meetings and throughout the planning process. It was communicated that further investigation is required for alterations to the existing navigation channel. Under the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) USACE is authorized to plan, design, and construct small scale projects under existing project authority from Congress. Local governments and agencies seeking assistance may request USACE to investigate potential water resources issues that may fit a particular authority. A CAP project is conducted in two phases: a feasibility phase and a design and implementation phase. These two phases are cost-shared between the federal government and the City of Destin. The maximum federal limit is \$10 million per project**

**The Section 107 Small Navigation Improvements of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1960, as amended, is the authority that allows USACE to plan, design and construct small projects for commercial navigation purposes such as channels, breakwaters, and jetties to ensure safe and efficient use of the nation's navigable waterways. Pursuing the CAP Section 107 is recommended to the City of Destin**

**DISCUSSIONS:**

Councilmember Destin asked if they counted slips just down to the Destin Yacht Club in Zone A, or whether they extrapolate the rest of the slips all the way around the north shore and then all the way around the south shore in the capacity study.

USACE Response: During scoping, they counted slips most commonly used and accessible by the public. The assumption was this sample was representative of the entire harbor. One of their constraints was there were certain areas they simply could not access daily during data collection.

Councilmember Destin noted there are literally hundreds of slips as they go around the harbor, and recreational slips in all the canals and all the way around the south shore. He expressed concern that while they captured part of the area where mostly commercial slips are located, they may not have a data set that will help them with their objective. He stated that the object of the study was to determine whether they have too many slips, if they should permit any more slips, if they have too many boats, and whether they allow more livery vessels. He continued that while they made some recommendations on how they might improve the current situation by changing the configuration of the slips, the study does not drill down to the guidance that they need to get to those kinds of conclusions.

USACE Response: Their charge was to develop a recommendation, but anything to really get to that level of granularity would require additional investigation similar to what they proposed for the environmental health objective that further water quality studies would be required. The capacity study points to the fact they have a capacity problem, and that they must analyze that problem and potentially partner in the solution. Their last recommendation was to perform a deeper study. The Section 107 study will be another study which will take longer because it is a larger federal investment. But the result of that study is a recommendation for modifications to the harbor. They will do modifications to the jetties, breakwaters, and channels that need modifications, which would actually result in non-federal and federal co-share. It would be 80% for federal and 20% for non-federal for these kinds of modifications.

Councilmember Bagby inquired as to the city's responsibility on whether to accept or decline any of the recommendations of the 107 study once the result of the study is produced.

USACE Response: They are partner with the city. The city is not directed to do anything. The study itself is co-shared 50-50. The city can come back with a locally prepared plan which could change the cost-share. For instance, if the city asked for something more expensive, then they could potentially have to pay the difference in cost. If the city does not agree with any of the USACE recommendations, then they could simply walk away.

Councilmember Bagby asked whether there have been any recent 107 study in this district.

USACE Response: There may not have had a similar 107 study in this district for several years. There have been plenty in the region, i.e., Jacksonville District has had several.

Councilmember Bagby inquired as to the length of the 107 study.

USACE Response: Maximum length for the 107 study is 24 months.

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Capt Jim Green, Chairman of the Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee discussed the committee's actions with regards to USACE's recommendations as well as added recommendations from the committee:

**Objective 1: Promote Safety and Enjoyment of Local Waterways**

1. **A1.** Install better defined channel markers equipped with “NO MOORAGE” signs.
2. **A10, A3.** Regulate livery vessel traffic operations to ensure each livery vessel is properly registered. Concurrently identify pre-existing, appropriate City Action Plans to leverage and promote the shuttling of visitors to primary destinations around the Harbor via water taxis and/or tour boats as an alternative to livery vessels.
3. **A9, A10.** Revisit regulations on issuing vessel permits to minimize over issuance, in combination with regulating livery vessel traffic operations to ensure each livery vessel is properly registered.
4. **A1, A6, A7.** Install better defined channel markers equipped with “NO MOORAGE” signs, in combination with the creation of a Destin safety video to cover boating, traffic safety, and boating under the influence, in combination with an increase in law enforcement presence to avoid BUIs on vessels and jet skis.
5. **A6, B8.** Create a Destin safety video and implementation strategy to cover boating, traffic safety, and boating under the influence, in combination with the Coast Guard Auxiliary/Nonprofits conducting vessel inspection trainings.

**It was the consensus of the committee members present to support the following recommendations under Objective 1: 1, 3, 4, and 5.** The committee did not support recommendation #2 as it seems this recommendation was more for a commerce area that was split by a waterway; and having water taxi shuttling people around the waterways. The committee did not want the City of Destin to waste any energy on it because they have everything commercial on the north side of the harbor in the festive marketplace, and that the purpose of the boardwalk is for connectivity.

**Objective 2: Promote Environmental Health of Harbor and Surrounding Waterways**

6. **B9.** Incorporate a more robust water quality monitoring system in the Harbor.
7. **B10.** Conduct a hydrographic study to optimize pump usage.
8. **B11.** Study the current effectiveness of the pump system to gather baseline data that could then inform decisions regarding changes to the pump system and its operations.
9. **B7.** Conduct a comprehensive water quality study (CWQS), including a hydrographic flow study on the pump, to provide baseline data and optimize pump usage.

**It was the consensus of the committee members present to support the following recommendations under Objective 2: 6, 7, 8, and 9**

**Objective 3: Promote Economic Development of Businesses Operating Along the Harbor**

10. Optimize slip configurations in the Harbor based on user demand and improve slip usage efficiency.

11. C7. Implement Comprehensive Parking Strategies to reassess existing parking lot usage to optimize current available parking.

**It was the consensus of the committee members present to support the following recommendations under Objective 3: 10 and 11**

**Multi-Objective Recommendations: Meets all three strategic objectives.**

12. This recommendation cuts across all three strategic objectives of public safety, environmental health and economic development of the study area. Throughout this technical assistance study, measures of navigational improvements were raised during public meetings and throughout the planning process. It was communicated that further investigation is required for alterations to the existing navigation channel. Under the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) USACE is authorized to plan, design, and construct small scale projects under existing project authority from Congress. Local governments and agencies seeking assistance may request USACE to investigate potential water resources issues that may fit a particular authority. A CAP project is conducted in two phases: a feasibility phase and a design and implementation phase. These two phases are cost-shared between the federal government and the City of Destin. The maximum federal limit is \$10 million per project.

The Section 107 Small Navigation Improvements of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1960, as amended, is the authority that allows USACE to plan, design, and construct small projects for commercial navigation purposes such as channels, breakwaters, and jetties to ensure safe and efficient use of the nation's navigable waterways. Pursuing CAP Section 107 is recommended to the City of Destin.

Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee's additional recommendations for the city council's consideration:

**Motion to recommend to the city council to have the city work with the county and the industry in reaching out to the National Park Service to determine their Crab Island regulatory guidelines and timelines and how the city, county, and industry can be involved in the regulatory process, passed 4-0.**

**Motion to recommend to the city council to direct staff to install petroleum absorption in stormwater runoff that is diverted into the Destin Harbor from US Hwy 98, passed 4-0.**

Motion to recommend to the city council that a CAP Section 107 study be conducted with the Harbor Capacity Study data to further understand the amount and demographics of the slips available in the Destin Harbor along with adjusting the location and size of the navigable channel and ecological benefit of flushing the harbor with the shoals dredged to accommodate the modified channel's location; and using the BP Triumph funds where it can possibly be used, passed 4-0.

Motion to recommend to the city council to enact an 8-year livery vessel moratorium to allow time for further studies to be conducted to move and/or widen the navigable channel to provide property owners with the ability to expand their dockage as well as provide a balance of availability of commercial slips for other industries in the Destin Harbor, passed 4-0.

Motion to recommend to the city council to have the city reach out to the county to determine the feasibility of creating a county-wide livery vessel moratorium, passed 4-0.

Motion to recommend to the city council that under:

Objective 1, recommendation #1 – *Install better define channel markers equipped with “NO MOORAGE” signs* – to add a “no wake” signs on the bridge along with the current recommendation from USACE.

Objective 1, item #3 – *Revisit regulations on issuing vessel permits to minimize over issuance, in combination with regulating livery vessel traffic operations to ensure livery vessels are properly registered* – to add state's definitions for livery, which includes boating clubs, kayaks and Paddleboards, bareboat charters, and peer-to-peer boat rentals. Also, to adopt some Okaloosa County regulations which includes requiring physical location/dock for livery, requiring chase vessel, increasing employee training requirements, requiring liveries to attend the Okaloosa County Pre-Season Watersports Meeting held by the county, increasing the rental customer operating requirements, adopting the vendors use of wristbands, and include the news FWC standards to include renter attestation checklist and insurance to cover renters. Motion passed 4-0.

Motion to recommend to the city council that under:

Objective 1, recommendation #5 – *Create a Destin safety video and implementation strategy to cover boating, traffic safety, ana boating under the influence, in combination with the Coast Guard Auxiliary/Nonprofits conducting vessel inspection training* - to direct staff to review the Watersports Coalition pontoon safety video with recommendations as soon as possible; to add more trash cans along the harbor and Norriego Point to prevent trash from being thrown into the harbor; and pushing forward with as Fuel Contingency Plan for all fuel facilities and certain businesses in the harbor. Motion passed 4-0.

Motion to recommend to the city council that under:

Objective 2, recommendation #6 – *Incorporate a more robust water quality monitoring system in the harbor* – to have the city work with the

Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance and/or city staff to conduct water testing in the harbor. Motion passed 4-0.

**Motion to recommend to the city council that under:**

**Objective 3, recommendation # 10 – *Optimize slip configurations in the harbor based on user demand and city needs to improve slip usage efficiency* – that for any new dock construction or modification that a number of transient slips council deems appropriate be included in any commercial docks. Motion passed 4-0.**

**Motion to recommend to the city council that under:**

**Objective 3, recommendation #11 – *Implement comprehensive parking strategies to reassess current parking lot usage to optimize current available parking* – to analyze the current shared parking for the businesses to determine any overlap. Motion passed 4-0.**

**Motion to recommend to the city council to keep the current committee in place as a monitoring agency to evaluate the effectiveness of the recommendations that the city council ultimately decides to put in place, passed 4-0.**

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**DISCUSSIONS:**

Referencing Objective 1, USACE Recommendation #2 as follows:

*Regulate livery vessel traffic operations to ensure each livery vessel is properly registered. Concurrently identify pre-existing, appropriate City Action Plans to leverage and promote the shuttling of visitors to primary destinations around the Harbor via water taxis and/or tour boats as an alternative to livery vessels.*

Councilmember Bagby stated that the city has no problem creating regulations. The problem is enforcing them.; and that the only way for the city to accomplish this is to put “gate keepers” at the entrance to the harbor to check every single boat that comes through. He asked what actions USACE feels the city needs to take in order to accomplish this particular recommendation.

USACE Response: This is not about physically tracking boats in the water. There is a process involved in their permits before they get in the water. The recommendation is to develop a centralized database and a data management plan. Whenever permits come through, they will be entered into a database so they could keep track of all of them. During the course of the study, they have also spoken to some of the law enforcement personnel who also provided some feedback to the recommendation. They suggested having some level of law enforcement and active regulation along the channel. Some of the operators may be new and not familiar with the area and just adding to the congestion. There is very limited way for them to track the place of origin for these vessels.

According to Councilmember Bagby, they can have a list of the number of every boat in the county, but the problem they are trying to solve is managing the harbor and keeping it from being over-populated. He reiterated that there is no way to do this unless they place a couple of officers at the gate to check every boat that enters the water.

Councilmember Hebert stated there are thousands of boats from other cities that come to the harbor. They will never get a list of pontoon boats coming out of cities like Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Shalimar, and Navarre. Other cities are allowing their business owners to incorporate more pontoon boats to their livery count because they are not covered under Destin's livery vessel moratorium.

Councilmember Bagby noted that the harbor is already over-capacity or at least near capacity as they already have too many vessels. He asked for USACE's opinion with regards to one of the committee's recommendations which was *"to enact an 8-year livery vessel moratorium to allow time for further studies to be conducted to move and/or widen the navigable channel to provide property owners with the ability to expand their dockage as well as provide a balance of availability of commercial slips for other industries in the Destin Harbor"* as building more docks would create more slips in the harbor.

USACE Response: Creating more slips in the harbor without addressing the current situation would certainly be a struggle; however, this is the city's recommendation and USACE needs to have more information to fully understand the recommendation before they could render an opinion.

Capt Green explained that many of the vessels that circle the harbor are possibly sightseeing or looking for a place to dock, similar to a lot of automobiles looking for a place to park in the harbor district. Dockage for commercial enterprises is at a premium and has a very small window as compared to the other slips in the harbor. Moving the channel in the middle and allowing them to increase their dockage and add more transient slips that would create more places for boats entering the harbor from different locations to dock which would help relieve the congestion in the harbor. One of the committee's other recommendations was to increase transient slips on new dock constructions or expansion. He also noted that livery vessels outnumber all the other industries operating in the harbor by almost 3 to 1. Livery operator could put 4 to 5 pontoon boats in one slip and pay a certain amount of money each month while a charter boat can only have one revenue center in that slip. The main reason they recommend enacting an 8-year livery vessel moratorium is for preservation of their founding industry as well as other industries that operate in the harbor. He continued that they would need a letter from the county, the entity that established the channel, to get the 107-study approved. The study will take about 24 to 36 months to complete and at least another two years to implement the result of the study. Once the channel is moved, it could take another two years before additional dockage can be built. He added that moving the channel would allow for a balance of water-based industries to operate in the harbor. It would also allow for a greater operation in a densely, bottlenecked area.

Councilmember Bagby stated that having more transient list would only invite more vessels from other places; adding he is not in favor of giving them a place park and a place to operate in the Destin Harbor.

Councilmember Bagby asked if the city could create some kind of policy that would require a parking pass for boats that charges a specified amount annually.

The Land Use Attorney noted that it is not in their current code, but they could certainly amend the ordinance to make it happen. However, some of the slips are private property and so private property owners must be willing to participate in the program.

Councilmember Hebert commented that the committee's recommendation to "*reach out to the county to determine the feasibility of creating a county-wide livery vessel moratorium*" is a great idea. If they will put an 8-year moratorium on their own businesses, they need to do it across the board, and that she feels the county would agree to it.

Councilmember Schmidt asked for the exact definition of "carrying capacity."

USACE Response: They looked at it in 3 different components. One was the spatial carrying capacity is the number of vessels that can safely operate and recreate on a specific water surface at a given time.

Councilmember Geile opined that the above definition is incomplete and that there are some elements that were left out. The carrying capacity has to mean that at some point there is a detrimental impact if the carrying capacity is exceeded, such as environmental or safety issues.

USACE Response: Another way they define carrying capacity is the number of people that can safely and enjoyably occupy a given water space without a loss in quality. For instance, there may safely operate one boat per acre, but can it be considered an enjoyable experience.

Councilmember Schmidt asked whether they have studied all the residential docks on the south sides and to the east of the harbor and that they are all included in the count.

USACE Response: They were not. During scoping it was determined there is a finite amount of resources and time, and that they have a narrow window of data collection; and so they went ahead with what they can access.

Councilmember Schmidt inquired as to the purpose of studying Crab Island if they were not studying the actual docks and vessels in the harbor.

USACE Response: It was included in this portion of the spatial carrying capacity because those are the immediate recreational areas where people go to recreate.

Councilmember Schmidt asked how the scope of the study came about.

Community Development Director Louis Zunguze stated that the scope of the study was negotiated between the city and USACE.

Councilmember Schmidt stated that he was expecting more to come out of the study and that he is a bit disappointed as he does not quite see a sure-fire solution to their problems in the harbor. He also stated that they need to think long and hard about what they are allowing in the harbor and not just focusing on one industry which is livery vessel.

Councilmember Geile noted that the study shows that livery vessels outnumber all the other industries operating in the harbor by almost 3 to 1.

Councilmember Destin pointed out that the 107 study will be required to really get to that level of granularity or to obtain the minutest detail that they asked for.

With regards to the survey results, Councilmember Bagby suggests they focus on the following two questions and responses to these questions:

*#18 – Are there any locations in the Destin Harbor or surrounding waterways where you feel unsafe because of other boats/watercrafts?*

*Yes – 116*

*No – 102*

Councilmember Bagby noted that a majority of the people surveyed felt unsafe in the Destin Harbor or surrounding waterways.

*#22 – How did the number of other boaters affect your enjoyment of the harbor this past summer?*

*Added 14*

*Neither added nor detracted 72*

*Somewhat detracted 44*

*Moderately detracted 39*

*Extremely detracted 39*

Councilmember Bagby pointed out that those respondents that said the number of boaters in the harbor detracted from their enjoyment outnumbered those that said they added to their enjoyment by almost 9-1. Based on this information, they may not need more parking spaces for boats because many of those people may not be coming back.

Councilmember Bagby would like to see a prioritization of the Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee's recommendation and then be brought back to the council for their consideration and action. He continued that some of these recommendations are quite simple that this council can readily do such as extending the terms of this committee or creating the safety video, which is already ongoing. There are some that may need to be reworked. He added that he expects to see the Section 107 study to be the number one priority because it has the longest lead time for the most part. They may need to get started with this study right away or some of the other items will not get done.

There was a general consensus among the council in support of Councilmember Bagby's recommendation.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mr. John Stephens, a Destin resident, livery operator, and member of the Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee, announced that he was he who spearheaded the efforts to create the

safety videos, and that they will start filming the third one very soon. He also stated that if modification is needed for the initial two safety videos, the watersports coalition may need some help with the funding from the TDC.

Mr. Mike Dombrowski, a Destin resident and member of the Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee, expressed concern over the definition that is being used for “carrying capacity” and “capacity.” He stated that a “capacity” is simply a utilization of the docks. He also noted it is being reported on Table 6 of the USACE final report that utilization of the Harbor District slips is in 60 to 90 percent capacity. It is also being report it is in full capacity with regards to “carrying capacity.” He stated that 60 to 90 percent does not equate to a full capacity. He continued that this information will be misinterpreted once it is released to the public. A lot of people already believe the harbor is in full capacity, and no additional docks or boats should be allowed, which is not the case at this point. He added that the study that was just conducted was more of an inventory study rather than a carrying capacity study.

Mr. Dombroski also noted that he resides on the harbor, and that he observes that a lot of the problems occur at the entrance to the harbor, which was not addressed in the study. There are a number of different studies that looked at navigational channels, which is the same exact thing as a roadway study. They consider different factors such as the number of lanes, traffic condition, and vehicular speed. He added that they could increase the carrying capacity by expanding their navigational channel.

Mr. Dombroski also reported that one of the biggest problems that he has observed was on the northside of Norriego Point where a lot of people dock their boats. He has observed people swimming across the channel, sometimes with their dog and drink while doing the backstroke coming from Margaritaville.

According to Mr. Christian Meyers, a Destin resident, it is almost a daily occurrence around noon to 2:00 p.m. during the summertime to see three pontoon boats tied together, with an operator operating the middle boat. They come from the bridge, down to the harbor and to their location on the harbor. It seemed they have run out of boats to rent, and they are bringing back more boats. It is wide and dangerous, and a hindrance to the other boats. He stated they ought to have some kind of rule and enforcement for this kind of situation. He added there is a limit to the number of boats each operator could rent on the harbor.

Mr. Chuck Heir, a Destin resident and livery operator, explained that the people moving those boats are employees of the company. They are coming from the Destin Marina and those boats have probably been repaired and being brought back 2 or 3 at a time to their spots on the harbor. He added they are all medallion vessels operated by professional boaters.

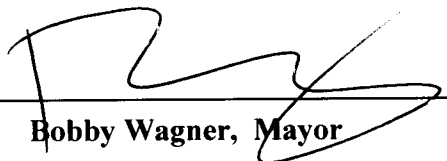
Councilmember Destin noted that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Marine Patrol, the Sheriff’s deputies, and the US Coast Guard are the entities that enforce unsafe boating activities on the harbor. They work very hard and make the efforts to do their job. It was concluded that most people surveyed had the perception that the harbor is unsafe, and so they will not be coming back.

Mr. Chuck Heir stated that he is also frustrated with the results of the Harbor Capacity Study; however, USACE was only working the scope that was provided to them. The city was not very specific on what they want out of the survey and so pertinent questions were not asked. He also stated that as livery operator, he takes great exceptions to decisions being made about his

industry and his business; adding they should not make decisions on people's livelihood based on perceptions and assumptions. They need hard facts and data. This is a tourist town and people come here to do things and to have a good time. They need only to look at the reviews of all these fishing boats and livery businesses from thousands of visitors saying they had the time of their lives and that Destin is an awesome town.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.

  
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**Bobby Wagner, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

  
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**Rey Bailey, City Clerk**