



**AGENDA
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 12, 2026
5:00 PM
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
204 ASH STREET
FERNANDINA BEACH, FL 32034**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**
 - 3.1 Approval of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of July 8, 2026.
- 4. OLD BUSINESS**
- 5. NEW BUSINESS**
- 6. BOARD BUSINESS**
 - 6.1 **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL** — *Planning Staff and Northeast Florida Regional Council partners will present Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Review ("EAR") recommendations and the associated 2050 Vision Plan findings.*
 - 6.2 **Legislative Updates**-*Legal Staff*
- 7. STAFF REPORT**
- 8. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 9. ADJOURNMENT**

NEXT PAB REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 9, 2026.

All members of the public are invited to be present and be heard. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in this program or activity should contact the City Clerk at (904) 310-3115 or TTY/TDD 711 (for the hearing or speech impaired). All interested parties may appear at said meeting and be heard as to the advisability of any action, which may be considered with respect to such matter. For information regarding this matter, please contact the Planning Department (904) 310-3135.

ITEM TYPE: Approval of Minutes

SYNOPSIS:

Sarah Campbell, City Manager

Submitted By: Sylvie McCann,
Administrative Coordinator



**MINUTES
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 8, 2026
5:00 PM
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
204 ASH STREET
FERNANDINA BEACH, FL 32034**

1. CALL TO ORDER 5:00 PM

ROLL CALL / DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Doster (Chair)
Mark Bennett
Peter Stevenson

Daphne Forehand (Vice-Chair)
Barbara Gingher

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Victoria Robas

Nick Gillette

OTHERS PRESENT:

Margaret Pearson, Planning Manager
Mackennah Tarmey, Recording Secretary

Glenn Akramoff, City Deputy Manager
Mia Sadler, City Planner

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting of April 8, 2026

Member Stevenson noted a minor grammatical error.

ACTION TAKEN: A motion was made by Member Stevenson, seconded by Member Bennett, to approve the Minutes from April 8, 2026, as presented with the noted amendment.

Vote upon passage of the motion was taken by voice vote, and being all ayes, carried.

4. OLD BUSINESS

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. BOARD BUSINESS

6.1 2050 Visioning Plan Survey and Discussion

Margaret Pearson, Planning Manager, initiated a presentation of the 2050 Visioning Plan. She introduced Ms. Jen Bryla, Community Development Manager, with the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC).

DRAFT

Ms. Bryla described the purpose of the 2050 Visioning Plan and explained the process of community visioning. She presented the survey to the Board and asked Board Members various questions related to survey questions.

Member Stevenson provided some personal comments regarding his current place of residence and the lots surrounding that area.

Chair Doster asked about the demographics of the City, especially regarding younger residents living within the City limits. Ms. Bryla referenced the BEBR report trends and that the majority of residents is of the older category.

Member Gingher gave insight into her concerns on affordability and walkability needs.

Chair Doster shared that he appreciated that the community is a dog-loving community.

Ms. Pearson reminded the Board that the importance of assessing the commercial aspect of the City and that the goal of this survey is to establish a balance as a whole and assist in planning better neighborhoods.

Ms. Bryla rounded out the conversation asking the Board to provide insight on what they think is the most important resiliency investment the City could support.

Member Bennett noted that the seawall is the most important goal.

Chair Doster commented that shade structures are an important feature to consider.

Member Stevenson shared that he enjoys visiting the parks in the area.

The consensus seemed to be that overwhelming residents' responses focused on the preservation of their community character and management of growth and redevelopment.

Member Bennett requested a copy of the newest data.

Mrs. Pearson clarified that once the survey is reviewed and feedback is compiled, an assessment will be made in regard to what the City is mandated to change versus what recommendations and goals have been submitted through the survey. Ms. Bryla noted that the EAR letter is the 1st step, and that the City will then have 1 year to implement these changes within the Comprehensive Plan.

7. STAFF REPORT

7.1 Legislative Updates

Glenn Akramoff, Deputy City Manager, provided insight into how to create a community that you anticipate being created. He spoke of his past experiences and how they relate to the City's cycles of reinventing itself, emphasizing its 3 key elements: its natural environment, its built environment, and its people. He also spoke of the PABs role in the research aspect to communicate findings to the City Commission and the challenges of this role.

Then, Mr. Akramoff delved into the impact of the state legislative updates and how the City is preparing for those changes.

Vice-Chair Forehand asks that Board Members be provided with information on both HB 399 and HB 803. Mr. Akramoff explained that HB 399 relates to third-party reviewers for Planning, and that HB 803 relates to permit exemption on projects with a valuation threshold being less than \$7,500. This permit exemption could affect trade permits and permits for fences and accessory structures of less than 150 sqft.

Finally, he spoke about the impact of the property tax exemption house bill that could reduce the Ad Valorem

DRAFT

property tax income by 15%.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret Kirkland, 1377 Plantation Point Drive, voiced that there is little attention being given to transportation, biking, and pedestrians. She recommended that there be education and outreach about bike and pedestrian safety.

At this time, Board Members provided additional comments.

Member Gingher spoke about the notice by the Police Department regarding the new requirements for e-bikes.

Member Stevenson introduced the idea of setting up a future joint meeting with the Board of Adjustment Members to get updated on the BOA processes and role and share idea on Board processes.

Chair Doster spoke of the Comprehensive Plan and asked that a list of the things that need to be addressed so the Board can better strategize changes for mitigation. He further emphasized the need for awareness of civic buildings and how these contribute to the character of the City.

9. ADJOURNMENT 6:27 PM

Mackennah Tarmey, Recording Secretary

Richard Doster, Chair

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA ITEM
City of Fernandina Beach



SUBJECT:

ITEM TYPE: Zoning Map Amendment >10 Acres

REQUESTED ACTION:

SYNOPSIS:

CITY ATTORNEY COMMENTS:

Margaret Pearson, Planning and
Conservation Manager



Sylvie McCann, Administrative

Date: July 21,
2026

Submitted By: Coordinator

City Letter Head

August 12, 2026

Mr. Stansbury, Chief
Florida Commerce
Division of Community Development
107 East Madison Street
Caldwell Building, MSC 160
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4120

Attention: Donna Harris, Plan Processor

Re: The City of Fernandina Beach Evaluation and Appraisal Notification Determination

Dear Ms. Stansbury,

Pursuant to Section 163.3191, Florida Statutes, at least once every seven years local governments must evaluate their comprehensive plans to determine if amendments are necessary to reflect changes to requirements in Section 163, Part II of the Florida Statutes since the last update of the Plan. Our City is required to submit the results of that review to Florida Commerce by September 1, 2026. In accordance with these provisions, the City of Fernandina Beach hereby submits our notification of necessary evaluation and appraisal plan amendments.

The following amendments will include, but not be limited to the following statutory changes:

- An update to the City's Planning Horizons to the required 10-year and 20-year period in compliance with Chapter 2023-31 [Section 163.3177, Florida Statutes].
- The Comprehensive Plan shall be amended to permit floating solar facilities within appropriate Future Land Use Categories, including the Industrial (IND) and Public & Institutional (PI) categories, where wastewater treatment ponds, stormwater treatment ponds, reclaimed water ponds, or other water storage reservoirs are located, in accordance with Chapter 2022-83 (Section 163.32051, Florida Statutes).
- Adopt a policy addressing affordable housing in compliance with Chapters 2022-176, 2023-17, and 2025-172 [Section 166.04151, Florida Statutes].
- The inclusion of Resiliency Facilities, defined as a public utility-owned site used to hold and deploy natural gas reserves during emergencies, as permitted uses in the General Commercial (GC), Industrial (IN), and Industrial-Waterfront (IW) Future Land Use Categories in compliance with Chapter 2024-186 [Section 163.3210, Florida Statutes].
- Adoption of factors for assessing the compatibility of allowable residential uses within the Low Density Residential (LDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), and High Density Residential (HDR) Future Land Use Categories in compliance with Chapter 2026-7 [Section 163.3194, Florida Statutes].
- The adoption of a policy to address the assessment of the feasibility of providing sanitary sewage services within a 10-year planning horizon for developments with over 50 lots and

City Letter Head

a density of more than one septic system per acres in areas of the City where central wastewater treatment is not available in compliance with Chapter 2023-169 [Section 163.3177, Florida Statutes].

- The City will also adopt a new Goal for the Future Land Use Element establishing measures for public trust and citizen participation.

Other expected changes include an update to the Future Land Use Map Series and the re-transmittal of the City Water Supply Facility Work Plan and the associated comprehensive plan amendments in accordance with the Water Demand and Projections specified in the 2023 North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan. The comprehensive plan amendments tied to the City's 2025-2035 Water Supply Facilities Work Plan, adopted through Ordinance 2025-03, will only become effective once the State Land Planning Agency issues a final order declaring the amendments to be "in compliance" with Section 163.3184 of the Florida Statutes. This requirement has not yet been fulfilled. The City already adopted a Property Rights Element in 2021 (City of Fernandina Beach 21-02ESR). In addition to the compliance update, additional amendments will be included to address a recent community visioning exercise which is further explained in detail below.

The City of Fernandina Beach worked with the North East Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) to conduct a series of community workshops to explore community issues and views for consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Workshop participants described Fernandina Beach as a collection of small residential neighborhoods with distinct identities but limited interaction between them. Participants expressed interest in improving connectivity between neighborhoods while maintaining their individual character.

Participants of the workshops consistently emphasized preserving the city's small-town feel, neighborhood character, and quality of life while expressing concern that rapid growth and redevelopment are undermining those qualities. Residents discussed increasing traffic, changing development patterns, shrinking lot sizes, and homes being built closer together as examples of changes that are altering the community's character.

These comments will be memorialized in updates to Comprehensive Plan Objectives to include but not limited to 1.02, 1.04, 2.01, 2.02, 2.05, 2.07, 3.01, 3.02, 5.01, and 5.11. The City will prepare the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan based on the findings and transmit them to the Department within one year of the date of this letter.

Should you require additional information regarding this notification, please contact Margaret Pierson at

Sincerely,

City Manager (COFB)

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR & Neighborhood Vision Plan



Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

TOTAL RESPONSES - Currently 141

DEMOGRAPHICS Questions 1-7

What is your age?

1. Description	Totals	Percentages
19 & under	0	0%
20 - 34	12	9%
35 - 49	26	19%
50 - 64	39	28%
65+	61	44%

What is your employment status?

2. Description	Totals	Percentages
Full-time	62	47%
Part-time	7	5%
Retired	61	46%
Not employed	2	2%
Student	0	0%

Which best describes your connection to Fernandina Beach?

3. Description	Totals	Percentages
Full-time resident	90	66%
Part-time resident	11	8%
Amelia Island resident, non-Fernandina Beach	11	8%
Nassau County resident, non-Fernandina Beach	11	8%
I work here, or I live elsewhere	14	10%

How long have you lived or worked here?

4. Description	Totals	Percentages
Under one year	4	3%
1 - 5 years	25	20%
6 - 10 years	17	13%
11 - 20 years	37	29%
Over 20 years	44	35%

What is the housing status of your primary residence?

5. Description	Totals	Percentages
Own my home	126	93%
Rent my home	9	7%
Rent out a home I own	0	0%

Which neighborhood do you live in?

6. Description	Totals	Percentages
1 Old Town	3	2%
2 Egans Creek Uplands/Lighthouse	11	8%
3 Working Waterfront	5	4%
4 North Beach	6	4%
5 Central Business District	2	1%

Total Responses

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

6 North Downtown	1	1%
7 South Downtown	5	4%
8 Mid-island Shoreline	8	6%
9 South Shoreline	6	4%
10 Mid-Island	23	17%
11 Central Island	15	11%
12 County Adjacent Mixed-Use	16	12%
13 Golf Course	2	1%
14 Crane Island	0	0%
15 City Areas outside	6	4%
16 Other	25	19%

Does this map reflect the boundaries of your neighborhood?

7. Description	Totals	Percentages
Strongly Agree	26	19%
Agree	41	31%
Neutral	32	24%
Disagree	17	13%
Strongly Disagree	18	13%

2045 CONFIRMATION QUESTIONS 8 - 11

What is the most important quality of the community to preserve?

8. Description	Totals	Percentages
Beach and waterfront lifestyle	10	7%
Historic preservation and arts/culture	8	6%
Natural environment, trees, and open space	46	34%
Small-town character and community events	45	34%
Walkable neighborhood and local businesses	25	19%

Which transportation improvement would benefit the community the most?

9. Description	Totals	Percentages
More walking and biking paths	54	40%
Bus, trolley, or circulator service	16	12%
Safer and more walkable streets	31	23%
Improvements to major corridors, such as South 8th Street	33	25%

What type of investment should the City focus on most?

10. Description	Totals	Percentages
Housing affordability and housing options	17	13%
Managing traffic and transportation improvements	28	21%
Purchasing land for conservation and preservation	29	22%
Walkable mixed-use development and managing tourism	22	17%
Burying overhead utilities and storm-hardening infrastructure	36	27%

Which of these themes is most important for the City to focus on?

11. Description	Totals	Percentages
Livability	22	17%

Total Responses

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

Preservation of Character	55	42%
Mobility and Transportation	5	4%
Environmental Sustainability & Resiliency	27	21%
Future Ready Infrastructure, Utilities, and Public Facilities	22	17%

COMMUNITY CHARACTER 12 - 17

What is the greatest challenge to Fernandina Beach's community character?

14. Description	Totals	Percentages
Overdevelopment	90	73%
Traffic congestion	8	6%
Rising housing costs	16	13%
Public Safety concerns	3	2%
Environmental concerns	3	2%
Stormwater issues/ flooding	4	3%

How do you want your neighborhood to look in the next ten years?

15. Description	Totals	Percentages
Low-density, suburban neighborhoods (single-family home, larger yard, quiet streets)	60	50%
Medium-Density neighborhoods (mix of single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings)	15	12%
Urban-style neighborhoods (denser housing such as apartments or condos near commercial areas and transit)	4	3%
Mixed-use neighborhoods (a mix of housing, small businesses, restaurants, and services within walking distance)	42	35%

Which design feature is most important in your neighborhood?

16. Description	Totals	Percentages
Access to parks or trails	24	20%
Sidewalks & walkability	29	24%
Street trees & landscaping	9	7%
Nearby shops & restaurants	12	10%
Safe bike lanes & multi-use paths	49	40%

What should be the top priority when redeveloping large vacant or underused sites in the

17. Description	Totals	Percentages
Multi-family residential areas	1	1%
Single-family residential areas	7	6%
Entertainment, dining, and retail	3	2%
Industrial use for high-wage job creation	17	14%
Community amenities, public spaces, or land conservation	47	39%
Ensuring new development fits with surrounding neighborhoods	46	38%

Total Responses

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

TRANSPORTATION / MOBILITY 18 - 21

What's your primary mode of transportation?

18. Description	Totals	Percentages
Car	106	85%
Cycling or bikes	11	9%
Walking	5	4%
Golf cart or moped	1	1%
Rideshare options, like Uber and Lyft	1	1%

How often do you use other modes of transportation than your car?

19. Description	Totals	Percentages
Often, at least once a week	68	57%
Somewhat often, at least once a month	18	15%
Rarely, a few times a year	10	8%
Almost never	24	20%

What is the main barrier preventing you from replacing car trips with walking or biking?

20. Description	Totals	Percentages
Distance	43	36%
Weather or heat	17	14%
Not enough lighting	1	1%
Travel time is too long	2	2%
Not enough safe street crossings	6	5%
Not enough sidewalks and bike lanes	37	31%
Not applicable	14	12%

What transportation improvements should be prioritized?

21. Description	Totals	Percentages
Add/improve bike lanes	40	36%
Improve road maintenance	15	13%
Improve sidewalks and pedestrian safety	25	22%
Improve intersection safety and traffic signals	8	7%
Reduce traffic congestion by constructing new roads	6	5%
Adding public transport (bus, trolley, or circulator service)	18	16%

RESILIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY 22 - 25

What is the most important resiliency investment the City should make?

22. Description	Totals	Percentages
Water system reliability improvements	7	7%
Stormwater and flood control improvements	21	20%
Urban tree canopy expansion and heat mitigation	25	24%
Road and bridge upgrades to withstand extreme weather	6	6%
Hardening of Utilities (burying power lines and strengthening substatic	29	28%
Economic resilience	15	15%

Which environmental resource should the community prioritize protecting?

23. Description	Totals	Percentages
Beaches	35	32%

Total Responses

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

Rivers and streams	6	6%
Forests and tree canopy	43	39%
Wetlands and floodplains	25	23%

How important is protecting natural areas when planning future development?

24. Description	Totals	Percentages
Very Important	99	83%
Somewhat Important	16	13%
Neutral	4	3%
Not Very Important	1	1%

What types of recreational areas do you visit regularly?

25. Description	Totals	Percentages
Beaches	-5	-9%
State parks	9	16%
Waterfront areas	10	18%
Community parks	6	11%
Sports fields/Athletic complexes	-1	-2%
All of the above	36	64%
I do not regularly visit recreational areas	1	2%

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

The "Select Multiple" Questions

DEMOGRAPHICS Questions 2, 3, 5

What is your employment status?

2. Description	Totals
Full-time and Part-time	0
Full-time and Retired	1
Full-time and Not Employed	0
Full-time and Student	0
Part-time and Retired	2
Part-time and Not Employed	0
Part time and Student	0
Retired and Not Employed	2
Retired and Student	0
Not Employed and Student	0

Which best describes your connection to Fernandina Beach?

3. Description	Totals
Full-time resident & Part-time resident	0
Full-time resident & Amelia Island resident, non-Fernandina Beach	1
Full-time resident & Nassau County resident, non-Fernandina Beach	0
Full-time resident & I work here, or I live elsewhere	2
Part-time resident & Amelia Island resident, non-Fernandina Beach	0
Part-time resident & Nassau County resident, non-Fernandina Beach	0
Part-time resident & I work here, or I live elsewhere	1
Amelia Island resident, non-Fernandina Beach & Nassau County resident, non-Fernandina Beach	0
Amelia Island resident, non-Fernandina Beach & I work here, or I live elsewhere	1
Nassau County resident, non-Fernandina Beach & I work here, or I live elsewhere	4

What is the housing status of your primary residence?

5. Description	Totals
Own my home & Rent my home	0
Own my home & Rent out a home I own	1
Rent my home & Rent out a home I own	0
Own my home & Rent my home & Rent out a home I own	1
Own my home & Rent out a home I own & Rent my home	0
Rent my home & Rent out a home I own & Own my home	0
Rent my home & Own my home & Rent out a home I own	0
Rent out a home I own & Rent my home & Own my home	0
Rent out a home I own & Own my home & Rent my home	0

2045 CONFIRMATION QUESTION 11

Which of these themes is most important for the City to focus on?

11. Description	Totals
Livability & Preservation of Character	0
Livability & Mobility and Transportation	0

Total Responses

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

Livability & Environmental Sustainability & Resiliency	1
Livability & Future Ready Infrastructure, Utilities, and Public Facilities	0
Preservation of Character & Mobility and Transportation	0
Preservation of Character & Environmental Sustainability & Resiliency	0
Preservation of Character & Future Ready Infrastructure, Utilities, & Public Facilities	0
Mobility and Transportation & Environmental Sustainability & Resiliency	0
Mobility and Transportation & Future Ready Infrastructure, Utilities, & Public Facilities	0
Environmental Sustainability & Resiliency & Future Ready Infrastructure, Utilities, & Public Facilities	1

TRANSPORTATION / MOBILITY 21

What transportation improvements should be prioritized?

21. Description	Totals
Add/improve bike lanes & Improve road maintenance	0
Add/improve bike lanes & Improve sidewalks & pedestrian safety	2
Add/improve bike lanes & Improve intersection safety & traffic signals	1
Add/improve bike lanes & Reduce traffic congestion by constructing new roads	0
Add/improve bike lanes & Adding public transport (bus, trolley, or circulator service)	0
Improve road maintenance & Improve sidewalks & pedestrian safety	0
Improve road maintenance & Improve intersection safety & traffic signals	0
Improve road maintenance & Reduce traffic congestion by constructing new roads	0
Improve road maintenance & Adding public transport (bus, trolley, or circulator service)	0
Improve sidewalks & pedestrian safety & Improve intersection safety and traffic signals	2
Improve sidewalks & pedestrian safety & Reduce traffic congestion by constructing new roads	0
Improve sidewalks & pedestrian safety & Adding public transport (bus, trolley, or circulator service)	0
Improve intersection safety & traffic signals & Reduce traffic congestion by constructing new roads	0
Improve intersection safety & traffic signals & Adding public transport (bus, trolley, or circulator service)	0
Reduce traffic congestion by constructing new roads & Adding public transport (bus, trolley, or circulator service)	0

RESILIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY 22, 23,& 25

What is the most important resiliency investment the City should make?

22. Description	Totals
Water system reliability improvements & Stormwater and flood control improvements	3
Water system reliability improvements & Urban tree canopy expansion and heat mitigation	0
Water system reliability improvements & Road and bridge upgrades to withstand extreme weather	0
Water system reliability improvements & Hardening of Utilities (burying power lines & strengthening substations)	0
Water system reliability improvements & Economic resilience	1
Stormwater & flood control improvements & Urban tree canopy expansion & heat mitigation	0
Stormwater & flood control improvements & Road & bridge upgrades to withstand extreme weather	0
Stormwater & flood control improvements & Hardening of Utilities (burying power lines & strengthening substations)	0
Stormwater & flood control improvements & Economic resilience	0
Urban tree canopy expansion & heat mitigation & Road & bridge upgrades to withstand extreme weather	0
Urban tree canopy expansion and heat mitigation & Hardening of Utilities (burying power lines & strengthening substations)	3
Urban tree canopy expansion and heat mitigation & Economic resilience	2
Road & bridge upgrades to withstand extreme weather & Hardening of Utilities (burying power lines & strengthening substations)	1
Road & bridge upgrades to withstand extreme weather & Economic resilience	0
Hardening of Utilities (burying power lines & strengthening substations) & Economic resilience	0

Total Responses

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

Which environmental resource should the community prioritize protecting?

23. Description	Totals
Beaches & Rivers & streams	1
Beaches & Forests & tree canopy	1
Beaches & Wetlands & floodplains	1
Rivers & streams & Forests & tree canopy	0
Rivers & streams & Wetlands & floodplains	1
Forests & tree canopy & Wetlands & floodplains	4

What types of recreational areas do you visit regularly?

25. Description	Totals
Beaches & State parks	19
Beaches & Waterfront areas	14
Beaches & Community parks	4
Beaches & Sports fields/Athletic complexes	0
Beaches & All of the above	12
State parks & Waterfront areas	2
State parks & Community parks	2
State parks & Sports fields/Athletic complexes	0
State parks & All of the above	2
Waterfront areas & Community parks	2
Waterfront areas & Sports fields/Athletic complexes	0
Waterfront areas & All of the above	2
Community parks & Sports fields/Athletic complexes	1
Community parks & All of the above	0
Sports fields/Athletic complexes & All of the above	2

Total Responses

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

The Discussions

DEMOGRAPHICS

Workshop participants described Fernandina Beach as a collection of small residential neighborhoods with distinct identities but limited interaction between them. While neighborhood boundaries were not universally understood, residents often defined areas based on major corridors, historic districts, schools, landmarks, or long-established community patterns rather than official boundaries. Participants expressed interest in improving connectivity between neighborhoods while maintaining their individual character. Discussions also highlighted concerns about demographic change, particularly the loss of affordability for working families, service workers, young adults, firefighters, and long-time residents. Several participants noted that rising housing costs and redevelopment pressures are making it increasingly difficult for lower- and middle-income households to remain on the island, raising concerns about displacement, gentrification, and the loss of socioeconomic diversity.

2045 CONFIRMATIONS

The workshop discussions strongly validated many of the priorities identified in the survey. Participants consistently emphasized preserving the city's small-town feel, neighborhood character, and quality of life while expressing concern that rapid growth and redevelopment are undermining those qualities. Residents discussed increasing traffic, changing development patterns, shrinking lot sizes, and homes being built closer together as examples of changes that are altering the community's character. Concerns were also raised regarding code enforcement practices, perceived inconsistencies in how regulations are applied, and a growing feeling among some residents that decision-making processes are not always transparent or equitable. Several participants connected these concerns to broader issues of trust in local government and a desire for greater accountability, transparency, and public involvement in planning decisions.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER 12 & 13

What do you love about your neighborhood?

12. Description

Residents overwhelmingly value Fernandina Beach's unique combination of small-town character, walkability, natural beauty, and strong sense of community. The most common themes include proximity to the beach, downtown, parks, and greenways; the extensive tree canopy and wildlife habitat; and the ability to walk or bike to daily destinations. Many respondents describe the city as quiet, friendly, and family-oriented, with a character rooted in historic neighborhoods, maritime forests, and a working waterfront tradition tied to shrimping, manufacturing, and other local industries. At the same time, numerous comments express concern that overdevelopment, increasing density, traffic, and the loss of trees and open space could erode the qualities that make Fernandina Beach special. Overall, respondents strongly support preserving the city's natural environment, historic charm, walkability, and working-community identity while carefully managing future growth to maintain its distinctive sense of place.

Fernandina Beach 2050 EAR / Vision Update

What is a word or phrase that captures what you want to protect in Fernandina Beach?

13. Description

The responses further reinforce residents' desire to preserve Fernandina Beach's identity as a small-town, environmentally sensitive, and community-oriented coastal city. Respondents repeatedly highlighted the importance of maintaining the community's historic character, natural landscapes, tree canopy, beaches, and walkable neighborhoods while protecting the qualities that distinguish Fernandina Beach from more heavily developed tourist destinations. Many residents expressed pride in the city's working waterfront heritage, blue-collar roots, diverse economy, and local industries, emphasizing the need to support year-round residents, working families, and local businesses rather than becoming solely dependent on tourism. Comments also reflected a strong desire to preserve affordability, housing opportunities for younger families, and a balanced economic base that includes tourism, industry, and residential uses. Concerns about overdevelopment, excessive tourism, loss of tree cover, high-rise construction, and the erosion of small-town character were common throughout the responses. Residents envision a future that protects Fernandina Beach's natural resources, historic charm, community atmosphere, and economic diversity while managing growth in a way that maintains the island's unique sense of place, livability, and quality of life for future generations.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community character generated some of the strongest discussion throughout both workshops. Participants repeatedly described Fernandina Beach as a unique place defined by its small-town atmosphere, historic character, tree canopy, working waterfront heritage, and environmental assets. Residents expressed strong support for preserving local industries, including the working waterfront, maritime economy, and industrial employment base, while cautioning against becoming overly dependent on tourism. Many participants viewed the city's economic diversity as an essential part of its identity and resilience. Discussions also focused heavily on maintaining neighborhood character, protecting mature trees, preserving historic areas, limiting overdevelopment, and ensuring that future growth remains compatible with the qualities that residents value most. Participants frequently referenced the importance of retaining the community's authenticity and avoiding development patterns that could make Fernandina Beach resemble other heavily developed coastal communities.

TRANSPORTATION / MOBILITY 21

Transportation discussions centered overwhelmingly on increasing congestion, traffic safety, and the need for alternative mobility options. Residents acknowledged that traffic is becoming more problematic and is likely to continue worsening as growth occurs both on and off the island.

Participants expressed support for exploring alternative transportation solutions, including trolleys, trams, park-and-ride facilities, improved connections to the mainland, and coordinated transportation planning with Nassau County. Walkability and bicycle safety were recurring concerns, with residents identifying gaps in sidewalks, multi-use paths, bike infrastructure, and safe crossings of major corridors. Concerns were also raised about golf carts, electric bicycles, pedestrian safety, parking availability, and conflicts between different users of the transportation network. Overall, participants emphasized the importance of maintaining the walkability and accessibility that contribute to Fernandina Beach's quality of life while finding innovative ways to manage increasing traffic volumes.

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RESILIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY 22, 23,& 25

The resiliency discussions closely mirrored the survey results, with environmental protection emerging as a central concern. Participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of preserving tree canopy, protecting natural areas, managing flooding, and maintaining environmental resources that contribute to both community character and storm resilience. Many residents linked recent flooding issues to tree removal, vegetation loss, and development practices that increase impervious surfaces. Concerns were also raised about storm impacts, utility infrastructure, drainage, and redevelopment occurring in environmentally sensitive areas. Participants frequently discussed the need for stronger monitoring, enforcement, and long-term management of environmental regulations, expressing skepticism that existing rules are consistently enforced. Overall, residents viewed environmental preservation, flood mitigation, tree protection, and infrastructure improvements as interconnected resiliency priorities that will become increasingly important as development pressures and climate-related risks continue to grow.

SUMMARY

Across all five topic areas, the dominant message from participants was that Fernandina Beach's future should be guided by preservation of its small-town identity, environmental assets, neighborhood character, and economic diversity. Residents generally support thoughtful growth and investment but expressed concern that current development patterns, rising housing costs, increasing traffic, and perceived gaps in governance and enforcement are threatening the qualities that make the community unique. Trust, transparency, affordability, environmental stewardship, and preserving community character emerged as the common threads connecting discussions across every section of the survey.

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA ITEM
City of Fernandina Beach



SUBJECT:

ITEM TYPE: Zoning Map Amendment < 10 Acres

REQUESTED ACTION:

SYNOPSIS:

CITY ATTORNEY COMMENTS:

Margaret Pearson, Planning and
Conservation Manager



Sylvie McCann, Administrative

Date: July 01,
2026

Submitted By: Coordinator
