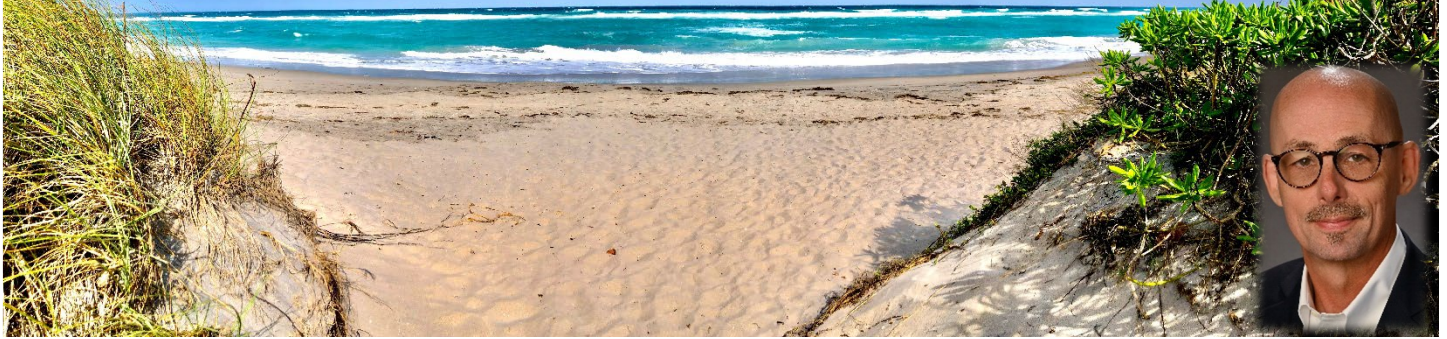




The Facts

Official News and Information



Inaugural Edition: August 20, 2025

Town Manager's Commitment

Professional management is essential to effective, efficient, fair, and democratic local government.

As a local government management professional, I am committed to keeping the Juno Beach community informed on local government affairs.

This newsletter is intended to support informed public participation in local government decisions, promote public transparency, and provide a trusted source for official news & information of interest to the Juno Beach community.

Cheers,
Rob Cole
Town Manager
rcole@juno-beach.fl.us

The Facts: Welcome!

Welcome, Juno Beach, to the inaugural edition of *The Facts*, your Town Manager's newsletter. Though I began serving Juno Beach at the end of March 2025, I've hesitated to wade into the newsletter realm, having noted an unreasonable level of divisiveness and counterproductive public messaging in that landscape. However, recognizing that communication is the cornerstone of excellence in public transparency and central to high performing municipal organizations, both of which help cultivate an informed and engaged citizenry – a hallmark of the American way of life – I've determined that there is no better time than the present to get started.

I pride myself in cultivating public faith and trust in local government. Against that backdrop, and with a strong sense of ethical and professional responsibility for helping the Juno Beach community to access accurate and *sometimes* interesting content to enrich their daily lives and support productive conversation on important community topics, I hope you find the newsletter of value and that it contributes to a stronger sense of community while promoting collaborative problem solving. Perhaps my no-nonsense approach and occasional attempts at humor will be refreshing & appreciated.

When controversy arises, rely upon *The Facts* to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Warmly,
Rob Cole, Town Manager

The Facts: Master Development Plan

The Rumor: During a consultant work-in-progress presentation to the Town Council on August 06, a majority of the Town Council, including Mayor Wheeler, Vice Mayor Callaghan, and Councilmember Hosta, voted to approve 90% residential and 10% commercial for the Plaza La Mer property.

The Facts: The rumor is **not true**.

Neither Mayor Wheeler, Vice Mayor Callaghan, nor Councilmember Hosta voted to approve a 90% residential /10% commercial plan.

Some public confusion has arisen on the 90/10 topic because there was a motion made by Vice Mayor Pro Tem Davis and seconded by Councilmember Halpern to “reject the proposed 90%/10% (residential/commercial use) breakdown for the Plaza La Mer property.” The motion was voted down, as the consultant’s work is still in progress with no final decisions to be made at this stage – voting down a premature motion **is not** the same as approving the 90/10 split, of course.

Retaining policy options as the study continues to mature under Council and community guidance is prudent, and choosing not to eliminate a particular option or tool that may initially appear unfavorable **does not** equate to championing that option; it’s nothing more than sound policymaking. Importantly, Council can later winnow down options based on their improved understanding of available policy alternatives and their likely outcomes.

The Rumor: Mayor Wheeler, Vice Mayor Callaghan, and Councilmember Hosta voted to approve 184 condominiums on the Plaza La Mer site.

The Facts: The rumor is **not true**.

There is no development proposal for 184 units at Plaza La Mer, and **no one** on the Town Council voted to approve 184 condominium units for the site.

This rumor appears to be rooted in a mischaracterization of the consultant’s conceptual depiction of **one possible outcome** for the site. The concept wasn’t presented as **the** plan for the site, but rather as an **illustrative example** of one alternative that both the Town Council and Juno Beach community were asked to react to. Town Council and community feedback received helps to inform and shape the Master Development Plan on a moving forward basis, and all Juno Beach residents and property owners are strongly encouraged to participate in the continuing conversation.

The Rumor: The ITE Trip Generation Statistics **underestimate** the number of projected trips associated with residential uses in auto-dependent locations most similar to Juno

Beach because the ITE methodology assumes walkable neighborhoods with nearby amenities and low vehicle use.

The Facts: The rumor is **not true**.

Just the opposite is true – abundant literature has documented that the ITE Trip Generation statistics are based on suburban auto-dependent locations and they **overestimate** trip counts in pedestrian-oriented areas with nearby amenities and multiple transportation mode choices, like high-quality transit, etc.

Need to check for yourself? Just type “Are ITE trip generation statistics based on auto-dependent suburban development?” The results reveal abundant peer reviewed citations documentation that the rumor is *not* true.

One may ask, “**Why is this important?**” The answer is that planners and consultants, like the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (now working on our Master Development Plan), are very concerned about the parking and traffic impacts to communities in association with various development scenarios.

When comparing and contrasting the range of possibilities, the ITE Trip Generation Statistics, when properly applied and interpreted, provide sound guidance in comparing and contrasting potential scenarios and are thus instrumental to staff, the Town Council, and the Juno Beach community in informing important public policy choices.

Beware of efforts to alter the value or meaning of ITE Trip Generations Statistics, as someone may be trying to sell you some swampland, or they’re simply misinformed.

More Facts to Support Informed Public Participation

As added background, the Special Meeting for a Work-in-Progress update was scheduled for the consultant team, the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, to update both the Town Council and the Juno Beach community on their efforts to date, as well as to solicit feedback on the site concepts they had crafted.

A key rationale for the presentation was for the consultant team to see if they are on-track and, if not, to gain guidance on areas requiring additional work. It **was not** a meeting to authorize changes to our land use regulations, and no Town Council resolutions were scheduled for discussion; ***no votes authorizing a change to our zoning regulations or to endorse any development project proposal were approved.***

However, next steps were identified.

The Facts: Master Development Plan - Continued

Next Steps – Town Council Consensus and Staff Discussion with Treasure Coast

The following next steps have been identified:

1. Schedule another work-in-progress session in the fall 2025 so that more residents are in Town and able to participate in person;
2. Conduct additional historical research into prior redevelopment plans created for the intersection of Donald Ross and US-1, making sure that the consultant team receives a copy of same;
3. Consultant to facilitate discussion of a Town Center vision for the ¼ mile area around the intersection of Donald Ross and US-1; and
4. Clarify decision-making parameters, including such factors as the type of development possible today under a do-nothing scenario, the legal parameters for the types of changes we are able to make to our land use regulations, and the alternatives for positively shaping the contextual fit for proposed development/redevelopment sites on a moving forward basis.

Of note, there was Council consensus **not** to rush completion of the plan, as there remained work to be done to capture local concerns, portray options, establish decision-making parameters, and more.

The End Goal

We all value the Juno Beach aesthetic and want to do our level best in cultivating the best possible outcomes for our community.

The end goal **is not** to provide incentives for sites to be redeveloped, as that is likely to occur without incentivization, **but rather** to positively shape the contextual fit of any development that may occur, and to maximize prospective public benefits.

The most recent work-in-progress meeting reflected public and Council feedback received by the consultant to-date, as filtered through the consultant's interpretation and synthesis of sometimes disparate viewpoints. The Town Council and community feedback will help the consultant team to continue to refine their approach and, ultimately, their final recommendations and deliverables.

The Facts: Master Development Plan - Continued

We target the end of this calendar year for completion of the planning effort, though the process and timing continue to be shaped by Town Council and community feedback, so the timeline can be adjusted to reflect Council readiness to advance to next steps.

Informed public participation will continue to be strongly encouraged as the effort progresses.

Key Elements to be Considered: Being Prepared to Participate Effectively

1. **Understand the types of development projects are possible under our current codes** – are such projects and uses consistent with our local preferences? If not, we need to act in order to shape the future, as change will occur with or without our collaborative efforts to positively influence it. To help the community provide meaningful feedback, our consultant team is working to visualize what is now possible, with such effort now underway.
2. **Understand the limits of our land-use regulatory authority.** To illustrate, we are now legally prohibited from making our land use regulations more restrictive or more burdensome on property owners (and developers) than they are at present, though that *may* change in 2027. Assuming there is a case for change and an urgency to act in our best interests, our levers of influence are limited to voluntary compliance concepts. This issue (referred to as “SB108”), litigation risk, and others will be covered when our consultant team next presents their work-in-progress to the Town Council and Juno Beach community.
3. **Think about what you want to see and experience in the area of the intersection of Donald Ross and US-1 – what is your vision for that part of Juno Beach?** Freezing it in time as it is today is not likely viable. Thus, with change being inevitable, we should try to exert positive influence on it. Recognizing we have legal rules to operate within, what would you do to promote contextual fit for future development, and to maximize prospective public benefits you may find desirable, e.g., interesting ground level storefronts, public sidewalks with benches and native landscaping, etc?

Get Involved

If you haven't already actively participated in this conversation, let us know your thoughts by emailing our [Director of Planning and Zoning, Frank Davila](#), and he will share your feedback with the consultant team. In making that effort, try to focus on what **you** want to

The Facts: Master Development Plan - Continued

see and experience, **not** necessarily what you've heard may happen and others tell you that you should fight to oppose – **think for yourself** and help to craft the change you want to see; [don't be a lemming](#) by simply following someone else's potentially ill-informed scripted email campaign telling you what to do and when. Remember the phrase, "If you believe that, I have some swampland in Florida to sell you." Rely upon the facts, filter them through your own perspectives and experiences, and share **your** viewpoints with us to help shape the future!

The Facts: Fun Fact

With each newsletter, I'll conclude with something of personal interest, not necessarily associated with our local context, ranging from a personal photo I've taken to a recent news article of interest . . . to *who knows what* – the idea is simply to allow each of you to get to know me not just as the Town Manager, but as a person you have some familiarity with, even if we have not had the opportunity to meet in person. On that point, I am available to meet with community members to discuss any topic of interest. People wishing to meet with me can reach out by email or phone to schedule a convenient date and time.

Future editions of **The Facts** will not likely delve into so much detail on a single subject of community concern, though I felt it important to dive into a little more depth on the Master Development Plan, as the topic is very timely, controversial, and would benefit from balanced discussion, so I dedicated this first effort nearly exclusively to that topic.

That written, below is my Fun Fact contribution for this inaugural edition of **The Facts**. I took the photo last year in Picayune State Forest, the actual location that gave rise to the phrase, "If you believe that, I have some swampland in Florida to sell you." Trust but verify; I hope you find **The Facts** helpful in this regard.

