

**City Commission Work Session**

**June 9, 2026**

**3:00 p.m.**

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Scott Tate, Mayor

Karen Marriott, Commissioner, District 1

Lisa Robinson, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, District 2

Al Causey, Commissioner, District 3

Jon Maldonado, Commissioner, District 4

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Frances Robustelli, City Manager

Ralf Brookes, City Attorney

Ginny Bodkin, Deputy City Clerk

Adam Poirrier, Assistant City Manager

Devon Schmidt, Finance Director

Candyce Galloway, Technology & Innovation Director

Mayor Tate called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. PRESENTATIONS**

**a. 2025-2026 Strategic Plan**

Candyce Galloway, Director of Technology, explained that today's session would use the framework that has already been built and the priorities indicated in Commissioner surveys to discuss progress and measurement, benchmarking, organizational and culture shifts, and choose a path forward. Her presentation is part of the meeting record.

Ms. Galloway explained that staff has developed a simple framework based on Commission workshops and feedback, produced a two-year strategic roadmap, aligned strategic projects to the adopted strategic pillars, and begun developing KPIs and metrics to measure progress. The pillars identified were Community Prosperity, Operational Excellence, Resilience/Recovery/Sustainability, Economic Growth and Development, and Reliable Infrastructure. Survey results showed broad alignment among Commissioners, staff, and leadership around serving residents, fiscal responsibility, service excellence, infrastructure and recovery priorities, resident-first governance, and preservation of community character.

Ms. Galloway stated that the City is moving from broad themes and recovery-focused priorities toward long-term planning with clearer prioritization, measurable outcomes, and ongoing reporting. She described draft strategic dashboards, existing public transparency tools such as the CIP dashboard, and planned KPI-based reporting. Staff reported that approximately 73% of active projects remain concentrated in infrastructure and recovery-related pillars, reflecting continued recovery demands. She also summarized benchmarking of approximately 20 peer communities and stated that the City is already ahead of many peers in public project portfolio reporting, with the target being live dashboards, KPI tracking, and regular department-level reporting.

Ms. Galloway presented three potential paths for advancing the City's strategic planning efforts beyond the current two-year roadmap, asking for Commission guidance:

**Option A – Full External Support**

- Hire an outside consultant to lead the strategic planning process.
- Consultant would facilitate community engagement, surveys, focus groups, workshops, and development of a longer-term strategic vision.
- Provides dedicated expertise and a turnkey approach but comes with the highest cost.

**Option B – Continue In-House**

- City staff would continue refining and implementing the existing strategic plan using available resources and time.
- Maintains momentum and minimizes costs but may limit the pace of progress and lacks a defined plan for broader community engagement.

**Option C – Hybrid Approach (Staff Recommendation)**

- Continue managing the strategic planning process internally while using outside consultants for targeted

support.

- Consultants would assist with community surveys, focus groups, stakeholder engagement, workshops, and analysis.
- Intended to provide meaningful public input, third-party facilitation, and community-facing deliverables while maintaining staff ownership of the process.
- Staff recommended this option as a balanced approach that accelerates planning efforts and strengthens community involvement without fully outsourcing the process.

Following her presentation, Ms. Galloway asked for Commission guidance and direction. Commissioners generally agreed that strategic planning has value and that broader community input should be part of the process. However, there was significant discussion about the scope, cost, and necessity of hiring outside consultants. There was support for the hybrid approach (Option C) because it would provide an independent, unbiased process and help ensure the strategic plan reflects community priorities rather than solely the perspectives of staff or the current Commission. It was noted that community engagement is important if the plan is intended to guide the City beyond the tenure of current elected officials. At the same time, multiple questions were raised about the proposed \$42,000 hybrid option and the larger costs associated with a fully outsourced approach. Concerns were raised about current budget constraints, ongoing hurricane recovery efforts, and whether staff could accomplish much of the work internally. Commissioner Robinson questioned whether the City should spend additional funds on strategic planning when infrastructure and recovery projects remain pressing priorities and suggested the City could develop and administer its own survey.

Discussion also focused on the value of community surveys. There was general support for obtaining input from residents who do not typically attend meetings or contact the City, but some questioned whether a survey of approximately 200 respondents would adequately represent the community. It was noted that professionally designed surveys can provide statistically valid results and may be the most cost-effective way to gather broad community feedback. By the conclusion of the discussion, there appeared to be little support for the full consultant-led approach or for the full \$42,000 hybrid package. Instead, many favored a more limited version of the hybrid approach that focused primarily on a professionally administered community survey and related analysis while avoiding more costly workshops and facilitation services.

The Commission did not make a final decision on a strategic planning option. Instead, the consensus direction was for staff to:

- Reevaluate the proposed options.
- Consider a scaled-down version of the hybrid approach.
- Focus on cost-effective methods for obtaining community input, particularly through surveys.
- Return with revised recommendations and additional information for future consideration.

Staff indicated they would take the Commission's feedback and develop refined options for future discussion.

**b. Budget Workshop #2: Overview of the landscape, Feedback on the Rankings of CIP, Revenue Strategy Direction, Strategy of Building the FY2027 Budget**

Devon Schmidt, Finance Director, opened the budget discussion by noting that staff is bringing the Commission into the budget development process early, seeking guidance on capital improvement priorities, revenue strategies, and overall fiscal year 2027 budget direction.

A major focus of her presentation was a "Save Our Homes from Excessive Property Taxes" legislation that passed both chambers on June 2, 2026 and will appear on the November ballot. If approved, it would significantly increase Florida's homestead exemption and reduce the growth cap on non-homestead property assessments. She explained that these changes could reduce the City's property tax revenue by approximately \$1.1 million in FY 2027 and \$1.6 million in FY 2028, while also making it more difficult to raise property tax revenues because any

millage rate above the rollback rate would require a supermajority vote of the Commission.

Ms. Schmidt reviewed how the City is tracking future redevelopment projects and their potential impact on taxable value and revenue generation. While redevelopment is expected to generate additional tax revenue over time, staff emphasized that these projections are long-term forecasts and should not be relied upon as immediate solutions to budget challenges. She further noted that the proposed legislation could restrict the use of property tax revenues to specific purposes such as public safety, infrastructure, debt service, and retirement obligations. As a result, administrative and quality-of-life services may need to rely more heavily on alternative funding sources, including fees, parking revenues, and cost allocation methods. Budget balancing strategies under consideration include expenditure reductions, fee adjustments, enterprise fund restructuring, millage rate changes, and potential reductions in capital project funding.

Commission discussion primarily focused on understanding the long-term financial implications of the proposed property tax changes. Commissioner Marriott asked how much future redevelopment revenue could offset the projected loss in property tax revenue and sought clarification on how the rollback rate would function if the homestead exemption increases. Ms. Schmidt explained that the rollback rate calculations will become clearer once official figures are received from the county. Mayor Tate asked for clarification regarding redevelopment revenue projections and the assumptions behind the estimated increase in taxable value from future hotel redevelopment projects. It was also pointed out that redevelopment revenue forecasts are highly uncertain because some major projects may take many years to complete and are still subject to legal and economic uncertainties. Rebuilding activity following the hurricanes may not generate substantial new taxable value for homesteaded properties because of existing tax protections. Commissioner Causey highlighted the larger fiscal picture, noting that while the City may lose approximately \$1.6 million annually from the homestead exemption changes and gain roughly \$2 million annually from redevelopment over time, those figures are small compared to the City's much larger infrastructure, stormwater, wastewater, and hurricane recovery needs, which are projected to require tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars in investment over the coming years. Major Commission concerns included the potential impacts of the state property tax proposal, the limits of redevelopment revenue as a funding solution, and the need to develop long-term strategies to address significant infrastructure and recovery costs.

City Manager Frances Robustelli introduced Public Services Director Camden Mills who would be reviewing Capital Improvement Projects and seeking Commission feedback on whether to continue funding projects or not.

Mr. Mills presented the City's capital project prioritization framework and preliminary project rankings developed to assist with FY 2027 budget planning. He explained that projects were evaluated using a scoring system of 100 points based on factors such as public safety, regulatory requirements, infrastructure condition, resiliency, operational impacts, and funding opportunities. He noted that the rankings are intended to provide a consistent decision-making framework and that lower-ranked projects may still represent important community needs. He reviewed the information included in the project ranking matrix, including project scores, funding sources, current budget allocations, projected FY 2026 expenditures, proposed FY 2027 appropriations, seven-year cost projections, grant funding opportunities, and whether projects represent one-time or recurring investments. Additional information was provided regarding estimated operating and maintenance costs, expected asset service lives, and total long-term project costs for major infrastructure initiatives. The presentation highlighted the City's highest-ranked projects, which are primarily associated with wastewater, stormwater, critical facility, and infrastructure improvement needs. There was a handout provided that was made part of the meeting record. Mr. Mills noted that the purpose of the workshop was to obtain feedback on the project rankings, identify Commission priorities, discuss potential project tradeoffs, and confirm projects that are considered essential due to safety, operational, or regulatory requirements. There was a question regarding the distinction between resiliency projects and traditional stormwater infrastructure projects. Mr. Mills explained that stormwater projects generally relate to rehabilitation and replacement of existing infrastructure, while resiliency projects typically involve new infrastructure or increased levels of service designed to address long-term flooding and climate adaptation needs. He also noted that several resiliency projects are based on prior planning studies and that the ongoing Watershed

Management Master Plan will provide updated recommendations and priorities for future capital investments.

Discussion centered the project ranking methodology and there was a request for additional detail regarding the distinction between stormwater infrastructure projects and broader resiliency initiatives. There was interest in understanding how resiliency project costs relate to stormwater, wastewater, shoreline protection, and other infrastructure improvements, particularly given the significant long-term costs associated with resiliency projects. Mr. Mills explained that stormwater projects generally focus on rehabilitation and replacement of existing infrastructure, while resiliency projects are intended to provide new infrastructure or enhanced levels of service to address future flooding and adaptation needs. Discussion also focused on the role of grants, FEMA reimbursements, insurance recoveries, and other external funding sources in project prioritization. Additional information was requested to show where projects may be offset by grant funding, insurance proceeds, or FEMA reimbursements to better evaluate the City's actual financial obligations. Mr. Mills clarified the status of various grants and noted that many hurricane-related facility repair projects are expected to be funded through insurance and FEMA reimbursement programs. Several of the highest-ranked projects, including Fire Station 22, wastewater collection system improvements, facility repairs, and elevator rehabilitation projects were discussed. Several items were addressed, such as project timelines, total project costs versus annual appropriations, recurring versus one-time expenditures, and the importance of considering long-term maintenance obligations when evaluating capital investments. Mr. Mills explained that some recurring infrastructure programs require larger investments in the near term to address deferred maintenance, with lower annual costs anticipated once systems reach a more sustainable condition. City Manager Robustelli explained that most grant, insurance, and FEMA funding is reimbursable, requiring the City to fund projects upfront and then seek reimbursement, which may take months or years to receive. It was noted that insurance and FEMA reimbursements associated with the 2024 storms will be incorporated into future budget presentations as revenue projections become more certain, and that the City is currently managing 86 FEMA-related projects. Discussion also focused on the relationship between project rankings and available funding. Staff confirmed that the highest-priority projects identified in the ranking system represent approximately \$23.3 million in proposed FY 2027 expenditures.

Mr. Mills reviewed shoreline protection and seawall-related capital projects, including citywide seawall improvements, the Pass-a-Grille seawall replacement, and the Don CeSar neighborhood resiliency initiatives. He explained that seawall projects range from minor repairs to full replacements, with replacement projects generally requiring construction to current code elevation standards. Discussion focused on the costs and benefits of raising seawalls, the relationship between city-owned and private seawalls, long-term resiliency planning, and potential impacts on adjacent properties. There were differing perspectives regarding the timing and prioritization of seawall elevation projects, while highlighting the need to protect public infrastructure and maintain consistency with adopted City policies. Discussion included grant funding opportunities, noting that some projects are partially dependent on state or federal grant awards that have not yet been secured. Staff clarified funding assumptions, project scopes, and the distinction between existing infrastructure repairs and broader resiliency improvements. Additional discussion addressed the Don CeSar neighborhood adaptation project, including the use of planning studies, grant eligibility considerations, and the need for further refinement of project costs and recommendations. There was discussion regarding the subaqueous wastewater force main replacement project, questioning its ranking relative to other infrastructure priorities. Mr. Mills advised that the existing force main remains serviceable but is approaching the end of its projected useful life, and that current funding is primarily intended to continue procurement and project development activities. Commissioners discussed the potential impact of future regional wastewater system discussions on the project and expressed interest in maintaining flexibility while evaluating long-term wastewater service options. Discussion concluded with a review of the project prioritization methodology and the importance of appropriately ranking and evaluating critical infrastructure, wastewater, and resiliency projects as part of the City's long-term capital improvement planning process.

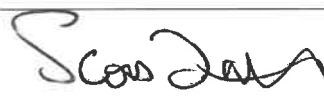
Mayor Tate noted time constraints associated with completing the budget workshop before the regular meeting. There was consensus to adjourn the work session and continue the budget discussion following the regular Commission meeting.

Mayor Tate adjourned the meeting at 5:47 PM.

MINUTES APPROVED: JUNE 23, 2026



RENEE ROSE  
CITY CLERK



SCOTT TATE  
MAYOR

