

**LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 22, 2026 - 5:30 P.M.
DESTIN CITY HALL BOARDROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Wood called the Local Planning Agency Meeting to order on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., in the Destin City Hall Boardroom; with the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

2. ROLL CALL:

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Members Absent</u>	<u>Staff Members Present</u>
James T. Wood, Jr.		Rey Bailey City Clerk
Todd Buhr		Daniel Butler Principal Planner
Jay Purut		David Prichard CD Director
Marcie Bell		Chris Rush Planner
Ken Wampler		Kimberly Kopp City Attorney
Tammy Weidenhamer		
Bree Uptigrove		

3. AGENDA APPROVAL:

Motion to approve the agenda with no changes was made by Agency member Buhr with ~~Chairman~~ Wampler providing the second. The motion passed 6-0.

Agency member

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- **December 4, 2025 Minutes**

Motion to approve December 4, 2025 meeting minutes as written was made Agency member Bell, with Agency member Wampler providing the second. The motion passed 6-0.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Land Development Code (LDC) Text Amendment Application: Adding Coffee and Tea Manufacturing Use to Table 7-2

Mr. Daniel Butler, Senior Planner explained the Text Amendments by Perfect Cup LLC, intention is to provide toll-roasting and private labeling services for the coffee industry. He further explained how currently, coffee roasting/processing/packaging is not currently specifically listed in the city's land use categories as written, prompting the need for a code amendment. The

requester has indicated interest in operating in an existing facility with potential for expansion depending on forecasted growth.

Additionally, the intent of the Industrial zoning district: to provide strategically located sites for industrial and limited commercial development, noting the general location focus in the city and to exclude residential uses except limited security/custodian situations.

- Mr. Butler explained how the Comprehensive Plan policy guidance sites the following:
 - Manufacturing/assembling/distribution/warehousing and similar uses to be regulated through appropriate procedures and substantive policy.
 - Potentially harmful environmental impacts must be mitigated prior to development approval.
 - Such uses can generate heavy truck traffic, require significant acreage, and is difficult to screen/buffer from residential areas; therefore, they should be sited appropriately.
 - The City's plan includes working with industrial interests to pursue selective industrial expansion.

Mr. Butler stated that staff recommends for the Local Planning Agency (LPA) forward to City Council a recommendation to allow Coffee and Tea Manufacturing as a Conditional Use in the Industrial district, instead of a permitted use for the following reasons:

- Some Industrial parcels are near residential areas.
- Potential emissions/odors and other impacts could be more effectively addressed through the conditional use review, including buffers, screening, and mitigation requirements.
- A conditional use framework enables case-by-case review by the LPA and City Council, requiring site plans and enforceable mitigation measures tailored to each proposal.

The City Attorney clarified for the members the following:

- This is a code amendment, not an approval for one individual project.
- If adopted, any property owner/business in the Industrial district could apply for coffee/tea manufacturing as a conditional use.
- The requester is not an "applicant" for a specific development order until a development application is submitted.

According to the applicant, Mr. Webb Rouse, he is proposing a small-footprint startup operation with the following equipment:

- Two roasters, each up to 25 pounds per batch.
- Estimated output described as roughly one sack per hour (described as about 130–150 pounds/hour) on an 8-hour shift.
- Estimated annual capacity stated around 200,000–250,000 pounds/year for the initial setup.

- Long-term growth goal described as 2-4 million pounds/year, with the requester stating that once production exceeded roughly 250,000–300,000 pounds, they would consider a larger facility elsewhere.
- Business identity/online presence
 - A board member noted they searched “Perfect Cupp, LLC” online and saw varied references (including coffee-related offerings and an unrelated housing/apartment connection), seeking clarification.
 - According to Mr. Rouse, Perfect Cupp, LLC is primarily a service company to the coffee business (private label/toll roasting).
 - The requester explained they may launch separate consumer brands under different LLCs, giving an example brand name mentioned during discussion, and referenced a holding structure for different investments.
 - Board asked whether coffee would be sold from the site.
 - Requester stated the facility would manufacture/roast coffee and may allow walk-in purchases of bagged coffee in pounds but would not operate as a café (no drip coffee/service for on-site consumption).
 - Requester stated a business partner has extensive experience installing commercial roasters and has relationships in the industry.
 - Mr. Rouse indicated there are pending contracts/interest for co-roasting services.

Chairman Wood commented on the presence of odor from the nearby water/sewer utility facility noting that both a sewage plant and coffee roasting can create odors, and emphasized on how the Conditional Use process would require proposals to return for review. Which would allow the City Council to add conditions to mitigate impacts, such as odor.

Mr. Rouse acknowledged awareness of neighboring conditions and indicated his understanding for those concerns.

- The following concerns were also addressed:
 - Additional concerns were voiced about pests/rodents and operational controls.
 - Requester stated they had registered with and been initially inspected by the Health Department and would maintain required controls such as pest control contracts as part of compliance.
- Parking and staffing
 - Board asked about expected staffing and whether parking would be sufficient.
 - Requester anticipated approximately one employee initially and referenced existing leased/overflow parking arrangements.
 - Staff stated parking compliance would be reviewed at the time of the specific development application.

Motion by Agency member Buhr, seconded by Agency member Wampler for the Local Planning Agency to recommend City Council approve the Text Amendment by adding Coffee and Tea Manufacturing as a Conditional Use within the Industrial zoning district in Table 7-2. The motion passed 7-0.

B. Proposed Ordinance 26-05-LC - Revising Parking Reductions (Article 8 Update)

Senior Planner Daniel Butler explained that Ordinance 26-05-LC revises the City's parking reduction language, currently in Article 8 of the Land Development Code. Currently, the LDC includes multiple ways to reduce required parking, including:

- An automatic 20% reduction for being in the Multi-Modal Transportation District (MMTD).
- Paid reductions - about \$2,000 per space or a prorated amount in areas like Crystal Beach.
- Parking agreements, joint use, shared parking
- Other allowances/reductions based on low usable floor area percentages.

Mr. Butler explained the city has long discussed parking problems, and City Council has directed staff to bring forward an ordinance to remove parking-reduction options.

- Council's first review & adjustment: Staff's original draft, was heard at the City Council in January, language that was struck through was essentially all parking reduction options. After discussion, Council showed interest in keeping shared/joint use options because they could be beneficial, on a case-by-case basis.
- What staff proposes:
 1. Shared parking analysis (off-site shared parking).
 - Example: a church sharing parking with a business that operates on different days/times, via an agreement.
 2. Joint use / mixed-use shared parking (on-site, same property).
 - Different uses on the same site with different peak demands (AM vs. PM), supported by an engineer's analysis.
- Key procedural change:
 - Current code: City Manager "shall" approve reductions if an engineer submits the analysis.
 - Proposed change: City Council "may" approve (discretionary basis).
 - Staff also added language so any developments using a shared parking agreement becomes a "Major Development Order", meaning it must go to City Council for a public hearing to approve or deny.
 - Mr. Butler emphasized this prevents Council from having "hands tied" under mandatory approval language.
- Other change: Staff proposes eliminating the "maximum parking" cap that existed under the old MMTD rules. Parking would be treated as a minimum requirement only, not a maximum limit.

Chairman Wood called for a motion for discussion purposes.

Motion by Agency member Bell, seconded by Agency member Purut to recommend the Local Planning Agency recommends that City Council adopt Ordinance 26-05-LC.

According to Mr. Butler, the currently the LDC includes multiple parking reduction options, including:

- Automatic 20% reduction for being located in the Multi-Modal Transportation District (MMTD).
- Paying \$2,000 (or prorated amount) per space within Crystal Beach.
- Parking agreements / joint use / shared parking agreements.
- Allowance reductions based on low usable floor area among other methods.
- The reasoning for this ordinance is the ongoing concerns about a citywide parking problem; City Council directed staff to bring forward an ordinance to remove a number of parking reduction options.
- Prior Council direction: An earlier draft largely removed all parking reduction options, but Council discussed that shared parking/joint use may still be useful on a case-by-case basis.
- Staff's revised approach in this ordinance:
 - Removes all parking reduction options except two:
 - Shared parking analysis (generally off-site shared parking; example: church sharing parking with a business with different operating days/times)
 - Joint use / mixed-use shared parking (different uses on the same property with different peak parking demands; analysis by engineer demonstrates AM/PM peaks)
 - No change to the technical requirements/components of the shared parking analysis, those remain as currently required.
 - Changes approval language from "City Manager shall approve" to "City Council may" approve shared parking reductions.
 - Intent: Council would have discretion to approve or deny rather than being required to approve, if an engineer analysis is submitted.
 - Any development proposing a shared parking agreement/analysis would be treated as a Major Development Order, requiring City Council review.
 - Eliminate the existing maximum parking cap tied to the old MMTD table; parking becomes a minimum requirement rather than a maximum limit.

Agency member Wampler expressed concern about existing operations with approved parking reductions and whether they are grandfathered.

The City Attorney explained how they are covered under the legal nonconforming use provisions already in the code. She clarified the reduction runs with the land and that a transfer of ownership does not negate it. Additionally, a nonconforming situation cannot be expanded without coming into compliance; changing/expanding the use would require meeting current parking requirements.

Agency member Buhr board member highlighted specific shared parking covenant/recording language and emphasized that if adopted, it should be integrated consistently into the LDC rewrite (potentially also appearing in other articles, e.g., Article 6).

- Staff clarified that despite adoption of the mobility plan and mobility fees, parking reductions remained because reductions were broader than just the MMTD.
 - Context provided: A recent large development application underscored Council's desire to remove mandatory reductions immediately so projects cannot "slip in" before the full LDC rewrite is complete.

With no further discussion, Chairman Wood called for the vote, the motion passed 7-0.

C. Proposed Ordinance 26-04-LC - Land Development Code Article 6 - General Development Regulations Rewrite.

Mr. Butler explained Article 6 focuses on "general development" standards used across most projects and provided the following:

- Highlighted the key areas consolidated, reformatted, and reorganized, including:
- Landscaping, fences/gates, and buffers (consolidated from scattered locations and "deconflicted" based on feedback).
- Lighting regulations consolidated from multiple sections of the LDC.
- Parking regulations reorganized for parking agreements (shared parking/off-site parking), with parking ratios/requirements handled in a different article.
- Section 6.02 Access management moved from current Article 8, including:
 - FDOT clear zones, site-vision triangles, and standards limiting placement of improvements in those areas.
 - Regulation of access/ingress/egress.
- General development requirements consolidated, including erosion, vibration, and dust control.
- Other general provisions mentioned: standard easements, boardwalk development requirements, construction activity requirements, and concurrency management updates (traffic/concurrency replaced by the Mobility Plan) and reorganized Level of Service concepts.

❖ Staff's recap of major discussion topics from the August 2024 City Council workshop

- **Tandem parking**
 - Current LDC limits residential tandem parking such that residents effectively cannot have more than one vehicle parked behind another for required parking credit.

- Direction from LPA/Council: allow residential properties (including short-term rentals/STRs) to use more than two tandem spaces if certain criteria are met (included in Article 6 draft).
- **Shuttle parking**
 - Water sports businesses asked about shuttle parking as a way to reduce required parking.
 - Decision: do not reduce parking requirements based on shuttle service because of the risk that shuttle may cease if business changes.
 - Result: Article 6 remains silent on shuttle-based reductions.
- **Sewer connection**
 - Existing requirement: properties with ability to connect must connect to sewer within one year, but historically not actively enforced.
 - Direction: retain the requirement and actively enforce it going forward.
 - Staff stated they are working with Destin Water Users to identify properties and begin enforcement once the code is adopted.
- **Tree removal**
 - Maintain current approach: single-family residential properties generally do not need a tree removal permit.
 - Added protection for “Heritage Trees” permit required for residential tree removal only if the tree is 36 inches+ in diameter.
 - Non-residential properties: must provide a tree survey identifying trees 12 inches+ in diameter as part of permitting/review.
- **Common boundary buffer**
 - Current code requires a 5-foot vegetated buffer along property lines.
 - Direction: buffers are not necessary between single-family/duplex lots of similar intensity (setbacks already address separation).
 - Multifamily and non-residential still require landscape buffers.
 - New screening: if commercial/non-residential abuts a residential zoning district or residential development, require buffer + masonry wall.
 - Even if buffering is reduced, stormwater rules still apply (cannot discharge stormwater onto neighboring property) and staff will review this during permitting review process.
- **Fences**
 - Code currently limits fence height within the first five feet of the front property line “front perimeter landscape area,” however, this conflicts with Florida Building Code’s pool barrier requirements (minimum 4-foot fence).
 - Past applicability was not uniform as certain older district areas were exempt.
 - Staff proposed exceptions allowing taller fences in the front perimeter landscape area:
 - For single-family/duplex in Village, Harbor, or Holiday Isle planning areas; where required by building code (e.g., pool fencing).

Motion Agency member Wampler, with Agency member Bell providing the second, to recommend the approval of Ordinance 26-04-LC to City Council.

- Chairman Wood described prior situations where items were sent back and noted the board sometimes approves contingent on changes.
 - He emphasized the need for:
 - Specific requested language when directing edits,
 - Confidence that revisions will return exactly as requested, and
 - Avoiding repeated “ping-pong” between board/staff that delays Council action by a month per meeting cycle.
 - Vice Chair Buhr acknowledged the comment but emphasized that with the rewrite, they must ensure to it right, because code language can last decades.
 - Example referenced: nonconforming structures language improved through multiple iterations after unintended consequences were identified only when rewritten language was seen. He noted that Article 6 was last before them on August 8, 2024, and the current draft did not clearly show all edits and since that date; significant changes/relocations were not readily visible as tracked changes.
- ❖ **“Design Manual” removed and replaced by “city standards”**
- Vice Chair noted older drafts referenced “in accordance with the design manual,” but that language now reads “city standards” and questioned whether the Design Manual still exists.

Mr. Butler explained how the former city engineer (Ryan Scott) created the Design Manual to streamline and guide development submittals. However, the current City Engineer, Community Development Director, and City Attorney raised concerns that publishing a design manual could increase liability by suggesting the City instructs “how to build/design.” Therefore, the decision was made to scrap the Design Manual and keep enforceable requirements within the LDC.

The City Attorney explained that for enforcement reasons, standards should be in the code; and having a separate manual was not preferred.

- Vice Chair raised concern about content previously assumed to be in the companion Design Manual:
 - Some items may still be necessary (e.g., turning radii, safety/engineering standards).
- **Staff response:**
 - No precise “percentage” analysis cited, but city engineer reviewed which standards belong in the LDC.
 - Staff noted they still need to decide whether remaining standards will go into another article or be inserted into Article 6.
 - Some items in the old manual had mistakes (including radii).
 - City engineer is concerned about overly prescriptive requirements without site context; professional engineers should design site-specific elements.
 - Plan is to create a “City Standards Manual” (roads and similar infrastructure), referenced by the code and described by participants as “a design manual by another name,” but more conventional.

- Vice Chair’s concern: “city standards” is lowercase and undefined; suggested defining “City Standards” in the glossary or otherwise clarifying what documents are incorporated by reference.
- ❖ **Example of ambiguity: “other landscape features in compliance with the city standards”**
 - Vice Chair Buhr directed the members and staff to Section 6.02.02 (right-of-way activities/permits) and flagged the exception language allowing mailboxes, sod, irrigation systems, and “other landscape features in compliance with the city standards.”
 - He stated the phrase was vague and could be hard to enforce or could unintentionally allow prohibited right-of-way improvements (“open enough to drive a truck through”).
 - Another member agreed the new “city standards” phrase may have added ambiguity rather than reduced it.
- **Right-of-way parking, “storage,” and trailers discussion (Section 6.02 / page 5 discussion)**
 - **New language noted:**
 - Vice Chair stated an item labeled “#8” was new since August 8, 2024, and addressed “storage” of vehicles/trailers in the right-of-way.
 - He supported prohibiting long-term problems in the right-of-way but questioned:
 - What does “storage” mean versus “parking”?
 - How would code enforcement define and prove “storage” consistently?
 - **Definition and enforcement concerns:**
 - Referenced challenges with the existing “occasional” right-of-way parking allowance in residential areas:
 - Occasional is described as irregular/infrequent, but if someone parks nightly and moves the car, is that still “occasional” under the code?
 - Asked staff how “storage” would be defined and enforced, especially when vehicles move slightly or intermittently.
 - **Board examples and intent:**
 - Members referenced known problem properties (e.g., Old Destin) where multiple vehicles sit in the right-of-way appearing “stored,” including:
 - Inoperable vehicles, flat tires,
 - Expired plates / removed plates.
 - Members agreed the true target is derelict/inoperable/unregistered “junk” vehicles and not ordinary day-to-day parking.
 - **Balancing community standards vs overreach:**
 - The Agency members stressed wanting a clean, resort-quality community appearance without making rules so strict that residents and working businesses feel pushed out.
 - Comments noted other communities where high-value homes are next to properties with many vehicles parked visibly; board members acknowledged they don’t want that for Destin.

- Emphasized discussion is about the public right-of-way, not private yards/garages.
- Additionally, they all agreed that Destin is full of water sports operators and service businesses and cautioned against language that unintentionally penalizes legitimate activity.
- **Possible approaches discussed**
 - Delete #8 as redundant and unclear.
 - Amend #7 to explicitly include trailers (and possibly “parking/storage”) while keeping the existing residential “occasional” framework.
 - Suggestion: prohibit “long-term storage of inoperable/unregistered” vehicles rather than using the undefined word “storage.”
 - Discussion about whether to simply prohibit trailers in the right-of-way:
 - Some were supportive, but concerns were raised about practical exceptions (boat loading/unloading, landscape crews, construction activity).
 - Chairman Wood explained nuance: many driveways include portions of public right-of-way; a blanket prohibition could make routine driveway-end parking illegal. He described how neighborhood design affects compliance:
 - Sidewalks can reduce usable driveway length; some areas can park many vehicles due to lack of sidewalks and different layout.
 - As families grow and car counts increase, garages are often used for storage with no rule requiring they remain empty.
 - He emphasized the difficulty of creating a single standard that fits all neighborhoods.
- **Right of Way Language:**

Discussion on how the language regarding parking vehicles in the right of way “shall be limited to designated areas that have been stabilized with an all-weather surface” and whether the intent is to allow right-of-way parking so long as the surface is stabilized/paved. Concern was raised regarding the interpretation of the statement.

- **Direction to staff**
 - Requested for staff to bring back options and language on the following:
 - Removing or revising #8,
 - How trailers should be treated within #7,
 - How to define or avoid “storage,” and
 - How to preserve practical residential allowances without enabling abuse.
 - Informal sense among several members is to delete #8 and refine #7, but staff was and bring back to the LPA with options.

➤ **Joint Access-way Agreement, Section 6.02.04 / page 7, item L**

- Vice Chair referred the members to 6.02.04, Joint Access-way language and suggested adding stronger provisions similar to other agreement language adopted elsewhere.

- After a brief discussion he emphasized how Joint Access-way agreements should read with the following:
 - Run with the land, not the owner,
 - Be recorded as a covenant so a purchaser cannot opt out,
 - Require City approval for changes and ensure enforceability.
- Board generally indicated agreement and staff was asked to consider adding teeth to align with other sections.

➤ **Sidewalk widths change (Page 9, B5)**

- Vice Chair noted a change from 8 feet (in the August 8, 2024 draft) to 10 feet minimum sidewalk width for arterial/collector roadways.
- Staff explained current practice/requirements in much of the City already range 8-10 feet, and the draft uses 10 feet for consistency with modern construction standards.
- He indicated the explanation resolved their concern.

➤ **Low-speed vehicle (LSV) only parking section (page 16)**

- Vice Chair Buhr noted the entire LSV parking section was added after their prior LPA review; it originated from a prior ordinance dealing with city-owned property (a carve-out for a specific city-owned site).
- His request:
 - Consider adjusting the title to make clear these are LSV-only / dedicated space parking to avoid confusion with standard parking and not interchangeable.
 - Concern: developers could try to count LSV-sized stalls as standard required spaces (e.g., claim 12 stalls by mixing standard and LSV stalls).

❖ Mr. Butler explained the following:

- The draft already includes provisions intended to prevent misuse, including:
 - LSV parking spaces are for limited use (LSV only).
 - LSV spaces shall not count toward required standard vehicle parking.
 - LSV spaces must be grouped/continuous and not intermixed with full-size stalls.
 - LSV spaces must be clearly marked by pavement marking or signage for LSV parking only.
- Vice Chair agreed the substantive protections were in place and reiterated the desire to avoid misunderstandings at City Council or during application review.

➤ **Parking agreements section (6.03.05, page 17)**

- Vice Chair noted a portion was highlighted as new and stated that a separate Council-adopted item contained more robust agreement language.

- He requested staff carry over that more detailed/strong language into the rewrite, so adoption of the rewrite does not reduce standards or “go backwards.”
- Staff indicated intent was consistency and agreed to incorporate as directed.

➤ **Water hookup vs sewer hookup discussion (page 25)**

- Vice Chair raised concern that the draft includes a clear “must connect” requirement for sewer but does not similarly state “must connect” for water.
- Questioned whether a developer could legally install a well and avoid connecting to city water, if the code does not explicitly require connection.
- Staff response:
 - City requires Destin Water Users approval for development orders; applicants typically must coordinate for service.
 - Staff noted sewer connection is an environmental/public health concern; water connection does not present the same environmental harm if someone uses a well.
- Board discussion:
 - Some members opposed forcing water hookup if someone wants to use a well, noting private irrigation wells are common and not problematic.
 - Vice Chair pointed out the inconsistency: if the City forces sewer hookup, why not water; and acknowledged he grew up on well water and recognized practical contexts.
 - The members agreed adding water hookup language, with discussion of potential grandfathering for existing situations.
- Legal/statutory clarification raised by members:
 - The City Attorney cited state law (referenced as Chapter 381) requiring connection when a utility notifies a property of the ability to connect within a year.
 - Discussion indicated this applies to sewer and may also relate to water; members debated the scope.
 - It was explained that even if state law requires it, the City often includes it in local code to enable local enforcement (the City enforces its own ordinances).
- Action item:
 - Vice Chair requested staff to research whether state statute requires water connection and report back so the board is not making decisions on-the-fly.

➤ **Open space and synthetic turf (Section 6.06.03; new since Aug 2024)**

❖ **Synthetic turf in the right-of-way**

- Vice Chair identified synthetic turf provisions as newly added and focused on item #3 allowing synthetic turf in the right-of-way adjacent to single-family residential.
- He stated strong opposition to allowing turf in the right-of-way because:
 - The right-of-way is City property; the City should not “give it away.”
 - Utility work (gas/water lines, repeated digging) would create disputes over damaged turf (“you ripped my carpet”).

- The city and contractors need unobstructed ability to maintain right-of-way infrastructure.
- Board discussion:
 - Members noted existing examples where turf appears installed up to the street (Choctaw Lagoon/Magnolia referenced).
 - Staff explained the “genesis” was prior Council direction supporting property owners’ ability to choose ground cover and property rights, but board members distinguished private yards from city right-of-way.
 - Staff suggested an alternate option to prohibit turf in front yards but allow sides/rear to avoid sharp transitions, members noted state law constraints.
 - Chairman Wood asked whether Public Works had weighed in; staff could not confirm broad Public Works review, though noted a Public Works staff member, Mr. Bodi, is involved in the rewrite.
- Direction/decision in discussion:
 - Multiple members stated agreement to remove right-of-way turf allowance.
 - Chair summarized consensus: remove item #3 synthetic turf in right-of-way.
 - Existing nonconforming turf and drainage concerns were discussed.
- Vice Chair asked about enforcement for existing installations that would not comply with the new standards.
- Staff confirmed existing installations could be treated as legal nonconforming if installed prior to the effective date.
- Vice Chair raised the following concerns:
 - Under prior rules, installations under 250 sq. ft. stormwater exemption could proceed without detailed drainage documentation.
 - Under the new turf rules, even small turf installations may require a drainage report/permit, eliminating the exemption for turf.
 - Inquired whether the city should implement a sunset period (1-3 years) for existing turf to submit drainage documentation to prevent long-term unreviewed runoff impacts.
- Staff response:
 - Council previously directed staff not to require permits for artificial turf installations for a period, so the city may not have records of where turf was installed.
 - Staff noted enforcement would largely be complaint-driven if stormwater issues arise.
 - Comment about how turf is not permanent and legal nonconformity may amortize out because significant replacement triggers compliance (discussion referenced the concept that replacement beyond a threshold would require current-code compliance).
 - Vice Chair Buhr acknowledged the point but noted potential loopholes by piecemeal replacements below the thresholds.

➤ **State law comment on synthetic turf bans (2025)**

- Agency member Bell stated that state law passed in 2025 limits local government authority to prohibit synthetic turf outright (DEP standards referenced).
 - The City cannot ban turf entirely on private property.
 - The City can prohibit turf in the right-of-way because it is City property.

➤ **Hardscape and impervious surface clarification - Open space**

- Clarification for pavers and other hardscape elements noting that “hardscape” is not defined in the glossary. Additionally, gravel/pebble rock driveways count as impervious.
- Staff and board discussion reflected the following:
 - There is practical ambiguity between “hardscape” and “semi-pervious” materials.
 - Staff cited existing stormwater code language encouraging semi-pervious surfaces (shell, gravel, crushed stone, decks, pavers) to reduce runoff but noted these can become compacted and effectively become impervious over time.
 - Staff stated professional engineers must account for these surfaces in stormwater plans with the City Engineer review to ensure correct treatment.
 - Staff agreed to tighten language by adding examples or clarifying what constitutes “hardscape elements” and how it is counted for stormwater/open space calculations.

Vice Chair Buhr made the substitute motion that based off all the comments and changes we've asked of staff to make those revised changes and bring it back at their next available date for further review. Agency member Purut provided the second.

Vice Chair Buhr indicated additional smaller formatting/substance items existed but did not need to be discussed exhaustively that night.

- Additional clarifications and requests before final direction back to staff. Vice Chair

Buhr withdrew his substitute motion.

❖ **Tree removal exceptions (diseased/dangerous trees)**

- Agency member Wampler asked whether state law prevents requiring permits for removal of diseased or dangerous trees.
- Staff agreed to include language addressing:
 - Verification/validation mechanisms (to avoid abuse where someone simply claims “danger”).
 - Potential documentation such as an insurance letter as support for hazard claims.

• **Existing fences near front property line / nonconforming fence repairs**

- A member raised concern their home fence may violate the front-perimeter fence height rule; staff indicated many properties likely have similar conditions.
- Staff noted:

- Some fences may be unpermitted; others may be legally nonconforming due to age or prior permitting errors.
- The city recently introduced a nonconforming site element clause (Article 3) allowing limited maintenance/repair of nonconforming fences (staff referenced a maintenance threshold concept around 25% per year).
- Informal comments were made acknowledging practical realities of legacy conditions and uneven historic permitting.

➤ **Palm tree landscaping percentage debate**

- A member requested reconsideration of the landscaping rule limiting palm trees to 40% of the total required trees and asked to raise the allowable percentage, stating:
 - The rationale for 40% appeared outdated.
 - Commercial properties with palms are often better maintained and fit Destin’s resort aesthetic.
 - Palms are viewed as more hurricane-resilient and less damaging if blown down compared to some larger canopy trees.
 - Tourism/“resort town” appearance was cited as a reason to permit more palms.
- Staff clarification of current rule:
 - North of U.S. 98: up to 40%
 - South of U.S. 98: up to 80%
 - Staff noted this is primarily relevant to commercial projects; single-family landscaping is rarely reviewed because single-family permits generally do not require landscape plans or landscaping permits.
- Discussion points raised:
 - Pro-palm: aesthetics, resort look, maintenance practicality, hurricane considerations, tourism branding.
 - Caution/concern: palms provide less shade, increasing heat in parking lots; native vs non-native landscaping goals.
 - Vice Chair expressed personal preference for shade in summer and noted communities can look attractive without heavy palms (example referenced: Seaside/Seagrove).
 - Multiple members reiterated it was only a maximum option, not required.

Motion by Agency member Weidenhamer, seconded by Agency member Bell to raise palm tree requirements to 70% on commercial properties failed, with a vote of 4–3 with Chairman Wood, Agency members Purut, Uptigrove and Buhr voting no, and Agency members Bell, Weidenhamer and Wampler voting yes.

➤ **Vegetation encroachment over sidewalks/streets (vertical vs lateral clearance)**

- A member asked whether the draft includes requirements for how far vegetation must be set back from curbs/sidewalks (lateral clearance), not just height clearance.
- Staff and board reviewed draft language:
 - Draft states trees/shrubs over a publicly accessible sidewalk/street must have 15 feet vertical clearance.

- Staff noted:
 - The current code includes a standard that trees shall be planted no closer than 5 feet from curbs/curb lines and sidewalks (publicly owned property context), though that specific provision was not carried into the rewrite.
 - Members requested carrying over the 5-foot rule or adding a lateral component.
- Chairman Wood suggested adding a lateral clearance requirement (e.g., 12–24 inches) to avoid pedestrians being struck by branches even if vertical clearance exists.
- Staff pointed out a broader maintenance standard already in the draft and existing code:
 - All landscaping adjacent to sidewalks, pathways, bike lanes, and vehicular areas must be trimmed so as not to interfere with their use.
 - Staff provided citations:
 - Draft: 6.06.10(A)(4)
 - Existing code: 12.04.06(A)(4)
- The member requested staff confirm and provide the specific code references (provided on the record).
- After completing the palm-tree vote and addressing additional questions, the board returned to the overall Article 6 motion.

Motion by Agency member Buhr, seconded by Agency member Wampler to have staff implement all of the discussed adjustments to Article 6 and bring back their review at the earliest time possible. Agency member Wampler provided the second.

Chairman Wood opened the hearing for public input, with no one coming forward he closed the public and called for the vote, **the motion passed 7-0.**

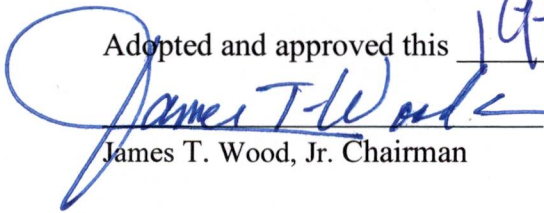
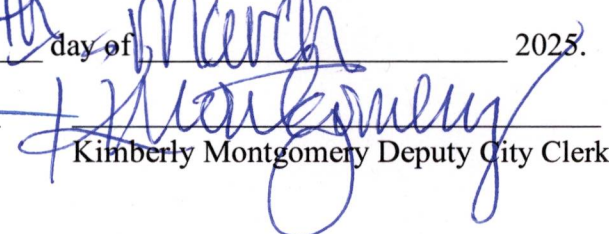
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chairman Wood opened the public for comment, but with no one present, he closed the public portion of the meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further discussion at this time, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Adopted and approved this 19th day of March 2025.

James T. Wood, Jr. Chairman Kimberly Montgomery Deputy City Clerk