



Fort Myers Beach Town Council Joint Session with the Local Planning Agency (LPA)

**Bay Oaks Recreation Center
2731 Oak Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

Agenda

Thursday, June 26, 2025

9:00 AM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- III. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**
 - A. Comprehensive Plan Update and Land Development Code Discussion
- V. ADJOURNMENT**

NOTE: THIS MEETING IS STREAMED LIVE ON [YOUTUBE](#).

IF A PERSON DECIDES TO APPEAL A DECISION MADE BY THE COUNCIL IN ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING/HEARING, SUCH PERSONS MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDING IS MADE, TO INCLUDE THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH ANY SUCH APPEAL IS TO BE BASED.



For special accommodation, please notify the Town Clerk's Office at least 72 hours in advance. (239) 765-0202

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons needing a special accommodation to participate in the Board's proceedings should contact the Town Clerk's Office not later than three days prior to the proceedings.

1. **Request:**

Meeting Date: June 26, 2025

Comprehensive Plan Update and Land Development Code Discussion

Why the action is necessary:

The Town Council and the LPA may direct staff whether the proposed Comprehensive Plan update Ordinance should be scheduled for second reading.

What the action accomplishes:

2. **Agenda:**

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

3. **Requirement/Purpose:**

5. **Background:**

Town Council requested that additional community feedback on the proposed Comprehensive Plan update be obtained prior to final approval. This joint meeting of the Local Planning Agency and the Town Council is intended to provide a summary of the community outreach effort and ask for directions on moving forward with finalization of the Comprehensive Plan update. Community feedback on the Land Development Code (LDC) was also obtained during the outreach effort. The attached summary relates to both the Comprehensive Plan and the LDC. The complete Comprehensive Plan and LDC documents are available on the Town's website in the Community Development section.

Attachments:

1. FMB Comprehensive Plan Community Engagement Report 2025

Financial Impact:

6. **Alternative Action**

7. **Staff Recommendations:**

8. **Recommended Approval:**

_____ Judith Frankel, Principal Planner	Date: June 16, 2025
_____ Georgina Cid, Community Development Manager	Date: June 20, 2025
_____ Frankie Kropacek, Community Development Director	Date: June 20, 2025
_____ nancy stuparich, Town Attorney	Date: June 20, 2025
_____ Amy Baker, Town Clerk	Date: June 20, 2025
_____ William McKannay, Town Manager	Date: June 20, 2025

Fort Myers Beach Comprehensive Envisioning Report and Analysis

The Town of Fort Myers Beach has undertaken a Comprehensive Plan Envisioning and is presently at the stage of incorporating residents' input on what the future of the town's comprehensive plan should encompass. Resident input was collected through a series of three outreach events, including two sessions which were held at the Fort Myers Beach Library and one during the Bayside Concert. This initiative has sought to understand the priorities, concerns, and vision of residents and analyze the impact on the town's vision for the future.

The outreach revealed a community deeply committed to preserving its identity, with residents aged 65 and older comprising the most active respondents. Common themes included:

- Preserving the small-town feel and sense of community
- Enhancing parks, addressing traffic issues, and protecting natural/cultural assets like the beach and the Mound House
- Concerns about the height and size of future development
- A desire for expanded restaurant options and medical facilities

This report summarizes the findings, analyzes themes, and provides recommendations to guide the comprehensive planning process.

Purpose and Context

The Comprehensive Envisioning process serves as a foundational step in creating an updated Comprehensive Plan for Fort Myers Beach. This plan will guide town policies and development efforts over the coming decades.

Objectives:

- Gather diverse resident input on key planning issues
- Identify community values and priorities
- Develop strategies that reflect public concerns and aspirations
- Provide a map for the growth of the town's future through resident input

As Fort Myers Beach continues rebuilding after major natural events and balancing economic opportunity with preservation, a community-informed approach is crucial to successful long-term planning.

Community Outreach Summary

Three community engagement sessions formed the backbone of the envisioning process.

1. Fort Myers Beach Library (Two Sessions)

The first of the sessions was held during the library's reopening. This session provided a fun and engaging experience for residents to share their opinions while enjoying the new features of the library. This session had the highest level of engagement of the three events. The second session provided residents with a structured, quiet setting to share feedback. Residents had an opportunity to interact with additional boards, including a Lego demonstration of the scale residents would like to see specific land uses.

2. Bayside Concert Outreach

The concert provided a more casual setting, encouraging participation from a broader demographic. Town planners and consultants set up an engagement table with boards, inviting those who were passing to contribute their thoughts in a relaxed environment.

3. Online Survey

The online survey included ten questions, with a total of 118 respondents providing feedback. The questions encompassed subjects such as transportation, challenges for the community, future development, businesses, and community services. The survey provided residents with the opportunity to include those who may not have had a chance to attend any of the community outreach events, an opportunity to have their input included.

Interactive Elements:

- Visioning boards: Residents shared keywords or phrases describing their ideal future for the town. Residents were also able to place stickers on desired land uses and future development.
- Mapping exercises: Participants marked key areas of concern or opportunity, as well as the scale of specific land uses that they would like to see in the town.
- Feedback stations: Residents responded to questions about priorities and concerns, and provided additional feedback that may not have been covered on the boards.
- Online Survey: The survey provided residents with a mobile interactive element to share their concerns in a private setting.

Respondent Demographics

A notable pattern in the data was the strong participation of residents aged 65 and older, confirming that retirees and long-time homeowners are highly engaged in shaping the town's future.

Key Observations:

- Older Adults (65+):
 - Most vocal group
 - Concerned about large-scale development

- Access to essential stores and services (i.e., health centers, banks, and hair salons).
- Younger Adults (under 40):
 - Underrepresented, suggesting a need for targeted engagement strategies in future phases.
 - Curious regarding large-scale development

The gap in age emphasizes a key need: addressing senior needs while also engaging younger residents to ensure intergenerational representation.

Civic, Natural, and Cultural Priorities

Residents were asked which civic, natural, and cultural resources they believe the town should prioritize. The responses consistently emphasized:

1. Parks and Public Spaces

- Residents value well-maintained, accessible parks.
- Parks are seen as critical for community cohesion, recreation, and health.

2. Traffic and Transportation

- Traffic congestion and pedestrian safety were among the most cited issues.
- Suggestions included improved walkability, traffic calming, and bike infrastructure.

3. The Beach

- The beach remains the town's greatest natural asset.
- Residents emphasized the need for protection, access control, cleanliness, and sustainability of the beach.

4. Mound House

- Frequently referred to as a cultural treasure worth protecting.
 - Residents support the funding and promotion of this historic site as a community and tourism asset.
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Vision for the Future

When asked what word or phrase best describes their vision for the future of Fort Myers Beach, residents overwhelmingly gravitated toward one central theme:

This vision implies a desire to:

- Resist high-density development that takes away from the community's small-town identity.
- Maintain a walkable human-scale environment
- Promote community unity centered around rebuilding the town post-disaster.

Other common responses included “peaceful,” “quaint,” “welcoming,” and “natural.” These reflect a collective sentiment: growth is acceptable if it aligns with the town’s traditional character.

Concerns for Future Development

Residents were asked about their concerns related to future development. Two clear themes emerged:

1. Building Height

- Many oppose tall structures that block views, create shadows, or change the town’s skyline.
- Height limits (i.e., developments of no higher than six stories) were commonly suggested to maintain the aesthetic and openness of the island.

2. Building Size and Density

- There is apprehension about oversized or dense developments increasing strain on infrastructure.
- Residents fear that large-scale resorts or condo complexes will erode the sense of community and increase traffic.

Implications:

- Future development must be sensitive and responsive to respecting the existing scale and identity of Fort Myers Beach.
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Desired Services and Retail

Residents also shared insights into services and retail they feel are currently lacking or should be expanded:

1. Restaurants

- Strong demand for more dining options, particularly those that are locally owned and offer diverse cuisines.
 - Residents would also like to see existing restaurants reopened post-hurricane.
- Maintenance and ability to remain open during the off-peak season of tourism.

2. Medical Facilities

- Access to healthcare was a concern for residents, with the majority stating the necessity to leave the town to find adequate resources.
- Suggestions included walk-in clinics, urgent care, and wellness centers

3. Local Retail

- Many participants advocated for small businesses over large chains, in an effort to help preserve the island's character.

Implications:

These insights suggest a need for targeted commercial development that supports everyday needs without undermining local charm.

Analysis of Community Themes

From the outreach data, the following key themes emerged:

Preserving Identity

- Residents want to preserve Fort Myers Beach's unique atmosphere, architectural style, and community character.

Managing Growth

- Growth is acceptable if it is incremental, environmentally responsible, and height and density conscious.

Prioritizing Quality of Life

- Investments in parks, safety, medical care, and transportation are considered high-impact needs for residents' daily lives.

Aging Population Needs

- With many respondents over 65, services for seniors—including medical access, mobility infrastructure, and social amenities—must be prioritized.

Community First

- New development must serve the people who live here year-round, not just tourists or investors.
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Recommendations and Next Steps

Recommendations:

1. Adopt Design Guidelines
 - Enforce height and size limits aligned with the town's character.
2. Improve Transportation
 - Address traffic congestion through pedestrian-friendly planning and public transit solutions.
3. Invest in Parks and Cultural Assets
 - Upgrade parks and preserve heritage sites like the Mound House, Bay Oaks Park, and the Matanzas Pass Preserve.
4. Expand Healthcare Access
 - Work with providers to bring medical services to the island.
5. Support Local Business Growth
 - Create incentives for local entrepreneurs in dining and retail.
6. Engage Younger Residents
 - Implement digital and social engagement tools to capture a broader demographic.

Next Steps:

- Integrate findings into the Draft Comprehensive Plan.
- Present findings to the Town Council and Planning Board.

By grounding development in public values, Fort Myers Beach can shape a future that honors its past, supports its residents, and creates a thriving, sustainable coastal community.

Event Photo Album

