SPECIAL MEETING
APALACHICOLA CITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2026 – 4:00PM
74 6th STREET APALACHICOLA, FLORIDA 32320

AMENDED AGENDA

You are welcome to comment on any matter under consideration by the Apalachicola City Commission when recognized to do so by the Mayor. Once recognized please rise to the podium, state your name for the record and adhere to the five minutes time limit for public comment. Comments may also be sent by email to the City Manager or to Commissioners.

I. Call to Order

II. Agenda Adoption

III. PRESENTATION: Proclamation-Mr. Boyd "Sandy" Howze

IV. Public Comment

V. New Business

1. **FY 26/27 Budget Calendar- Adoption**
2. **Tentative Millage Rate FY 26/27- Adoption**
3. **Strategic Plan Goals-Adoption**

Adjournment

Any person who desires to appeal any decision at this meeting will need a record of the proceeding and for this purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made which includes testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based. Persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk's Office 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Mayor
Brenda Ash

Commissioners
Donna Knutson
Adriane Elliott
Despina George
Donna Duncan

City Manager
Charles Anderson

Finance Director
Lee Mathes

City Clerk
Sheneidra Cummings

City Attorney
Dan Hartman

CITY OF APALACHICOLA

Proclamation

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF BOYD W. "SANDY" HOWZE, JR.
June 19, 1941 – July 18, 2026

WHEREAS, Boyd W. "Sandy" Howze, Jr., an eighth-generation Apalachicolian, devoted his life to the service of his family, his community, his state, and his nation; and was born on June 19, 1941, and returned to Apalachicola as a child, where he developed a lifelong love for the city's history, its people, and its unique maritime heritage, graduating from Chapman High School in 1959; and

WHEREAS, immediately following graduation, Sandy answered the call to serve his country by enlisting in the United States Navy, and following his military service, Sandy built a successful career in business while remaining deeply rooted in Apalachicola, where he also operated local businesses, shared his love of horticulture, and invested in the economic vitality of his hometown; and

WHEREAS, from 2003 through 2007, Sandy faithfully served the citizens of the City of Apalachicola as Mayor, leading with integrity, practical wisdom, and a steadfast commitment to preserving the character of one of Florida's most historic communities; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as Mayor, Sandy supported efforts to strengthen the City's infrastructure and environmental stewardship, including advancing major stormwater and water quality improvement initiatives designed to protect the Apalachicola River and Bay—resources that are central to the community's economy, heritage, and way of life; and

WHEREAS, throughout his years of public service and long after leaving office, Sandy remained an engaged and thoughtful advocate for responsible growth, historic preservation, and careful planning that would ensure future generations could enjoy the same unique community he loved throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, Sandy's life exemplified patriotism, humility, kindness, faith, and a deep sense of civic responsibility, leaving an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire all who knew him;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Apalachicola, Florida, do hereby honor and celebrate the life and legacy of Boyd W. "Sandy" Howze, Jr., expressing the community's deepest gratitude for his military service, his dedicated leadership as Mayor, and his lifelong commitment to the City of Apalachicola.

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED, that the City extends its heartfelt condolences to his beloved wife, Edna, his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, extended family, and many friends, and joins them in celebrating a life faithfully lived in service to God, family, country, and community.
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Apalachicola, Florida, to be affixed this ____ day of July, 2026.

Attest:

____
Brenda Ash, Mayor
City of Apalachicola

____
Sheneidra Cummings, CITY CLERK

APALACHICOLA CITY COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
Meeting Date: 7/21/26

SUBJECT: FY 26/27 Budget Calendar

AGENDA INFORMATION:

Agenda Location:	New Business
Item Number:	1
Department:	Finance
Contact:	Lee Mathes, Finance Director
Presenter:	Lee Mathes/Charles Anderson

BRIEF SUMMARY:

A budget calendar is a useful tool in keeping in compliance with the TRIM process. Workshop dates can be adjusted as necessary. Hearing dates cannot be adjusted. Once approved, the budget calendar will be posted on the City of Apalachicola website under the Finance Department.

RECOMMENDED MOTION AND REQUESTED ACTIONS:
Approve FY 26/27 budget calendar as presented.

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ATTACHMENTS: FY 26/27 Budget Calendar

STAFF'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

CITY OF APALACHICOLA
2026 – 2027 BUDGET CALENDAR

July 1, 2026	Certification of Taxable Value (Form DR-420) From Property Appraiser
July 21, 2026	Tentatively Adopt Millage Rate Special Meeting – 4:00 PM
July 23, 2026	Enter Form DR-420 and Form DR-420MMP into OASYS (Including Proposed Millage Rate, Rolled-Back Rate, and Date & Time of 1st Budget Public Hearing)
July 27 – 31, 2026	City Manager & Finance Director meet with Department Heads to discuss Budget Needs
Week of August 3, 2026	Finance Director meets with City Manager to review FY 26/27 Draft Budget
August 7, 2026	Draft Budget Must be Completed and Submitted to Commission/ Upload Draft Budget onto Website
August 11, 2026	Budget Workshop – 6:00 PM
August 18, 2026	Budget Workshop – 6:00 PM (Include 10% Reduction)
August 24, 2026	Property Appraiser Mails Notices of Proposed Property Taxes to Property Owners
August 25, 2026	Budget Workshop (If Needed) – 6:00 PM
September 15, 2026	First Budget Public Hearing & Special Meeting to Tentatively Adopt Millage Rate & Budget – 6:00 PM
September 17, 2026	Submit Budget Advertisement to Apalachicola Times
September 24, 2026	Budget Ads run in Apalachicola Times
September 29, 2026	Second Budget Public Hearing & Special Meeting – Final Adoption of Millage Rate & Budget – 6:00 PM

September 30, 2026	Submit Resolution Adopting Millage Rate to Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, and Department of Revenue
September 30, 2026	Complete and Certify Final TRIM Forms in OASYS

Complete and Certify Final Taxable Value Once Received From Property Appraiser Office

By October 16, 2026	Submit Trim Package to Department of Revenue

APALACHICOLA CITY COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
Meeting Date: 7/21/26

SUBJECT: Tentatively Set FY 26/27 Millage Rate

AGENDA INFORMATION:

Agenda Location:	**New Business**
Item Number:	**2**
Department:	**Finance**
Contact:	**Lee Mathes, Finance Director**
Presenter:	**Lee Mathes/Charles Anderson**

BRIEF SUMMARY: July 1st starts the TRIM process for municipalities. Municipalities must adopt a tentative millage rate for the FY 26/27 budget process by July 31st. Once the tentative millage rate is set, municipalities cannot go above the adopted tentative rate but may lower the millage rate to what works best to fund the upcoming budget. For the FY 26/27 budget, it is recommended the tentative millage rate be set at 8.6279. SB 4-F changes the maximum millage levy calculation so the tentative millage rate cannot exceed 8.6279.

RECOMMENDED MOTION AND REQUESTED ACTIONS:
Motion to tentatively set the FY 26/27 millage rate at 8.6279.

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ATTACHMENTS: Certification of Taxable Value, Millage Rate Information, Proposed Property Tax Amendment Information (Provided by Property Appraiser), Good Faith Estimate

STAFF'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Set tentative millage rate at 8.6279.

CITY OF APALACHICOLA MILLAGE RATE INFORMATION				
	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27
Taxable Value	$ 242,493,991.00	$ 276,461,210.00	$ 301,034,820.00	$ 330,508,752.00
Percentage Change From Previous Year	Did not have 2022 DR 420 Information	14.09% Increase	8.89% Increase	9.79% Increase
Rolled Back Rate	7.2299	7.5402	7.8048	7.8435
Adopted Millage Rate	8.3457	8.3457	8.3457	
Ad Valorem Collected	$ 1,922,593.00	$ 2,205,845.66	$ 2,467,358.00	
FY 26/27 MILLAGE RATE OPTIONS	**ESTIMATED REVENUE**	**INCREASE/DECREASE FROM 25/25**		
7.8435 - Rolled Back Rate	$ 2,462,728.00	$ (4,630.00)	DECREASE	
8.3457 - Current Millage Rate	$ 2,620,411.00	$ 153,053.00	INCREASE	
8.6279 - Recommended Tenative Millage Rate	$ 2,709,017.00	$ 241,659.00	INCREASE	

Terry Tipton, Jr., CFA
Franklin County Property Appraiser

June 1, 2026

To: Franklin County Board of County Commissioners
Re: Good Faith Estimate - June 1, 2026

Taxing Authority: CITY OF APALACHICOLA

Dear Commissioners,

Please accept this correspondence as the Good Faith Estimate for June 1, 2026. My office is working diligently to provide you with the Preliminary Values by July 1, 2026.

Below are the final values from last year and the Good Faith Estimate (GFE) for the current year:

2025 Final - $303,521,604
2026 GFE - $315,000,000

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Terry Tipton Jr., CFA
Property Appraiser

33 Market Street, Suite 101 - Apalachicola, FL 32320
Phone: 850-653-9236 Fax: 850-653-1861
ttipton.pa@franklincountyflorida.gov
franklincountypa.net

FLORIDA

CERTIFICATION OF TAXABLE VALUE

DR-420
R. 5/12
Rule 12D-16.002
Florida Administrative Code
Effective 11/12

Year : 2026	County : Franklin
Principal Authority : City of Apalachicola	Taxing Authority : City of Apalachicola - Operating

SECTION I : COMPLETED BY PROPERTY APPRAISER

1.	Current year taxable value of real property for operating purposes	$		319,165,849	(1)
2.	Current year taxable value of personal property for operating purposes	$		11,342,903	(2)
3.	Current year taxable value of centrally assessed property for operating purposes	$		0	(3)
4.	Current year gross taxable value for operating purposes *(Line 1 plus Line 2 plus Line 3)*	$		330,508,752	(4)
5.	Current year net new taxable value (Add new construction, additions, rehabilitative improvements increasing assessed value by at least 100%, annexations, and tangible personal property value over 115% of the previous year's value. Subtract deletions.)	$		7,552,532	(5)
6.	Current year adjusted taxable value *(Line 4 minus Line 5)*	$		322,956,220	(6)
7.	Prior year FINAL gross taxable value from prior year applicable Form DR-403 series	$		303,521,604	(7)
8.	Does the taxing authority include tax increment financing areas? If yes, enter number of worksheets (DR-420TIF) attached. If none, enter 0	☐ YES	☑ NO	Number 0	(8)
9.	Does the taxing authority levy a voted debt service millage or a millage voted for 2 years or less under s. 9(b), Article VII, State Constitution? If yes, enter the number of DR-420DEBT, *Certification of Voted Debt Millage* forms attached. If none, enter 0	☐ YES	☑ NO	Number 0	(9)

SIGN HERE	**Property Appraiser Certification**	I certify the taxable values above are correct to the best of my knowledge.
	Signature of Property Appraiser: Electronically Certified by Property Appraiser	Date : 6/17/2026 8:45:21 AM

SECTION II : COMPLETED BY TAXING AUTHORITY

If this portion of the form is not completed in FULL your taxing authority will be denied TRIM certification and possibly lose its millage levy privilege for the tax year. If any line is not applicable, enter -0-.

10.	Prior year operating millage levy *(If prior year millage was adjusted then use adjusted millage from Form DR-422)*		8.3457 per $1,000	(10)
11.	Prior year ad valorem proceeds *(Line 7 multiplied by Line 10, divided by 1,000)*	$	2,533,100	(11)
12.	Amount, if any, paid or applied in prior year as a consequence of an obligation measured by a dedicated increment value *(Sum of either Lines 6c or Line 7a for all DR-420TIF forms)*	$	-0-	(12)
13.	Adjusted prior year ad valorem proceeds *(Line 11 minus Line 12)*	$	2,533,100	(13)
14.	Dedicated increment value, if any *(Sum of either Line 6b or Line 7e for all DR-420TIF forms)*	$	-0-	(14)
15.	Adjusted current year taxable value *(Line 6 minus Line 14)*	$	322,956,220	(15)
16.	Current year rolled-back rate *(Line 13 divided by Line 15, multiplied by 1,000)*		7.8435 per $1000	(16)
17.	Current year proposed operating millage rate		per $1000	(17)
18.	Total taxes to be levied at proposed millage rate *(Line 17 multiplied by Line 4, divided by 1,000)*	$		(18)

Continued on page 2

19.	TYPE of principal authority (check one)	☐ County ☑ Municipality	☐ Independent Special District ☐ Water Management District	(19)
20.	Applicable taxing authority (check one)	☑ Principal Authority ☐ MSTU	☐ Dependent Special District ☐ Water Management District Basin	(20)
21.	Is millage levied in more than one county? (check one)	☐ Yes	☑ No	(21)

DEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS AND MSTUs STOP **STOP HERE - SIGN AND SUBMIT**

22.	Enter the total adjusted prior year ad valorem proceeds of the principal authority, all dependent special districts, and MSTUs levying a millage. *(The sum of Line 13 from all DR-420 forms)*	$ 2,533,100	(22)
23.	Current year aggregate rolled-back rate *(Line 22 divided by Line 15, multiplied by 1,000)*	7.8435 per $1,000	(23)
24.	Current year aggregate rolled-back taxes *(Line 4 multiplied by Line 23, divided by 1,000)*	$ 2,592,345	(24)
25.	Enter total of all operating ad valorem taxes proposed to be levied by the principal taxing authority, all dependent districts, and MSTUs, if any. *(The sum of Line 18 from all DR-420 forms)*	$ -0-	(25)
26.	Current year proposed aggregate millage rate *(Line 25 divided by Line 4, multiplied by 1,000)*	-0- per $1,000	(26)
27.	Current year proposed rate as a percent change of rolled-back rate *(Line 26 divided by Line 23, **minus 1**, multiplied by 100)*	-100.00 %	(27)

First public budget hearing	Date : 9/2/2026	Time : 12:00 AM EST	Place :

S I G N H E R E

Taxing Authority Certification	I certify the millages and rates are correct to the best of my knowledge. The millages comply with the provisions of s. 200.065 and the provisions of either s. 200.071 or s. 200.081, F.S.
Signature of Chief Administrative Officer :	Date :
Title :	Contact Name and Contact Title :
Mailing Address :	Physical Address :
City, State, Zip :	Phone Number : / Fax Number :

Instructions on page 3

City of Apalachicola

150,000 HX EX.

Taxable affected- 87,451,175

Taxable lost- 40,929,602

Taxes lost- $341,586.18

TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE 2026- 330,508,752

Millage 8.3457

Total Taxes $2,758,326.89

Taxes lost $341,586.18

Remaining $2,416,740.71

2025 Total Taxes (last yr) $2,533,100.25

250,000 HX EX

Value lost- 20,356,676

Taxes lost- $169,890.71

APALACHICOLA CITY COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
Meeting Date: July 7, 2026

SUBJECT: Review and Approval of Strategic Plan Goals

AGENDA INFORMATION:

Agenda Location:	New Business
Item Number:	3
Department:	Governing Body
Contact:	Charles Chapman – C4 Strategies
Presenter:	Charles Chapman

BRIEF SUMMARY: At the May 5, 2026 Commission Meeting, C4 Strategies was selected to facilitate a strategic visioning project. Mr. Chapman held a two day session (June 17th & June 18th) with community members selected by the City Commission to compile goals for the project. This item was tabled at the July Regular Meeting.

RECOMMENDED MOTION AND REQUESTED ACTIONS: Motion to review and approve goals for the two-year strategic plan.

FUNDING SOURCE: Governing Body

ATTACHMENTS: Phase Two Commission Report – Review & Approval of Goals for the Two-Year Strategic Plan

STAFF'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Approve

CITY OF APALACHICOLA, FLORIDA

Two-Year Strategic Plan

Phase Two Commission Report

Review and Approval of Goals for the Two-Year Strategic Plan

Stakeholder Engagement, SWOT Analysis &
Strategic Goal Development Workshop

Prepared for the Apalachicola City Commission
by C4 Strategies, LLC
June 19, 2026

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Strategic Goals for City Commission Review and Approval

Utilizing the identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats the following strategic goals are provided for the City Commission to consider for review and approval:

Two Year Strategic Goals:

- Within two years, the city will take concrete steps to protect and preserve the city's historic character in balance with maximizing the economic value for current and future generations.
- The city will translate city ordinances from legal language into an easy-to-understand guide in printed and online format to help residents, visitors, and other interested parties to understand and comply with the requirements of the city codes.
- Increase citizen involvement by establishing advisory boards that provide input and feedback to the City Commission and staff.
- In order to protect, promote, and preserve the historic waterfront and water resources, the City will create a Waterfront Development Advisory Board.
- Develop a system of accountability measures to illustrate the achievements of department and report them at each commission meeting.
- Develop and implement a workforce development program using partnerships to provide the services.
- The city will take concrete steps to explore increasing the inventory of attainable/affordable housing options for residents
- The city will undertake an analysis and develop an implementation plan to ensure its ability to recruit, hire, and retain the most qualified city employees possible.
- Ensure a successful two-year transition of the City's utility system to the independent special district established by HB 4103 (2026), consistent with legal requirements and industry best practices for customer service quality assurance.

Background and Methodology

Phase 2 – Stakeholder Engagement and Workshop Facilitation began with a public notice of an email address established for the submission of community input as to what they identify as the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing the City of Apalachicola (government). The dates for the open call for comment through the email address were May 20, 2026, to June 1, 2026, with input taken until June 5, 2026, to allow respondents additional time to submit their comments.

The City of Apalachicola also organized an intensive two-day stakeholder focus group workshop with twenty-five community leaders invited to participate in the facilitated exercise. Email submissions received were summarized and included in the materials the invited stakeholders participating in the two-day focus group utilized in their discussions.

On Day One, participants conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis of the City government. On Day Two, participants developed strategic goals using the SMART framework (Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Oriented, and Timely).

The outcomes of the individual city commissioner interviews and the stakeholder workshop are compiled below for the City Commission review and approval to proceed to phase 3 of the process. Phase 3 will include city staff developing objectives to achieve the approved goals over the two-year period of the plan.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Each category provides the top three ranked features or issues identified by the stakeholder group. Also provided are items that were not ranked and included here for reference.

Strengths

Number 1: Involved citizenry with a new attitude of active engagement and availability to assist the city in service on committees, potential partnerships, and seeking funding sources/alternatives to help gather resources.

Number 2: Strong professional leadership in place with a clear understanding of the policy making and oversight role of the City Commission alongside the day-to-day management of the city staff by the City Manager.

Number 3: The city's historical, well-planned platting alongside the waterfront location (Bay and River) are key features the city that should prize and utilize in planning, preservation, and development efforts.

Other strengths identified:

- An expressed renewed desire of city leadership to involve the community in strategic planning and encouragement of the residents to engage.

- The community itself is very supportive of each other. The qualities of the people who call the City of Apalachicola home is a key feature of what makes the city a special place to work, live, and play.

Weaknesses

Number One: The city is inconsistent with enforcing and applying the comprehensive plan, land development code, and building code.

Number Two: City owned properties and infrastructure are not operated and maintained in the most desirable manner. Waterfront properties, infrastructure (potable water, wastewater, stormwater, sidewalks) are not modernized to meet today's needs and expectations

Number Three: A reputation for city mismanagement (poor planning oversight, inconsistent enforcement of codes, weak fiscal controls, and subjective decision making) is real in the minds of residents. Because of this mindset, there is a disdain for public service and a resistance to becoming engaged.

Other weaknesses identified:

- Poor communication and public notice practices about meetings, workshops, amendment to commission agendas, and city project updates.
- The ability of the city to recruit, hire, train, and retain the best employees possible.
- A perceived attitude that is resistant to change with too much focus on the past without a vision or desire to advance into the future.
- Lack of expressed city support for residents well being and needs (elder services, youth involvement, affordable housing, economic development/job creation, and the tensions between residents and tourists).

Opportunities

Number One: Improvements to the planning, building, and code enforcement process, procedures, and services to become more professional and predictable including active public education on what is expected and how to comply.

Number Two: The city is uniquely positioned to become a desirable transient boating destination with its location to the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint river systems and the Gulf.

Number Three: The city's historical design and character is still viable and preservation efforts are achievable if active management and intentional planning is engaged now.

Other opportunities identified:

- The community desires and supports the "authenticity" of Apalachicola should be protected providing the city leadership support to make the tough choices to protect the unique qualities of Apalachicola.
- The city possesses the ability to connect the waterfront properties with existing parks into a "riverwalk" destination for residents, businesses, and visitors to enjoy.

- A renovation and re-development of the "Old" high school property into a variety of services including potential housing or training facilities.
- Regional partnerships should be sought out to help enhance the city's capacity to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Threats

Number One: Aggressive and well-funded developers are considering the City of Apalachicola who are unprepared/underfunded to respond to meet the demand for the planning, building and code enforcement the new development will present.

Number Two: Relationship with State legislative leaders is fractured. As such the city is now facing increased state scrutiny and intervention, including the loss of local control in decision making and infrastructure management (HB 4103).

Number Three: The availability of qualified workforce will continue to erode as ability to pay competitive wages and the housing stock becomes increasingly limited due to expansion pressure for short-term rental housing increases.

Other threats identified:

- Potential loss of tax and fee revenue resources to fund city operations
- Developer interest inconsistent with the "authenticity" of City of Apalachicola
- The lack of a comprehensive plan to ensure the future of the city will have a balance of future growth consistent with Apalachicola's history and culture.
- Natural disasters such hurricanes and flooding events.
- Any continued sentiment by city leadership and/or residents to move the city forward due to cynicism, apathy, and distrust of the city government.

Appendix A: Community Input Received by Email

The following input was submitted by community members through the dedicated project email address and is provided for reference alongside the ranked workshop findings above.

Organizational STRENGTHS

- Strong Existing Legal and Regulatory Foundation
- Unusually Strong Preservation Language in the LDC & Comprehensive Plan
- Home Rule Authority
- Recent Improvements in Community Communications
- Prior Capital Improvement Plan as a Proven Model

External STRENGTHS

- Historic Identity and Built Environment
- Historic Tourism as a Functioning Economic Engine
- Master Site File as a Ready Determinant of Historic Status
- Exceptionally Knowledgeable and Engaged Resident Base
- Waterfront and Boating Infrastructure as a Functioning Tourism Draw
- African-American History Museum and Cotton Warehouse Restoration as Cultural Capital in Progress

Priority STRENGTHS

- The LDC's Preservation Framework as a Legal Shield and Policy Anchor
- Historic Character as an Irreplaceable Economic Asset
- The Resident Population as an Untapped Strategic Planning Resource
- The Historic Plat as the City's Foundational Strategic Asset

Organizational WEAKNESSES

- Incomplete Regulatory Framework
- Absence of Recorded Encroachment Agreements
- Past Agreements of Questionable Legal Validity
- Limited Staff and Administrative Capacity
- Comprehensive Plan Commitments Systematically Unmet
- No Formal Employee Evaluation System
- Building Department Process Lacks Written Policy, Transparency, and Consistency
- Architectural Review Committee Effectively Non-Functional

- No Multi-Year Capital Improvement Planning
- Sidewalk and Road Infrastructure in Documented Disrepair
- Fire Department Capacity Not Keeping Pace with Population Growth

External WEAKNESSES

- Affordable Housing Vulnerability
- "Ask Forgiveness Rather Than Permission" Civic Culture
- Palm Tree Bronzing Disease Spreading Without Adequate Public Awareness or Response Coordination
- Dilapidated Waterfront Properties Suppressing Tax Base and Aesthetic Quality
- Fragmented and Difficult-to-Navigate Boating Access Information
- Absence of Affordable and Senior Housing Options

Priority WEAKNESSES

- The Regulatory Gap Between Temporary and Fixed Encroachments
- Absence of Recorded Agreements as a Title and Governance Failure
- The Gap Between Stated Policy Commitments and Operational Follow-Through
- Code Enforcement Inconsistency as a Public Trust Failure

Organizational OPPORTUNITIES

- Encroachment Ordinance Reform as a Title-Clarity and Market-Confidence Tool
- Building Permit Process as a Low-Cost Enforcement Lever
- "Permitless Public Amenity" Framework as a No-Cost Beautification Strategy
- Five-Year Grace Period as a Managed, Predictable Transition
- Restore and Modernize the Capital Improvement Plan
- Adopt a Written, Published Building Department Process
- Formalize ARC Review with Funded Neutral Expertise
- Adopt Historic Plat Protection Ordinance
- Develop a Centralized Boating Access Platform
- Conduct a Strategic City Property Inventory
- Establish a Proactive Tree Disease Response Program

External OPPORTUNITIES

- Rich Landscape of Peer Municipality Models
- Plain-Language Policy Guide as a Public Trust and Communications Tool

- Boating and Cruising Tourism as an Underdeveloped Revenue Category
- Entrepreneurial Business Recruitment Through Shared Marketplace Model
- Historic District Design Standards as a Developer Recruitment Filter

Priority OPPORTUNITIES

- Recorded Encroachment Agreements as a Self-Reinforcing Governance Mechanism
- Building Permit Trigger as the City's Most Practical Enforcement Entry Point
- The Visioning Process Itself as a Trust-Rebuilding Mechanism
- Waterfront as the City's Highest-Potential Economic Development Zone

Organizational THREATS

- Legal Exposure from Continued Inaction
- Past Agreement Fragility as a Latent Legal Risk
- Comprehensive Plan Non-Compliance as a Legal and Credibility Vulnerability
- Issuing Final Approvals with Open Contingencies
- Staff Empowered to Make Binding Decisions That Should Require Board Action

External THREATS

- Loss of Historic Structures Through Title Uncertainty and Market Attrition
- Aggressive Enforcement Backlash
- "Ask Forgiveness Rather Than Permission" Culture Expanding the Problem
- State Statutory Constraints as a Hard Boundary
- Development Pressure on the Riverfront Without a Guiding Framework
- Large Commercial Vehicle Traffic Damaging Historic Street Infrastructure
- Population Growth Outpacing Public Safety Capacity
- Golf Cart Traffic Safety Conflicts on Key Corridors
- Workforce Recruitment and Retention Constrained by Housing and Amenity Gaps

Priority THREATS

- Irreversible Loss of Historic Built Environment
- Compounding Legal Exposure from the Regulatory Gap
- Development Pressure on the Riverfront in the Absence of a Protective Framework
- The Civic Trust Deficit as a Compounding Governance Threat

Community Identified Goals

- Establish the public trust as the foundational principle of right-of-way governance
- Create a comprehensive, consolidated right-of-way encroachment ordinance
- Develop and maintain a formal registry of encroaching historic structures
- Establish equitable, tiered treatment of encroaching structures
- Require all permitted encroachments to be governed by recorded agreements that run with the land
- Adopt a financial hardship exception mechanism
- Develop a financial hardship accommodation pathway
- Publish a plain-language public guide for city regulations and amenities
- Reduce the Building Department's review and approval process to a written policy
- Establish enforced submission deadlines for special meeting agendas
- Require digital submission and immediate public posting of all commercial applications and any residential application seeking a variance, encroachment, or exception.
- Require a signed Compliance Checklist certified by the City Planner and/or P&Z Chairman as a prerequisite for building permit issuance
- Restore a formal multi-year Capital Improvement Plan
- Establish a formal employee evaluation system
- Make proactive public communications a defined staff responsibility
- Historic Preservation is a Priority
- Economic Development and Waterfront Opportunities
- Housing and Community Sustainability
- Traffic Flow and Parking Capacity

Appendix B: Interviews with Mayor and City Commissioners (April 2026)

Purpose: Consolidate leadership perspectives to inform strategic plan goal setting decisions.

1. Core Strategic Themes (High Alignment)

Organizational Modernization

- Broad consensus that the city is transitioning toward a more professional, structured municipal organization.
- Priorities include standard operating procedures, clear roles, and potential of expanded leadership capacity (e.g., Assistant City Manager).

Workforce & Housing Interdependency

- Workforce recruitment and retention challenges are directly tied to housing affordability.
- Competitive compensation, career pathways, and attainable housing are foundational to service delivery.

Governance Alignment (Commission–Manager Model)

- Strong agreement on the need to reinforce roles: Commission sets policy; staff executes.
- Gaps persist in consistency, communication, and alignment of priorities.

State-Level Risk Exposure

- Significant concern regarding HB 4103, home rule erosion, and property tax reform.
- Weak legislative relationships limit the City's ability to influence outcomes.

Community Engagement & Communication

- Engagement is strong during crises but inconsistent otherwise.
- Need for structured, ongoing mechanisms and improved transparency.

Managed Growth & Preservation of Character

- Unified preference for controlled, community-informed growth that protects natural and historic assets.

2. Secondary Themes (Moderate Alignment)

- Economic Transition: Shift from extractive industries to a diversified, quality-of-life-based economy.
- Intergovernmental Coordination: Opportunities to strengthen collaboration with Franklin County and regional partners.
- Development Processes: Inconsistency in planning, code enforcement, and permitting undermines confidence.

- Fiscal Management: Need for improved budget discipline, audit practices, and grant compliance.
- Civic Identity & Branding: Lack of a clearly defined narrative and proactive communication strategy.
- Aesthetics & Beautification: Physical appearance impacts economic development and community pride.

3. Key Risks and Threats

- Utility Governance (HB 4103): Potential loss of local control, financial uncertainty, and rate impacts.
- Home Rule Erosion: Broader statewide trend reducing municipal autonomy.
- Property Tax Reform: Uncertainty in long-term revenue stability.
- Workforce Attrition: Inability to recruit/retain staff due to wages and housing constraints.
- Operational Capacity Gaps: Staffing, expertise, and organizational systems remain underdeveloped.
- External Development Pressure: Risk of growth being shaped by outside interests if not proactively managed.

4. Divergent Perspectives (Leadership Variability)

- **Organizational Readiness:**
- Some view current progress as strong and improving; others see ongoing structural dysfunction requiring urgent correction.
- **Staff vs. Commission Roles:**
- Differences in comfort with staff-driven initiatives versus tighter Commission oversight.
- **Framing of External Threats:**
- Variation in emphasis (governance, financial, or strategic implications of state actions).
- **Urgency of Action:**
- Ranges from "strategic advancement" to "organizational recovery/crisis response."

5. Strategic Implications

- **The City is in a transitional phase requiring simultaneous:**
- Organizational stabilization efforts
- Workforce and housing interventions for recruitment and retention
- Governance discipline procedurally and financially
- External advocacy strengthening with the State and Federal delegations
- **Near-term success depends on:**

- Converting alignment on problems into coordinated execution
- Prioritizing foundational systems (people, processes, policies) before expansion of current initiatives or starting something new

6. Priority Focus Areas for Action Planning

- Organizational Structure & Staffing Capacity
- Workforce Strategy (Recruitment and Retention) & Attainable Housing Strategy
- Governance Protocols & Information Flow
- State and Regional Relationship Management
- Community Engagement Framework
- Land Use, Development Standards & Growth Management

Commission Interview Note: While perspectives vary in emphasis, there is strong overall alignment on the City's core challenges and direction. The primary gap is not vision, but execution capacity and consistency.