

GULFPORT ON THE EDGE

Event Summaries

These notes represent a compilation of the hundreds of notes taken during each of the three events. They have gone through several stages of organization and categorization. For purposes of clarity and usefulness, they have been summarized with some initial analysis and suggestions.

Finding Common Ground

November 14, 2022

After compiling all the notes from the first session of Gulfport on the Edge, here are some of the things people love about Gulfport:

1. Convenient location with wonderful weather
2. Small town friendly feel and very pet friendly
3. Colorful charming cottages
4. Tuesday markets
5. Many events for families, adults, pets and combinations
6. Senior Center, Library, Rec Center, Marina, Beach and Clam Bayou
7. Keeping the millage rates the same for years
8. Storm preparedness and CERT

Some of the issues that came up the most:

1. Affordable Housing - This includes the price/size of new homes, rising rents, rising cost of home insurance. Prices are going up for many reasons - the number of people moving here, lack of housing stock, higher incomes of newer people, short-term rentals, etc.
2. Homelessness - The number of people who are visibly homeless has increased. This includes the issues of people being on the beach, around town and sleeping in cars.
3. Independent businesses - There is a strong preference for keeping small, local, independent businesses in the downtown area. This helps with the "uniqueness" of Gulfport.
4. Planning - There were many comments on the need for long-term planning in general and the Marina area was mentioned specifically several times.
5. Communication about future planning and progress of existing plans.

Other issues discussed that are being addressed or showed up in conversation notes:

Derelict boats - The City makes every effort to get rid of these boats as soon as possible. There is usually a waiting list for county services that have the authority to move them.

1. Power lines - Duke is burying the power lines in Gulfport. They are starting in Ward 4 and will eventually cover the whole city. It will make our power much more resilient.
2. Storms/flooding - The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council will be made a presentation in February showing what would happen if Gulfport was hit by a Cat 4 storm like Ian.
https://granicus_production_attachments.s3.amazonaws.com/gulfport/714b822c5c0e2f80a57ffed181b20ca50.html
3. Sidewalks - The City is currently doing a study of all our sidewalks and will be systematically repairing and installing them where needed. We want to make sure people are safe and the streets are accessible. Not all streets need or would want sidewalks - people being in the street slows traffic and leaves residents bigger yards.
4. Buildings preserved - At times the historical society has looked at trying to get some buildings and homes designated as historical. It is not always welcomed as it puts many restrictions on how owners can change, remodel or update their properties. Consensus is difficult for groups to apply for multiple buildings due to the restrictions (i.e to get downtown as a whole considered).
5. Controlled growth - Many of our zoning and building heights and setbacks were in place when the City was trying to encourage growth. Now it is nearly impossible to scale these rules back to keep buildings smaller, due to the State policies.

Trends & Forces Impacting Our Town

January 30, 2023

Over 100 people attended and filled 20 tables with different topics at the January 30th Town Hall - Gulfport on the Edge - Trends and Forces Impacting Our Town. Like the first Town Hall, many of the same trends, questions, issues and comments emerged at the different tables - even though the topic focuses were different. People discovered that one trend can impact many different sectors. We live in a complex environment and a solution to one problem can have unintended consequences -- positive or negative -- in another area. Therefore, there is benefits to looking at issues from a variety of perspectives and stakeholder positions.

Among the many trends discussed, here are a few that intersected

1. People moving south for better weather, low taxes and a nice environment
2. More employees working remotely and can live anywhere
3. Home and building improvements increasing the value of property
4. Cost of living in Florida increasing more than the national average
5. People looking for alternative transportation - walking, scooters, ebikes, golf carts
6. Walkability is becoming more important - need for pedestrian safety
7. A desire from some people for more family-oriented festivals, art fairs and music - citywide entertainment
8. Short-term rentals as a means of vacationing instead of hotels/motels
9. RVs as an increasingly popular way to travel
10. More families moving into the area, increasing the need for kid-friendly activities
11. Dissatisfaction with inadequate or inequitable code enforcement
12. Loss of trees, plants, and green spaces
13. Concern about water quality and the trend to increasing incidents of red tide and other water issues
14. Sea level rise and the problems that it will bring
15. Increasing hot weather, drought and more intense storms

There were many more discussions about lots of trends and topics. The data will continue to be compiled and more will be added after the next session.

Topic Summaries, Strategic Questions, & Analysis

Climate Change

From this list of statements, some things that stand out include:

Sea level rise (6 times repeated): This appears to be a **major concern** for the residents of Gulfport, residents mentioned this the most number of times. It suggests that the residents are **worried about the potential impacts of rising sea levels on their community**.

How can Gulfport mitigate **climate change** (6 times repeated): This question came up multiple times, indicating that the **residents are interested in taking action to address climate change at a local level**.

Vulnerability analysis (3 times repeated): This suggests that the residents are interested in **understanding the risks and vulnerabilities of their community to climate change impacts**.

How much of Gulfport will survive storms and flooding (2 times repeated): This question indicates that the residents are concerned about the **potential impacts of storms and flooding on their community**.

Flooding in all low-lying areas (2 times repeated): This suggests that the residents are **concerned about the potential for flooding in areas of Gulfport that are at a lower elevation**.

Overall, these statements suggest that the residents of Gulfport are concerned about the potential impacts of climate change on their community, particularly in relation to rising sea levels, storm and flooding risks, and **the need for local action to address these issues**.

1. **Local readiness and emergency response**: The statement "**Excellent storm readiness and CERT**" suggests that the residents are aware of the importance of emergency preparedness and response in the face of climate-related risks. This could indicate that there is an **existing emergency response plan** in place for Gulfport, or that the residents are interested in developing one.

2. **Historical preservation**: The statement "What building should be preserved?" suggests that the residents are interested in preserving historical or culturally

significant buildings in Gulfport. While this statement may not be directly related to climate change, it could indicate that the residents are interested in balancing the need for development and growth with the need to preserve local history and culture.

3. Uncertainty and lack of knowledge: The statements "**Unsure how resilient Gulfport will be**" and "Increased storms" suggest that there is a level of uncertainty or lack of knowledge about the potential impacts of climate change on Gulfport. This could indicate a need for more information, education, and outreach to help residents better understand the risks and potential impacts of climate change in their community.

The residents of Gulfport are interested in a range of issues related to climate change, including emergency preparedness, historical preservation, and the **need for more information and education.**

From the list of statements, the overarching idea that emerges is that the residents of Gulfport are concerned about the **potential impacts of climate change on their community, particularly in relation to rising sea levels, storm and flooding risks, and the need for local action to address these issues.** There is a **sense of uncertainty and lack of knowledge about the potential impacts of climate change on Gulfport, and the residents are interested in understanding the risks and vulnerabilities of their community.** Additionally, there is an **awareness of the importance of emergency preparedness and response in the face of climate-related risks,** and a desire to balance the need for development and growth with the need to preserve local history and culture. Overall, the residents of Gulfport appear to be engaged and interested in taking action to address climate change at a local level.

Resiliency and Sustainability

1. **Resiliency and Sustainability:** The statement "Resiliency & Sustainability" suggests that the residents of Gulfport are interested in building a sustainable and resilient community. This includes promoting native plants, education about growing food and **sustainable landscapes**, resource sharing, and celebrating events like Earth Day.
2. **Community Building:** The statement "Resiliency is knowing your neighbors - built into Gulfport culture" suggests that the residents of Gulfport value community and neighborliness as a means of building resilience and sustainability.
3. **Aging Infrastructure:** The statement "Aging infrastructure" suggests that the residents of Gulfport are concerned about the state of their community's infrastructure, which could affect the community's ability to withstand climate-related risks.
4. **Trends:** The statements about trends suggest that the residents of Gulfport are aware of larger economic and environmental trends that could influence their community, including larger companies buying real estate, green energy, and corporate/state greed leading to negative climate impacts, and the impacts of climate change on storms, sea level rise, and pollinators.
5. **Balancing Growth and Development with Community Character:** The statements "Is this good? Does it raise taxes? How to keep the charm?" suggests that the residents of Gulfport are interested in balancing the need for growth and development with the desire to maintain the character and charm of their community.

Consistent themes and patterns:

Preservation of trees and plant diversity, with a suggestion for a **master tree plan** to plant more trees; More green spaces, especially in neighborhoods; How to clean up the water in the bay? Sea level rise; Red tide; More solar energy; Recycling and composting; Preserving public lands and investing in them for all residents; Habitat destruction and loss of species; Increased garbage, plastics, and packaging; Increased use of pesticides and negative human consciousness about the environment.

Some of the major topics that stand out based on the frequency of mentions in the list.

- There is a desire for more education about the environment, as seen in the suggestion for using the **youth center educational program for awareness of carbon footprint**.
- Several questions are posed, such as "What do we do about sea level rise?" and "Who are the biggest polluters?", indicating a desire for more information and potential solutions.
- The idea of burying power lines is mentioned once, which could suggest a desire for more aesthetic appeal or to reduce potential damage from storms.
- There is concern about overpopulation and the lack of accountability for heavily populated countries in environmental issues.
- The negative impact of human behavior on the environment is highlighted, as seen in the trend towards increasingly negative human consciousness about the environment.
- The need for businesses to be more environmentally responsible is highlighted, such as the suggestion for restaurants to recycle.
- Finally, there is a desire for the city to **take action to be more environmentally friendly**, as seen in the suggestion for the city to **change its ways of working** to be more ecological, as well as the mentions of environmental protections.

Overarching ideas and themes that emerged:

1. **Climate change and environmental concerns:** Across all three lists, there is a clear focus on climate change and the impact it is having on the environment, particularly on sea level rise, more impactful storms, and loss of biodiversity. There are also concerns about the role of larger companies in exacerbating climate change and the need for individual and collective action to address these issues.
2. **Resiliency and sustainability:** The first list in particular highlights the importance of resiliency and sustainability in the face of climate change. This includes the need to assess and improve the city's infrastructure to withstand

storms and flooding, as well as to promote sustainable practices like growing native plants, sharing resources, and building community resilience.

3. **Public engagement and education:** Across all three lists, there is a **clear call for more public engagement** and education around environmental issues. This includes **educating people about the impacts of climate change and how to mitigate them**, as well as **engaging the community in efforts to promote sustainability and resilience**.

4. **Environmental preservation and protection:** There is a clear emphasis on the importance of preserving and protecting the environment in all three lists, from preserving trees and public lands to cleaning up the water in the bay and reducing waste and pollution.

5. **Concerns about pollution and waste:** All three lists highlight concerns about pollution and waste, including toxic trash, heavy metals, hazardous waste, and plastic pollution. There is a call for more recycling and composting, as well as for reducing the use of single-use plastics and increasing the use of renewable energy sources.

Emotional Tone: There are some statements in the lists that express concern or urgency about the environment, such as the mention of sea level rise, worsening weather, loss of open space, and pollution. There are also statements that express hope or ideas for solutions, such as the focus on sustainability, resiliency, and using education to promote awareness of environmental issues. Overall, the emotional tone seems to be a **mix of concern and hope**, with a focus on **finding solutions and taking action** to protect the environment.

SUMMARY

Overall, the residents of Gulfport appear to be interested in building a **resilient and sustainable community through community building, education, and resource sharing, while also addressing the impacts of larger economic and environmental trends**. There is a concern about aging infrastructure and the need to balance growth and development with community character.

Character:

Consistent Themes or Patterns:

- The list reflects a desire to maintain Gulfport's small-town feel and character
- There is a stated desire to be welcoming and accessible to encourage more diversity in age, race and other social dimensions.
- The community places importance on supporting the arts, preserving historic buildings, and cleaning up run-down areas.
- There is concern about over-development, building heights, gentrification, and affordability.
- Repeated keywords or phrases include "small town feel," "arts," "preserving historic buildings," "affordability," "overdevelopment," "gentrification," "building heights," and "city events."
- The tone of the statements is generally positive, with a focus on maintaining Gulfport's unique character and charm. However, there is also concern about overdevelopment and gentrification, which could negatively impact the community.

SUMMARY

The community of Gulfport values its small town feel, diversity, and artistic community. There is a desire to preserve historic buildings and clean up run-down areas, while also ensuring affordability and controlling growth through building codes. The tone of the statements is generally positive, but there is also concern about overdevelopment and gentrification, which could threaten Gulfport's character. The community also places importance on city events, such as the farmers market.

Arts & Culture:

- Arts & Culture is a consistent theme throughout the list. Many of the statements relate to **promoting art and cultural events, creating spaces for artists to thrive, and incorporating art into the community.**
- Community involvement is also a consistent theme, with several statements suggesting ways to **involve children** in art and community events, and others suggesting **ways to handle an increase in visitors** to the area.

- Some repeated **keywords** or phrases include "art," "cultural events," "music," "community," "children," and "promotion."
- The tone of the statements is generally positive and enthusiastic about promoting art and cultural events in Gulfport. There is a **sense of community** involvement and excitement about creating a more **vibrant arts** scene in the area.

SUMMARY

There is a strong interest in **promoting arts and culture in Gulfport**, and that **community involvement is seen as a key factor in achieving this goal**. There is also an interest in promoting **Gulfport as a destination for art and cultural events**, as seen in the questions about how other communities promote their art events and how to handle an increase in visitors. The consistent themes and positive tone of the statements suggest that there is a strong desire to keep Gulfport a vibrant and artistic community.

Community:

Consistent themes or patterns:

- **Lack of diversity:** There are several comments that touch on the **lack of diversity** in the community, including **segregated demographics** (economic class and race), lack of diversity in people and ideas, and the need to increase what diversity is.
- **Civic engagement:** There is a strong **desire for more community conversations**, activities, and participation in city elections and civic affairs.
- **Quality of life:** Several comments touch on **improving the quality of life in the community**, such as investigating other cities, building city events around popular events, and maintaining the tree.
- Key phrases include, a lack of diversity, civic engagement, quality of life, Civic engagement, and Quality of life.

SUMMARY

Insights from this list include the **need to address the lack of diversity in the community, encourage more civic engagement**, and **improve the overall quality of life**. Additionally, it may be worth exploring ways to build a **stronger**

sense of community and connection, perhaps through more events and activities that bring people together.

Housing:

Consistent themes or patterns:

- Affordable housing is **by far the most commonly mentioned issue**, with 18 comments specifically focused on this topic.
- Other common themes include concerns about **rent increases** (6 comments), **large houses** (5 comments), **ability to get home insurance** (4 comments), and **short-term rentals** (4 comments).
- Some repeated keywords and phrases include: "affordable housing", "rent increases", "home insurance", "building codes", and "architectural design restrictions".

SUMMARY

The emotional tone in these statements is generally **concerned or frustrated**, with a focus on **addressing issues related to housing affordability and access**. Housing affordability is a major concern in this community, with many residents calling for **increased options for affordable housing and measures to keep rents from rising too high**. Other concerns include the **size and design of homes, the ability to get insurance, and restrictions on architectural design**.

Homelessness & Low Income:

Consistent Themes or Patterns:

- The list primarily focuses on homelessness and low-income issues in Gulfport, with a particular emphasis on **food security, affordable housing, and addressing homelessness**. The trends suggest that there are concerns about the **economic difficulties facing low earners** in the area.
- Repeated keywords or phrases include "affordable housing," "homelessness," "minimum wage," "food security," and "mental health care."

- The tone of the statements is generally concerned, with a focus on addressing the challenges faced by low-income residents and those experiencing homelessness. There are also concerns about the **impact of these issues on health, safety, and noise levels** in the community.

SUMMARY

There are significant concerns in Gulfport about homelessness and low-income issues, particularly with regards to **affordable housing, food security, and access to resources for those experiencing homelessness**. The trends suggest that economic difficulties facing low earners may be exacerbating these issues. The tone of the statements is generally concerned, with a focus on **finding solutions to address these challenges** and **support vulnerable members of the community**. The questions posed highlight **the need for temporary homeless centers, mental health care, and the potential for community organizations to contribute to addressing these issues**.

Economic & Workforce Trends:

Consistent themes or patterns:

- There is a consistent focus on housing affordability, with statements highlighting the increase in high-density housing, the need for government incentives for lower-income housing, and the negative impact of higher housing costs on affordability.
- The list also touches on concerns about diversity, as well as the changing pattern of businesses on 49th street and the potential impact of Gulfport's policies on work opportunities.
- Repeated keywords or phrases include "housing," "affordability," "diversity," "economic growth," "work opportunities," "retirees," "remote work," and "low wage."
- The tone of the statements and questions is generally concerned and serious, highlighting the challenges faced by the community with regards to affordability and diversity, as well as the need for economic growth.

SUMMARY

The challenges reflected in this document are related to affordability and diversity in the community, particularly with regards to housing. There is also a focus on the changing landscape of work opportunities and the potential impact of Gulfport's policies on this. The questions included in the list reflect a concern for economic growth and its impact on affordability and work opportunities.

Food & Agriculture

Trends:

- Technology used to increase yield and efficiency
- Community Gardens
- Food production in relation to climate change
- Sustainable farming
- Concerns about how humanely food is produced
- Local food production
- Concerns about food contamination
- People eating healthier
- People eating more different cuisines
- A lot more outside dining & food courtyards
- Foodies/food trucks/healthy food (from Tourism table)
- Farm to table
- Boutique cocktails
- Mocktail bars
- Pet bars

Comments:

- Concerns about how humanely food is produced

- Local food production
- Backyard food gardens & chickens
- Moving away from agribusiness
- People eating healthier
- Wasted production
- Where is food coming from

This **focuses on the ways in which food and agriculture can be more sustainable, healthy, and locally produced**. There is a lot of interest in **technology and new techniques to increase efficiency**, but also a desire for more **natural and humane food production practices**. People seem to be eating healthier and more **diverse cuisines**, and there is a trend towards outdoor dining and farm-to-table restaurants. There are also concerns about food contamination and wasted production, and questions about the cost of food and where it comes from.

SUMMARY

This list fits in with the other three lists as it touches on themes of **sustainability, local production, and community building**. A small local community can take a number of actions to address concerns and focus on the positives related to food and agriculture.

1. **Encouraging backyard food gardens** and community gardens to promote local food production and reduce the environmental impact of shipping food from far away.
2. Educating community members about the benefits of eating a healthy diet and supporting local food businesses.
3. Reducing food waste through education and outreach programs that teach people how to properly store and prepare food, and by composting food scraps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Promoting community events that celebrate local food and culture, such as farmers markets, food festivals, and farm-to-table dinners.

By taking these actions, a small local community can create a more sustainable and resilient food system that benefits both people and the environment.

Healthcare:

Consistent Themes or Patterns:

- The list mainly focuses on healthcare-related issues and trends, such as healthcare affordability, primary care shortage, aging population and their healthcare needs, rise of urgent care facilities, telemedicine, AI, automation, and robotic surgery.
- There is also a concern about the impact of climate change on health and the need to explore alternative transportation methods such as golf carts, e-bikes, and bikes.
- Repeated keywords or phrases include "healthcare affordability," "urgent care," "aging population," "nursing homes," "in-home care," "assisted living," "telemedicine," "AI," "automation," "primary care shortage," "a la carte insurance," "anxiety," "depression," and "substance abuse."
- The tone of the statements and questions is generally concerned and serious, highlighting the challenges faced by the healthcare industry and the impact of climate change on health.
- There is also a sense of urgency in some of the questions, such as whether the healthcare industry has the capacity to handle another pandemic.

SUMMARY

According to those present, there are significant challenges and issues related to healthcare, such as affordability, primary care shortage, and the impact of an aging population on healthcare needs. The list also highlights the rise of urgent care facilities, telemedicine, AI, and robotic surgery as potential solutions. The impact of climate change on health is also a concern, and alternative transportation methods are suggested. The questions included in the list focus on whether the healthcare industry has enough capacity to handle future pandemics and whether people have sufficient access to care.

Aging:

Consistent Themes or Patterns:

- The list mainly focuses on various challenges and issues related to aging, such as the lack of company pensions, scams targeted at seniors, unaffordable housing, and insufficient resources for end-of-life care. Could be a good idea for the Senior Center to know about these potential classes.
- There is also a trend of retirees going back to work to afford housing, and a general concern about the affordability of retirement.
- The questions included in the list focus on finding solutions to the challenges faced by seniors, such as creating more affordable senior housing and supporting the aging and dying process.
- Repeated keywords or phrases include "company pensions," "social security," "scams," "affordable housing," "retirement," "aging denial," "Medicare," "elder healthcare," "homelessness," "end-of-life care," "senior center," and "communities of color."
- The tone of the statements and questions is generally concerned and serious, highlighting the challenges faced by seniors and the need for solutions.
- There is also a sense of urgency in some of the questions, such as how to decrease homelessness for seniors and how to support the aging and dying process.

SUMMARY

There are significant challenges and issues related to aging in Gulfport, such as the lack of pensions, affordable housing, and resources for end-of-life care, and the prevalence of scams targeted at seniors. The questions included in the list focus on finding solutions to these challenges, such as creating more affordable senior housing and supporting the aging and dying process. There is a general concern about the affordability of retirement and the impact of these challenges on seniors' lives. (I don't know how much of this the city can "solve" but certainly more educational programs to arm seniors with knowledge.

Business:

Themes or patterns:

- The need to encourage growth, promote independent businesses, improve zoning rules, increase vegetarian options, improve the quality of artwalk, and better connect with St. Pete.
- Identify key phrases or keywords: Key phrases and keywords that appear throughout the list include "encourage growth," "independent businesses," "vegetarian options," "artwalk," "e-commerce," and "remote working." These phrases may indicate important themes or points of emphasis in the business community.
- The emotional tone of the statements in the list varies, with some expressing enthusiasm for growth and improvement, while others express concern or frustration about issues such as housing prices and inflation.
- There are other patterns present such as a desire for more support and understanding from the council for local businesses, the need to connect with St. Pete, and the impact of remote working and technology on the business community.
- There seems to be a need for further investigation into potential solutions for improving the quality of artwalk and the lack of tourist accommodation that aren't short-term rentals.

Tourism & Hospitality

- Several statements suggest a desire to balance the needs of tourists with those of the local community, and there is interest in promoting Gulfport as an authentic and unique destination.
- Repeated keywords or phrases include "short-term rental," "eco-tourism," "small town vibe," "traveling with children/pets," "food," "conventions/work trips," and "changing demographics."
- The tone of the statements is generally positive, with a focus on promoting Gulfport as a desirable tourist destination. However, there are also some concerns about balancing the needs of tourists with those of the local community, and ensuring that short-term rental owners are responsible.

SUMMARY

Overall, this list suggests that there is interest in promoting Gulfport as a desirable tourist destination, and that there is a desire to balance the needs of tourists with those of the local community. The list covers a wide range of topics related to tourism and hospitality, including short-term rentals, eco-tourism, food, and changing demographics. The tone of the statements is generally positive, with a focus on promoting Gulfport as a unique and authentic destination, while also addressing concerns about the impact of tourism on the community.

Recreation:

Consistent themes or patterns:

- There is a focus on improving and expanding recreational opportunities in Gulfport, with a variety of specific suggestions for different types of activities.
- There is an emphasis on accessibility, both physical (e.g., adding bathrooms and sidewalks) and in terms of accommodating different types of activities and abilities.
- There are several specific activities mentioned that could be considered keywords, such as "pickleball," "yoga on the beach," and "crew racing."
- The keywords "accessibility" and "recreation" appear frequently.

SUMMARY

The main themes in this list relate to improving and expanding recreational opportunities in Gulfport, with a focus on accessibility and accommodating different types of activities and abilities. There are also several specific suggestions for different types of activities.

Education:

Ideas to Expand:

- Importance of education: Education is essential for personal and community growth. It provides the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life and contributes to the development of a strong workforce. The community recognizes the importance of education and values the impact it has on the entire community.
- Challenges in education: There are several challenges facing education in Gulfport, including a lack of space in schools and dropping literacy rates. Additionally, the impact of COVID-19 has made it difficult to hold children accountable for their learning. Censorship in schools is also a growing concern. (County School Board Issue)
- Holistic education: Education should be holistic and take into consideration the well-being of the whole person. Mental health is an important component of education, and schools should provide resources to support students' mental health needs. Education should also consider the needs of the community and provide relevant programs that address issues such as poverty, homelessness, and access to healthcare.
- Community involvement: Parents play an important role in education, and their involvement in the PTA can help improve schools. The community can also support education by hiring local graduates and providing school vouchers. Involving local businesses and organizations can also help provide resources and support for schools.
- Trends in education: Homeschooling is becoming more popular, and schools need to provide alternative programs to meet the needs of families who choose this option. To keep children engaged, there is a need for more "fun" in schools, including extracurricular activities and hands-on learning experiences. (County School Board Issue)

Transportation:

Consistent Themes or Patterns:

- The list covers a wide range of topics related to transportation in Gulfport, including **bikeability, parking, accommodations for alternative modes of transportation, and street maintenance**. Several statements suggest a desire to **make Gulfport more walkable** and to **improve public transportation** options.
- Repeated keywords or phrases include "bikeability," "parking," "public transportation," "street maintenance," "walkable," and "alternative modes of transportation."

SUMMARY

The tone of the statements is generally practical, with a focus on identifying and addressing the transportation needs of Gulfport residents and visitors. There is some **frustration expressed about difficult parking**.

Public Safety:

Consistent themes or patterns:

- The safety of pedestrians and the need for sidewalks are mentioned in two separate statements, indicating that pedestrian safety is a concern in the community.
- The topic of law enforcement is mentioned multiple times, with statements about **not wanting to lose the local police department**, needing more police, and variations in police officers.
- There is a focus on safety in general, with statements about a **safe town**, concerns about crime, and the need for more lighting.
- The word "lose" appears in two separate statements about the fire department and local police department, indicating a **fear of losing important resources**.
- There is a sense of concern or urgency across many of the statements, with mentions of crime, safety, and the need for action to address these issues.

SUMMARY

Safety and law enforcement are important concerns for the community, along with a desire for better infrastructure and resources to support these needs.

City Government

Consistent Themes or Patterns:

- There is a clear theme of a need for more transparency and accountability from city government, as well as a need for long-term planning and a focus on the future. Many statements also express concern about the impact of state government on local control, and there is a desire for more collaboration and communication between local leaders and the community.
- Repeated keywords or phrases include "long-term plan," "accountability," "transparency," "local control," "communication," "state impact," and "future."
- Expressed need for a leadership "pipeline". Prepare people who want to step up to public service or other leadership roles in the community and equip them with knowledge and skills to perform leadership roles effectively
- The tone of the statements is generally critical, with a focus on areas where city government needs to improve. However, there is also a desire for collaboration and positive change, and many statements express a belief in the potential for the city to move forward.

SUMMARY

This list suggests that there is a want for more transparency and accountability from city government, as well as a focus on long-term planning and the future of the city. Many statements express concern about the impact of state government on local control, and there is a desire for more collaboration and communication between local leaders and the community. The tone of the statements is generally critical, but also optimistic about the potential for positive change.

Communication:

- **Process for meaningful communication:** The community wants to understand the process and methods through which meaningful communication can be established. This suggests a desire for effective channels and strategies to engage with residents and share information.
- **Need for more accurate communication:** There is a concern about the accuracy of information being disseminated. This indicates a desire for reliable and trustworthy sources of communication to ensure that the community receives accurate and credible information.
- **Unreliable news sources:** The mention of Facebook, Gabber, and Instagram suggests that some community members perceive these platforms as unreliable sources of news and information. This highlights the importance of ensuring that accurate and verified information is shared through official channels.
- **Better publicity of events:** There is a desire for improved publicity of events happening in the city. This indicates a need for more effective promotion and dissemination of information to ensure that residents are aware of and can participate in community events.

Political Climate:

Common themes or patterns:

- The list of statements about the political climate touches on several themes and patterns, including the need for term limits, financial inequality, disillusionment/distrust of government, community building, environmental concerns, and increasing global unpredictability.
- Outlier statement: "Retirees disinterested in community investment." This statement may indicate a minority opinion or unique perspective on community involvement.
- Identify key phrases or keywords: Key phrases and keywords that appear throughout the list include "financial inequality," "disillusionment/distrust of

government," "environmental concerns," "community building," and "increasing global unpredictability." These phrases may indicate important themes or points of emphasis in the political climate.

- The emotional tone of the statements in the list varies, with some expressing frustration or concern about issues like financial inequality, disillusionment/distrust of government, and increasing gun violence. Other statements express a more neutral or objective tone, such as "wealthier residents" and "people moving here who don't care about the environment."

Some Potential Solutions:

Recommendations\What we are already doing---RE: how city officials could engage the public about those ideas:

1. **Host public meetings or workshops:** City officials host public meetings or workshops to discuss the community's interest in sustainability, aging infrastructure, and the impacts of larger economic and environmental trends. These meetings are used to educate residents about the issues and gather input on potential solutions.
2. **Develop a sustainability plan:** City officials could work with residents to develop a sustainability plan for the community. This plan could outline specific actions that the city and residents can take to promote sustainability and address the impacts of climate change.
3. **Celebrate local events:** City officials celebrate local events like **Earth Day block parties** and **Native Plant Day** to promote sustainability and community building.
4. **Maintain the community garden or food forest** and promote sustainable agriculture and resource sharing.
5. **Use social media and other communication channels:** City officials could use social media and other communication channels to share information about sustainability and community building initiatives, as well as to gather input from residents.

SUMMARY

Overall, the key to engaging the public on these issues is to be **transparent, inclusive, and proactive**. By **working collaboratively** with residents, city officials can develop effective strategies for promoting sustainability and building a resilient community.

Additional Ideas:

1. **Develop educational programs:** City officials could develop educational programs to teach residents about sustainable practices, such as how to grow their own food and use native plants in their landscaping. These programs could be offered through the city's parks department, or through partnerships with local organizations like the county extension. (The library has a few programs like this now).
2. **Collaborate with local organizations:** City officials could collaborate with local organizations like the county extension and environmental advocacy groups to promote resiliency and sustainability initiatives. This could include hosting joint events, sharing resources and expertise, and coordinating outreach efforts.
3. **Create a community resilience task force:** City officials could create a community resilience task force made up of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to develop and implement strategies for building a more resilient and sustainable community. This task force could provide a forum for **ongoing collaboration and problem-solving**.
5. **Highlight success stories:** City officials could highlight success stories from other communities that have successfully implemented sustainability and resiliency initiatives. This could inspire residents to get involved and provide concrete examples of what is possible.
6. Implement programs and initiatives that address the specific environmental concerns mentioned, such as planting more trees (highlight or “Tree City” status), increasing recycling and composting efforts, and investing in public lands.
7. Work with local businesses, restaurants, and other organizations to promote sustainable practices and environmentally friendly operations. Highlight those that have already taken place (straw initiative).

8. Collaborate with neighboring communities and environmental groups to share resources and coordinate efforts towards a common goal.

SUMMARY

Overall, the key to engaging the public on resiliency and sustainability issues is to **provide opportunities for input, education, and collaboration**. By working together, residents and city officials can develop effective strategies for building a more sustainable and resilient community.

Regarding the trends mentioned, city officials could engage the public by:

1. Hosting community events and workshops focused on climate change, sea level rise, and other environmental concerns.
2. Partnering with local environmental groups and experts to develop and implement solutions.
3. Encouraging the use of public transportation, biking, and walking to reduce emissions and improve air quality.
4. Developing policies and regulations that hold individuals and businesses accountable for their impact on the environment. (Probably can't do this, with the current state legislature environment).
5. Promoting the use of renewable energy sources and green infrastructure. (Highlight already completed projects).
6. Providing resources and incentives for recycling, reducing waste, and using environmentally friendly products.

SUMMARY

City officials should **prioritize communication and collaboration with the community** to address these environmental concerns and ensure a sustainable future for their city.

Resident Opportunities:

Community Engagement and Communication:

- The community is interested in establishing a sailing center and boating programs for kids, indicating a desire for recreational activities.
- The need for meaningful communication and more accurate information is emphasized, with concerns about unreliable news sources like Facebook, Gabber, and Instagram. There is also a call for better publicity of events and a community calendar.
- Attendees highlighted the importance of community conversations, activities, and stronger connections between community groups.
- Participants suggested the revival of the welcome wagon and intergenerational events as ways to foster a sense of community and connection.

Environmental and Sustainability Initiatives:

- The community expressed a desire to change working practices to be ecological, increase the use of solar energy, and promote recycling and composting.
- The idea of using the youth center's educational program to raise awareness of carbon footprints demonstrates a focus on sustainability and environmental education.
- Backyard food gardens, community gardens, and the concept of a "Food Forest" suggest an interest in promoting local food production and self-sustainability.

Housing, Historic Preservation, and Quality of Life:

- Concerns about quality vs. substandard housing and a lack of historical designation reflect the community's interest in preserving the character and heritage of Gulfport.
- Rehabilitating rundown buildings, having a historic committee, and investigating other cities' quality of life committees indicate a desire to improve the overall living conditions and preserve the city's unique identity.
- There is a call for more community leaders, greater participation in city elections and civic affairs, and increased involvement of parents in the PTA.

Social and Cultural Activities:

- The community expresses an appreciation for music, with a desire to have music behind the rec center and participate in songwriters competitions.
- The need for more harmony between neighbors, addressing public manners, and reducing excessive smoking (cigarettes and pot) suggests a focus on improving community relationships and quality of life.

The list reflects a diverse range of citizen activities and concerns that cover areas such as community engagement, communication, environmental sustainability, housing, historic preservation, quality of life, social and cultural activities, and neighborhood cohesion. These ideas and insights highlight the community's desire for a vibrant, connected, and sustainable Gulfport that promotes meaningful communication, civic engagement, and a high quality of life for its residents.

Business Opportunities:

Development and Infrastructure:

- There is a suggestion to develop the Gateway building into a performance space or movie theatre, indicating a desire to enhance cultural and entertainment offerings in the community.
- The need for rehabilitating houses and attracting different builders to create a diverse architectural look highlights the importance of maintaining and improving the physical infrastructure of Gulfport.

Sustainable Practices and Local Economy:

- The idea of restaurants recycling and promoting more vegetarian options demonstrates a focus on sustainability and environmental responsibility within the local business community.
- Encouraging more support for local businesses and shopping locally indicates a desire to stimulate the local economy and preserve the unique character of Gulfport.

Housing and Tourism:

- The concern over the quality of housing suggests a desire for maintaining high standards and addressing substandard housing.

- The need for tourist accommodation options beyond short-term rentals reflects the community's interest in attracting visitors and diversifying the tourism sector.
- The mention of charter boating suggests an interest in promoting recreational activities and tourism opportunities related to boating.

Dining and Social Spaces:

- The trend of increased outside dining and food courtyards indicates a preference for creating vibrant and inviting social spaces where residents and visitors can gather, dine, and enjoy the community atmosphere.

The list highlights the importance of development, sustainability, and community support for local businesses. The ideas and insights revolve around enhancing cultural and entertainment spaces, promoting sustainable practices in restaurants, attracting diverse builders, rehabilitating houses, supporting local businesses, and ensuring high-quality housing and tourism options. Additionally, the trend of outdoor dining and food courtyards reflects a desire to create enjoyable social spaces. These activities and suggestions demonstrate the community's commitment to fostering economic growth, environmental responsibility, and a vibrant social scene within Gulfport.