

MINUTES
City of Cocoa
Special Meeting of The City Council

March 4, 2025

A Special City Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, in Cocoa City Hall, in City Council Chambers, located at 65 Stone Street, in Cocoa, Florida, 32922, as publicly noticed.

I. Opening Matters:

Mayor Blake called the meeting to order at 4:59 p.m.

Fire Chief Lamm provided the invocation, and Police Chief Collier led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Assistant City Clerk took the roll.

PRESENT:	Michael C. Blake	Mayor
	Lavander Hearn	Councilmember (Arrived at 5:51pm)
	Alex Goins	Councilmember (Arrived at 5:07pm)
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Patricia Weeks	Deputy Mayor
	Anthony Garganese	City Attorney (Arrived at 5:18pm)
	Stockton Whitten	City Manager
	Breanna Earley	Assistant City Clerk

ABSENT:

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rebecca Bowman, Finance Director; Director; Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief; Evander Collier, Police Chief; Charlene Neuterman, Community Development Director; Abigail Morgan, Public Works Director; Tammy Gemmati, Administrative Services Director; Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Robert Beach, Chief Technology Officer; and Corbin Gilbert, Help Desk Support Tech.

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

1. Agenda: Special Meeting of March 4, 2025. (2025-191).

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Koss to take a 5-minute recess.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (3-0)

Mayor Blake resumed the meeting after a 5-minute recess. Councilmember Goins arrived.

City Manager Whitten presented Resolution 2025-13 regarding the closing of Rockledge Hospital and expressing the City of Cocoa's concern and the impact it will have to Brevard County.

Mayor Blake stated his support for the resolution.

Councilmember Koss spoke about the layoffs of healthcare workers.

Deputy Mayor Weeks shared her concerns about the lack of beds in Brevard County for patients.

Mayor Blake spoke of his hope for a future hospital in the City of Cocoa.

City Manager Whitten spoke about the possibility of standalone emergency clinics.

- * **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Weeks to approve Resolution 2025-13.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (4-0)

III. Special Meeting Topics¹:

1. Evaluation and Appraisal Review

City Manager Whitten shared a legislative bill summary with Council.

¹ Exhibit A – 03/04/2025 Special Council Meeting Presentation

Alexis Crespo, RVi Consulting, spoke about the City of Cocoa's Comprehensive Plan. She broke down the process and timeline and areas they would focus on, including future land use, transportation, housing, infrastructure, intergovernmental coordination, conservation, and capital improvements.

1. Financial Update

Ms. Bowman provided a financial update. She went over the assigned fund balance and general fund balance.

Ms. Bowman provided new money estimates to include:

- 3% Property Tax Increases
- 3% Fire Assessment
- 5% Utility/Stormwater Indirect Cost Allocation
- 10% ROI

The total estimated increase in revenue is \$1,711,097.

Ms. Bowman provided an estimate for the increase in expenses. This includes:

- General Fund Salaries
- 15.7% Medical Insurance
- 5% General Funds Utilities
- 5% General Fund Liability Insurance
- 5% General Fund Fuel

The total estimated expense increase is \$2,038,784.

City Manager Whitten spoke about the medical insurance increase.

Ms. Gemmati spoke about the City's broker putting a bid out to try to reduce the cost of the City's medical insurance. A factor to increased medical insurance costs is GLPs being used for weight loss.

2. City Council Priorities

City Manager Whitten discussed Federal Appropriations requests, to include the following:

1. SR 524 Widening
2. SR 501 Curve
3. Cocoa Brightline Station

4. IRD Septic to Sewer Conversion
5. Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Healthcare Facility
6. Multi-Modal Regional Stormwater Facility and Park

City Manager Whitten spoke about Councilmember Goins' District 1 priorities:

1. RFP for 203 Orange Street
2. RFP for management of the Leon and Jewel Collins Museum of African American History and Culture
3. Allocate funds for future events and for future non-profits, \$30-\$50k per year
4. Allocate funds to upgrade and update City welcome signs on all four corners of the city
5. Allocate funds for landscape island inside of Virginia Park on Rosa L. Jones

Councilmember Goins wanted to highlight the management of the Leon and Jewel Collins Museum.

Further discussion on the museum was held.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Koss to put out a RFP for the management of the Leon and Jewel Museum of African American History and Culture with no allocated dollar amount.**

City Manager Whitten asked for clarification on the motion.

A discussion about museum volunteers and how other local museums operated took place.

- * **MOTION AMENDED by Councilmember Goins; Seconded by Councilmember Koss to place requests for letters of interest to manage the Leon and Jewel Museum of African American History and Culture on a volunteer basis.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Hearn, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

Councilmember Goins spoke further about his other district 1 priorities.

City Manager Whitten went over the District 3 priorities:

1. Reduce the millage rate so taxes do not go up this year for homeowners
2. SR 524 entrance, parking lot and trailheads for the Cocoa Conservation area

3. Septic to sewer project
4. Beautify entrances to city
5. Widen Friday Road
6. Plan for a new fire station

Deputy Mayor Weeks discussed these priorities further.

Councilmember Hearn spoke about his District 2 priorities, including paving the neighborhood south of Dixon Boulevard and possibly acquiring two large properties that are not taken care of within District 2 for mixed-use development.

Councilmember Koss spoke about her District 4 priorities which include a police waterway vessel, adding high visibility crosswalks at Cambridge Elementary, adding acoustic padding to the gym at Travis Park Recreation Center, bus shelters at the Clearlake Isles area, beautifying the corridor Cocoa High School, septic to sewer, and hiring an assistant City Manager.

A discussion on an Assistant City Manager took place.

3. Public Comment

Aleck Greenwood, 640 Brevard Ave, Cocoa, spoke about what he's experienced with Council.

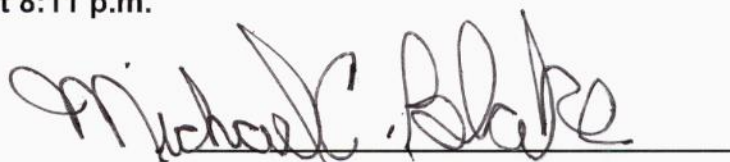
IV. Adjournment:

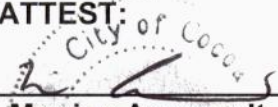
- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Hearn to adjourn the Special meeting of March 4, 2025.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.


Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:

Monica Arsenault, CMC, City Clerk



1002-14-100-1

1122

100-100

Exhibit A

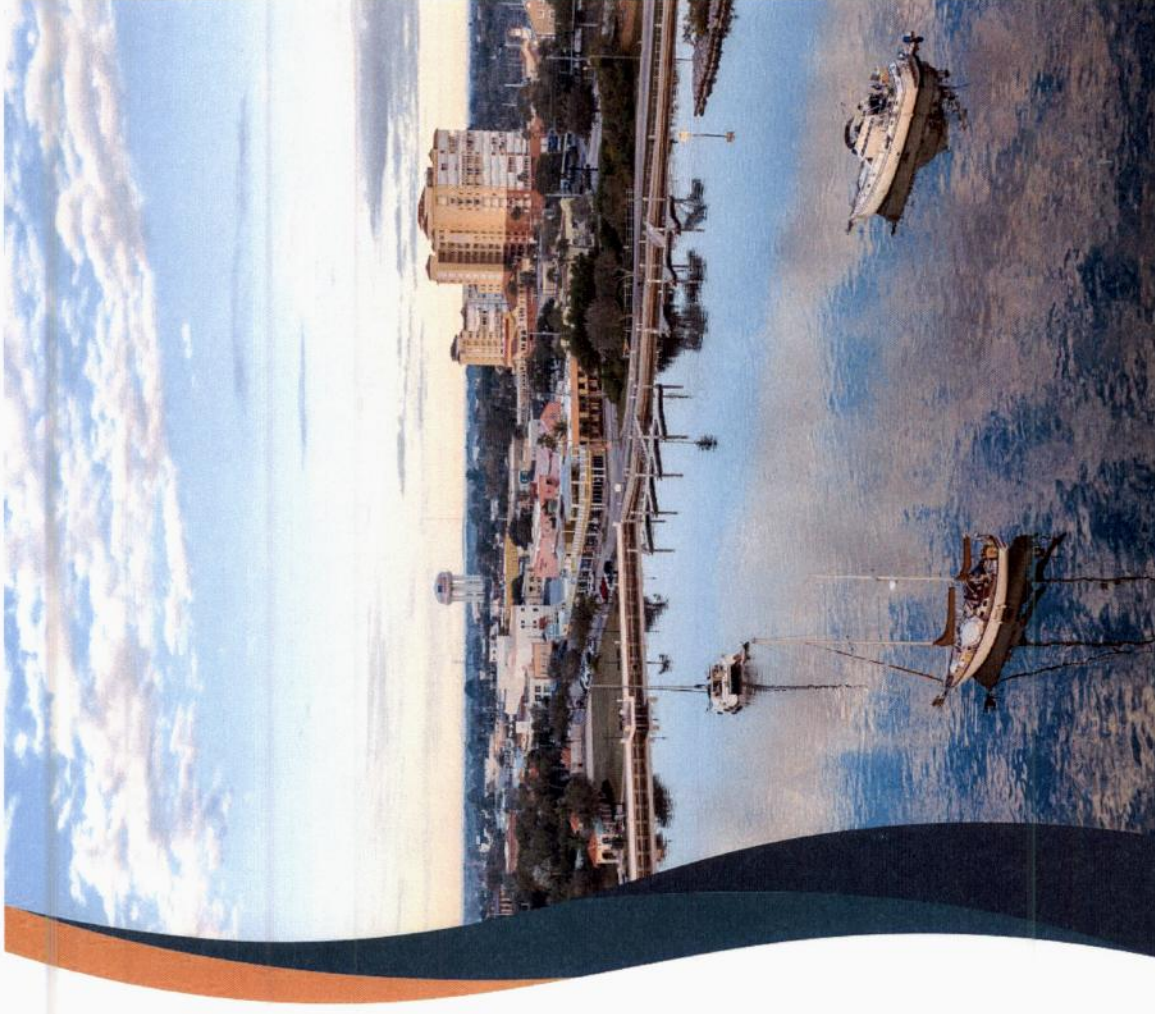


City Council

FY 2026 Priorities and Planning

Special Meeting

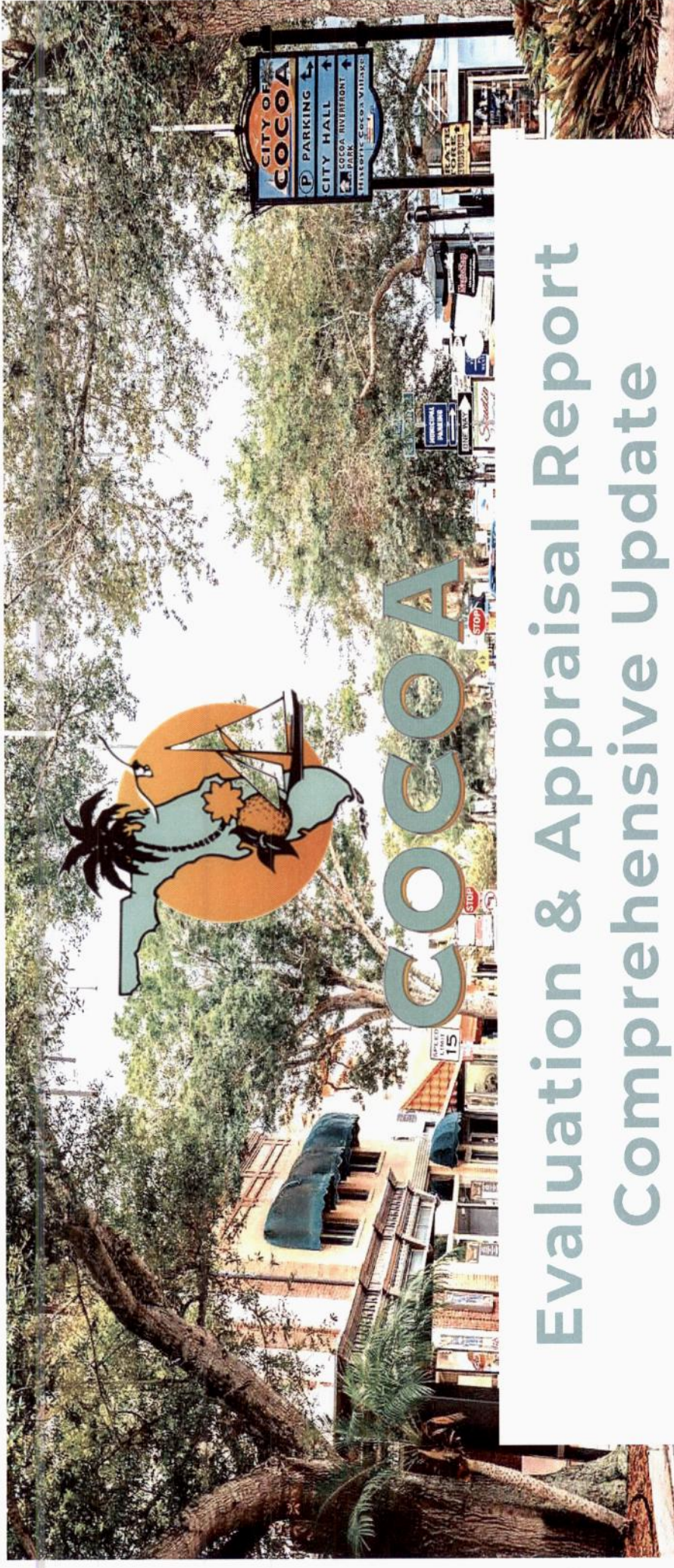
March 4, 2025



Agenda

1. Evaluation and Appraisal Review
2. Financial Update
3. City Council Priorities
4. Public Comment





Evaluation & Appraisal Report Comprehensive Update

Council Workshop

March 4, 2025

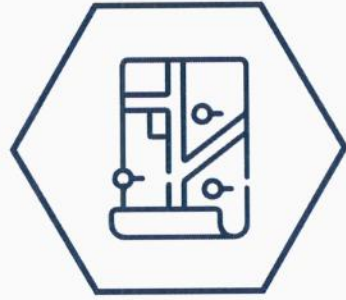


Planning +
Landscape Architecture

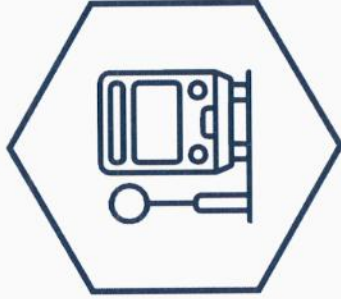
Comprehensive Plan Overview

- Long-range planning document required for each jurisdiction by the Community Planning Act (Ch. 163, Florida Statutes)
- Describes the City's Vision for the Future and translated this vision into policies, programs & public investments – The City's "Blueprint"
- Goals, Objectives & Policies to guide the physical development of the City
- Required and optional "Elements" or chapters
- More breadth and depth than your Strategic Plan
- Implemented by your Zoning Ordinance

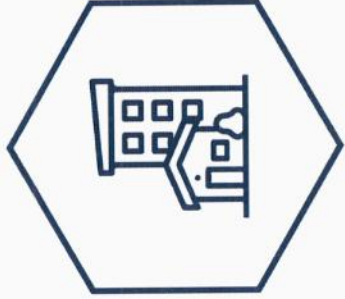
Comprehensive Plan Framework



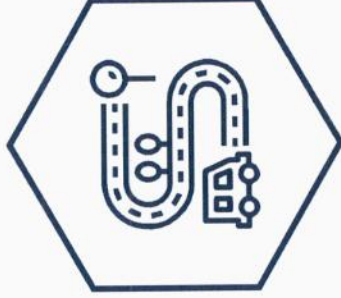
Future Land
Use



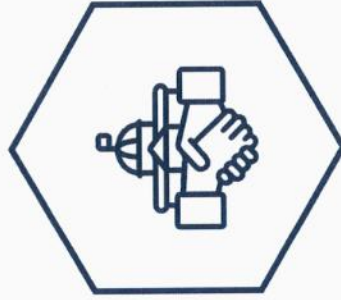
Transportation



Housing



Infrastructure



Intergovernmental
Coordination



Conservation, Recreation
& Coastal Management



Capital
Improvements

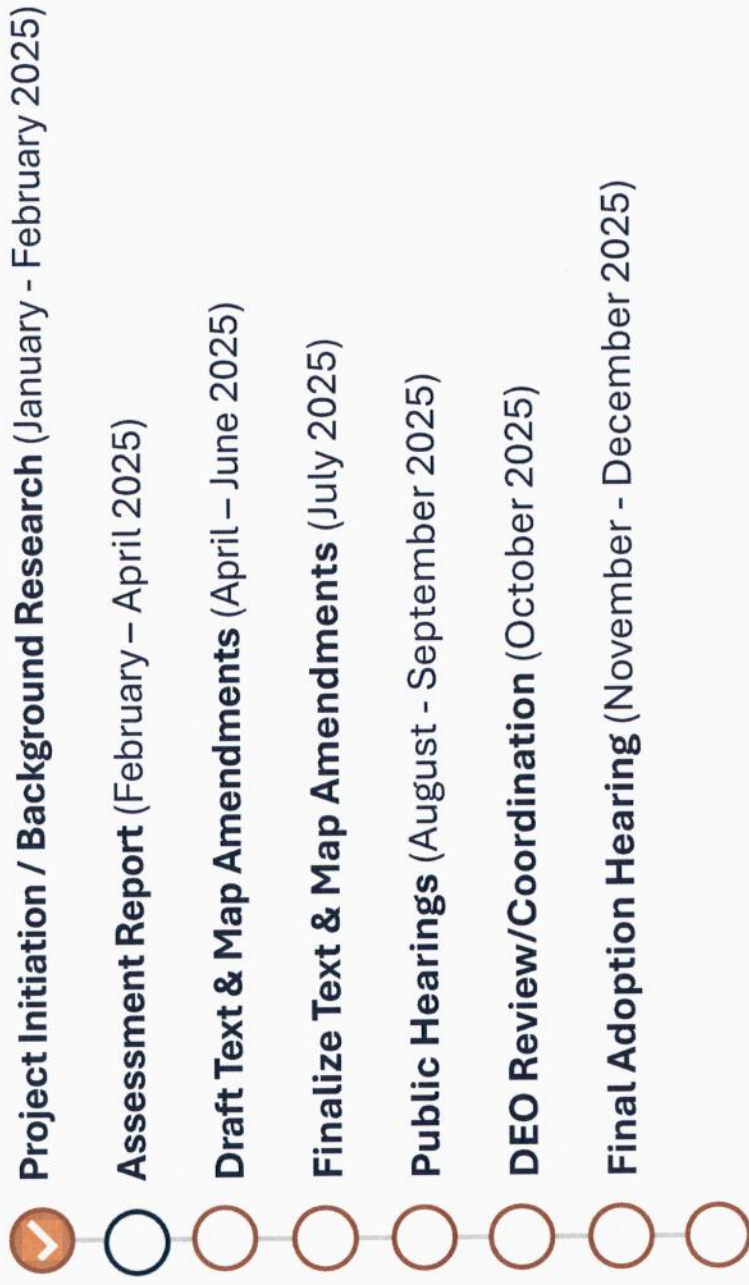
Comprehensive Plan Updates

- Current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2020
- Last Evaluation & Appraisal Report (EAR) conducted in 2019
- The EAR is a thorough evaluation of the Plan to ensure consistency with Florida Statutes
- Changes to State Law governing Comprehensive Plans since 2019

Phased Approach

- State-Mandated Amendments to fulfill statutory requirements such as concurrency, infrastructure/water quality directives, etc.
- State-Mandated amendment must be transmitted/sent to the State by October 2025
- If directed by Council, non-mandated “Optional” amendments can be prepared and processed with no deadline per the State

EAR Update Process/Timeline



Preliminary Assessment Overview

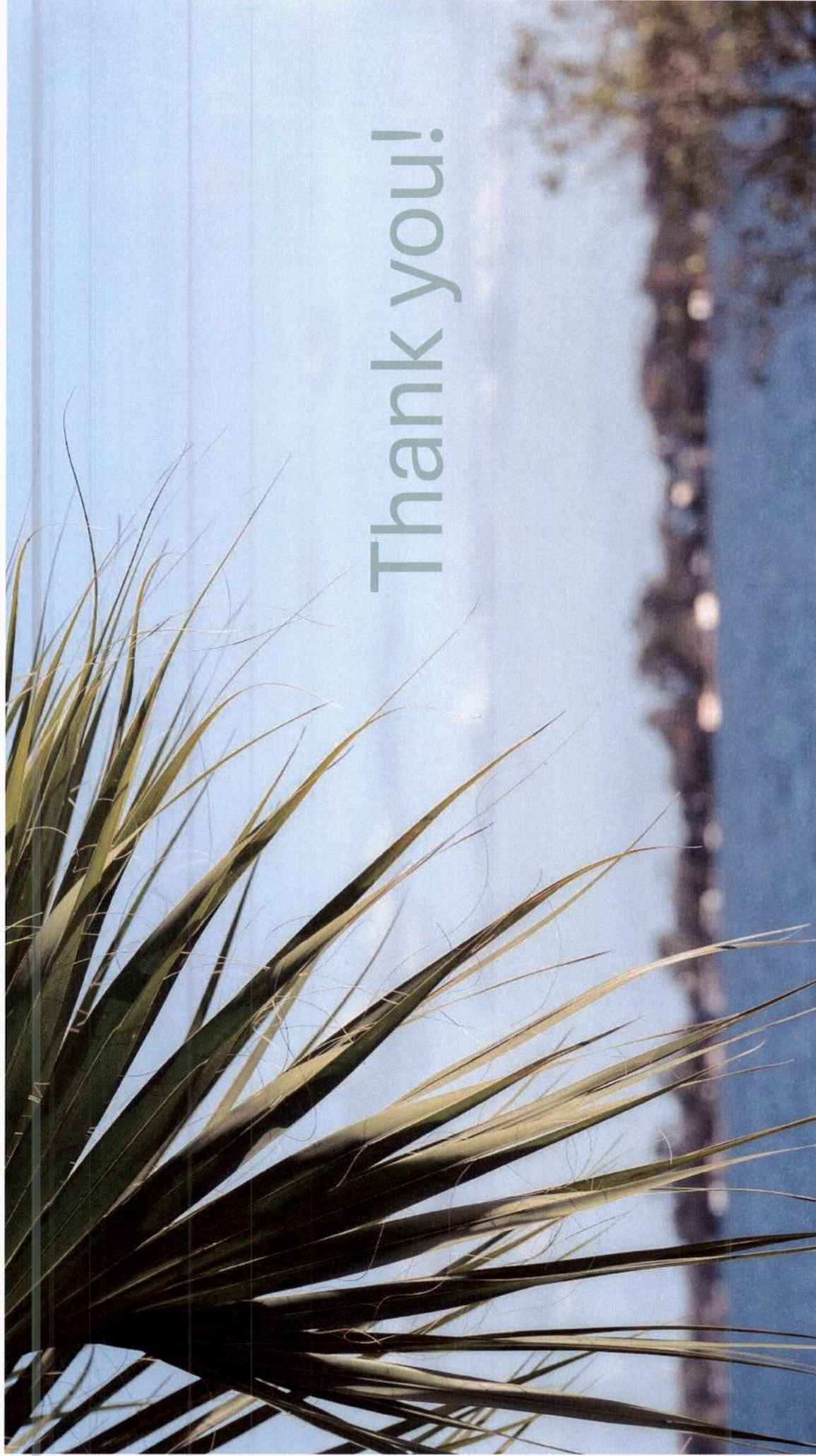
- ✓ Demographic Changes
- ✓ Local Industry & Business Environment
- ✓ Vacant Land Availability / Build Out Analysis
- ✓ Available Housing Stock
- ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Inventory of Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Annexation, Text Changes



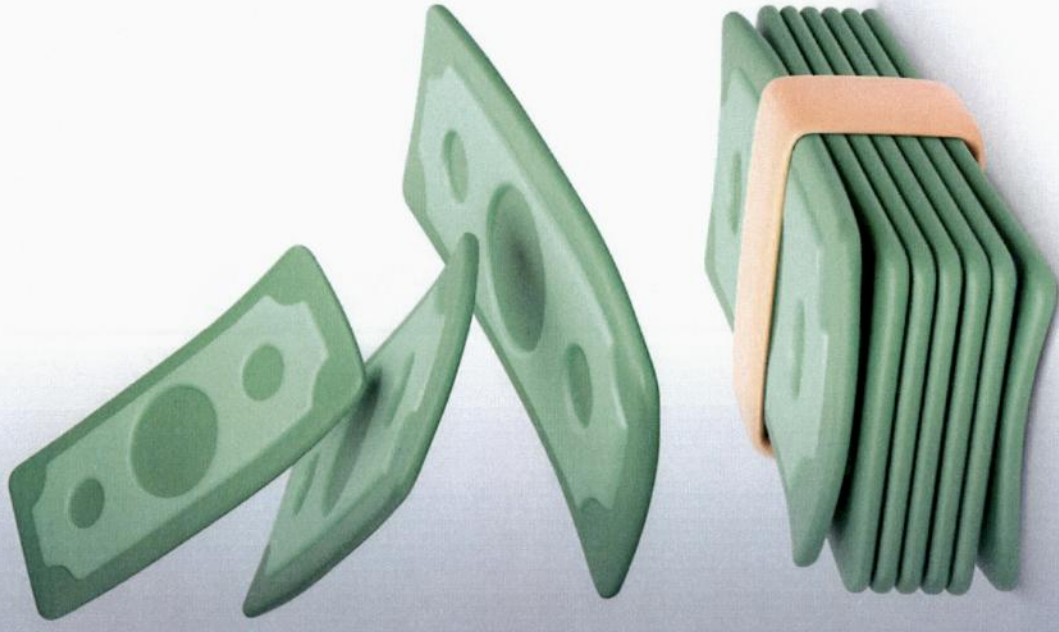
Community Involvement Opportunities

1. Workshop/Project Kick-Off Presentation
2. Preliminary Assessment Report on City Website
3. Planning and Zoning Board Hearing
4. City Council Transmittal & Adoption Hearings

Thank you!



FINANCIAL UPDATE



General Fund – Assigned Fund Balance 2024

FY24 Assigned Fund Balance:	\$20,066,558
Train Station	\$5,000,000
SR 524 Design	4,300,000
Early Debt Repayment	3,000,000
ERP Software	3,000,000
Capital Equipment	2,304,058
Economic Incentives	750,000
Employee Recruitment	600,000
Cocoa Village Parking	575,000
Road Resurfacing	500,000
Sustainability Plan	37,500



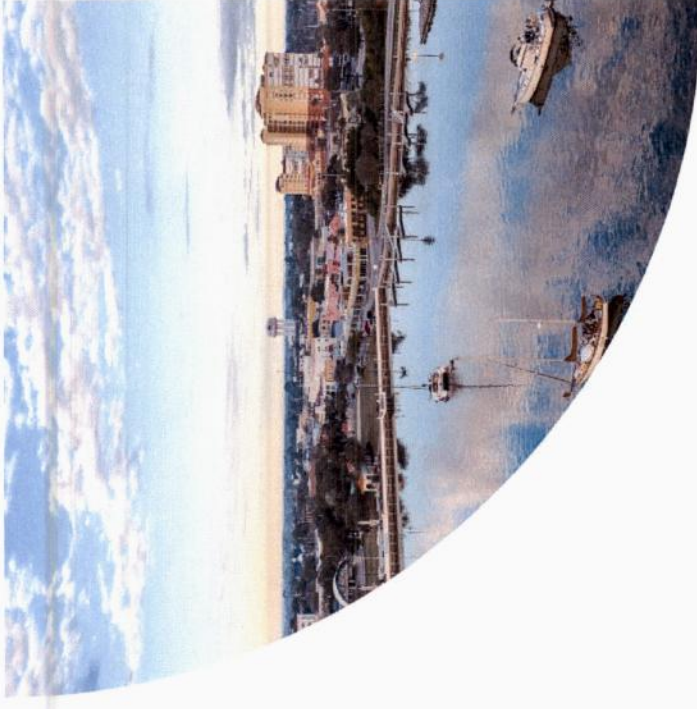
General Fund Fund Balance 2024

Total Fund Balance:	\$56,706,247
Nonspendable	\$ 2,663,032
Restricted	\$67,000
Committed for Stabilization	\$13,000,000
Committed for Capital Reserve	\$500,000
Committed for Grants	\$ 191,757
Assigned Fund Balance	\$20,066,558
Unassigned Fund Balance	\$ 20,217,900



New Money (Estimates)

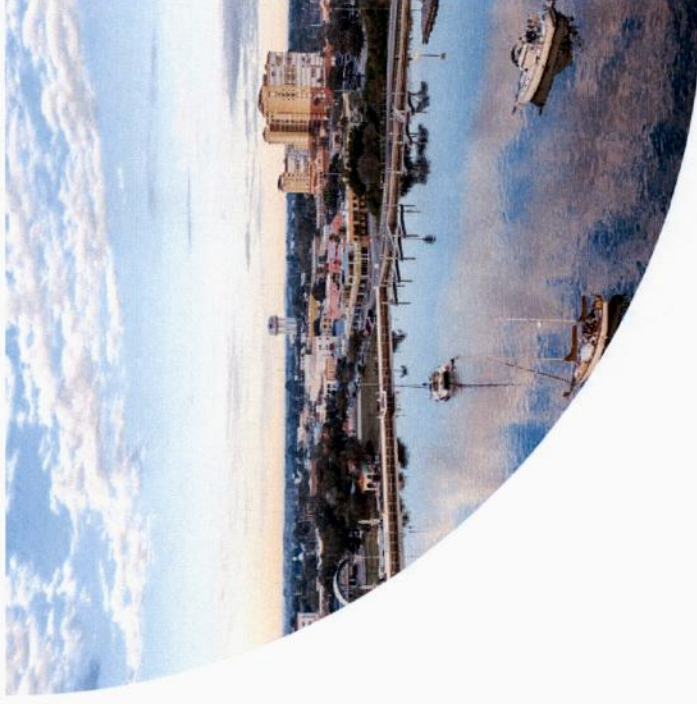
FY2026 Budget	
Property Tax Increase 3% (Current Millage)	\$363,000
Fire Assessment 3%	\$104,000
Utility/Stormwater Indirect Cost Allocation 5%	\$434,823
Utility Return on Investment (ROI) 10%	<u>\$809,274</u>
Estimated Increase in Revenue:	\$1,711,097



Increase in Expenses (Estimates)

FY2026 Budget	
General Fund Salaries (5 Unions and GF Staff)	\$1,207,892
General Fund Medical Insurance 15.7%	\$717,754
General Fund Utilities 5%	\$48,584
General Fund Liability Insurance 5%	\$44,554
General Fund Fuel 5%	\$20,000
Estimated Expense Increase	\$2,038,784

Estimated Shortfall (\$327,687)



CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES



Federal Appropriations Requests

1. SR 524 Widening
2. SR 501 Curve
3. Cocoa Brightline Station Gateway Road
4. IRD Septic to Sewer Conversion
5. Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Healthcare Facility
6. Multi-Modal Regional Stormwater Facility and Park



District 1

1. RFP for 203 Orange Street
2. RFP for management of the Leon and Jewel Collins Museum of African American History and Culture
3. Allocate funds for future events and for future non-profits, \$30-50k per year
4. Allocate funds to upgrade and update City welcome signs on all four corners of the city
5. Allocate funds for landscape island inside of Virginia Park on Rosa L. Jones



District 3

1. Reduce the millage rate so taxes do not go up this year for homeowners. I want them to stay the same as last year even though home prices went up.
2. SR 524 entrance, parking lot and trailhead with lots of signs to Cocoa Conservation area. Apply for grants that might help with improvements such as pavilion and bathrooms at the new entrance.



District 3

3. Septic to sewer project, time of essence with the half cent sales tax expiring in two years.
4. Beautify entrance to Cocoa at I-95, SR 520, SR 524, SR 528 and Industry Rd.
5. Widen Friday Rd. for all the new residents.
6. Plan for a new fire station.



