



The Facts

Official News and Information



September 08, 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, Juno Beach!

Welcome to this edition of *The Facts* newsletter.

The Town of Juno Beach is organized as a [council-manager form of government](#). Did you know that this form of government arose at the turn of the 20th century as a means to combat corruption and unethical activity within local government by promoting nonpolitical, professional management that is effective, transparent, responsive, and accountable? Under the council-manager form, a municipal management professional has significant responsibility for, among other important roles, informing both the public and council with accurate facts, data, and analysis to support informed public participation and sound policymaking.

As but one explicit indication of the manager's role in helping to inform public and council discussion and deliberation (apart from being organized under the council-manager form), the [Town Charter](#) explicitly authorizes the manager to take part in Town Council meeting discussions, though the manager can't vote. The absence of voting power *precludes* the manager from interfering with council policy-making authority, and the Town Council may accept, modify, or reject any recommendations the manager advances, of course.

The ability to participate in council and community discussions is central to the council-manager form of government and serves to support informed public participation and informed decision-making. *The Facts* is written to help **you** be an informed participant in local government decision-making.

Warmly,
Rob Cole, Town Manager

The Facts: Master Development Plan

The Facts: Town Council held a work session to discuss next steps for development of the Master Development Plan. There was broad consensus on the need to undertake additional public engagement.

The next steps include:

- Develop a community survey.
- Schedule an invitational forum, of sorts, with effort to include a sampling of Juno Beach residents, business and property owners, and potentially members of the redevelopment community. This meeting would be open to the public, with participation and comment limited to in-depth conversations between Town Council, the invitees, consultant team, and staff. This format will allow more rich exploration of representative issues, concerns, opportunities, and threats.
- Schedule an interactive public charette, or similar, to include *all* interested members of the Juno Beach community. With your help and collaborative spirit, perhaps we can even make it fun.
- Schedule an on-site discussion with the Sea Oats Association.

Aspects of our efforts moving forward will include:

- Understanding the types of projects that our current codes authorize.
- Increasing awareness of our regulatory framework and how it shapes options.
- Defining what slowing growth means in Juno Beach – *what does success look like?*
- Do we want a community gathering sense of place at Donald Ross and US-1?
- Should we use incentives to get what we want and, if so, which ones?
- . . . and more.

Please continue to participate in shaping the important decisions ahead. To help keep track of upcoming meetings and other official information, consider signing up for our [email updates](#), available from the “How Do I?” tab on the top of our website, www.juno-beach.fl.us. This topic will continue to be covered in future editions of **The Facts**.

The Facts: The purpose of the Master Development Plan **is not** to establish a **new** vision for the **entire** community. Rather, its purpose is to help translate the **existing** vision, goals, and objectives contained in the Town’s community-wide [Comprehensive Plan](#) (and separate [Vision Statement](#)) to a smaller geographic subset of the community, specifically sites that economic analysis suggest may be targets for redevelopment.

This is important because we may have a window of opportunity to proactively shape any such redevelopment if we can define a shared vision of success and authorize the tools required to maximize our ability to achieve it. **This is a pro-community mindset, not pro-**

development, though one informed by consideration of economic feasibility and property rights recognition, as mandated by Florida state law ([Community Planning Act](#)), and other legal considerations, such as the [Bert J. Harris Private Property Rights Protection Act](#).

Because there has been some public confusion on the topic, and for those not familiar with how a Comprehensive Plan, sub-area plan (like the Master Development Plan), and a Strategic Plan relate, I'll provide some added background and context. From a sequencing perspective, flowing from community-wide and most strongly vision-oriented, to most detailed, tactical, and task-oriented, the plans generally flow like this:

Comprehensive Plan => Sub-Area Plans (like the Master Development Plan) and any specialty plans (like our continuing Vulnerability Assessment) => Strategic Plan

A **Comprehensive Plan** establishes a community's "50,000-foot view" of what they desire for the future – *a vision* – and, by law, includes such considerations as protecting human, environmental, social, and economic resources, among others. The [Community Planning Act](#) calls upon municipalities to "... maintain, through orderly growth and development, the character and stability of present and future land use and development in this state." Of note, the Act also explicitly states that "It is the intent of the Legislature that all governmental entities in this state recognize and respect judicially acknowledged or constitutionally protected private property rights." Importantly, all our land use regulations, including our zoning regulations, must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

A **sub-area plan**, on the other hand, is a tool for implementing a comprehensive plan at a finer, more localized scale. Sub-areas of a community become the target for policy and regulatory interventions to address a known problem or take advantage of an identified opportunity. Often, both are involved. The completed work product, which relies heavily upon public engagement, expert analysis, and Town Council policy guidance, illustrates how the Comprehensive Plan's vision can be carried out in a specific location or related locations with a much more detailed and precise level of guidance, such that specific implementation strategies can be identified and executed.

A **strategic plan** focuses on the relative near-term, typically three to five years, depending on the rate of change being experienced, and is *tactical* in nature; think SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Aggressive yet Attainable, Relevant and Resourced, and Time-Bound), which are designed as specific steps/actions to achieve specified desirable outcomes. It is a tactical roadmap to implement the vision established in longer-term plans, inclusive of prioritization against other competing community and organizational needs. Importantly, the strategic plan informs the annual budgeting process, which ensures that the highest prioritized needs are adequately resourced, and supports accountability for deliverables and results.

In high-performing municipal organizations, each of the plans described above build upon one another in the sequence portrayed and function generally as described.

The Facts: Single-Family Appearance Review

The Facts: A Joint Workshop of the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board was held on the topic of Appearance Review for Single-Family Homes on [May 02, 2025](#). The staff [memorandum](#) and [presentation](#) highlighted substantial procedural and legal compliance concerns and urged prompt Town Council consideration of the matter and policy direction to resolve the critical issues. There is continuing discussion on [tonight's agenda](#); meanwhile, staff **continue** to apply zoning regulations that have not been codified to the evaluation of single-family permit review.

As staff wrote in the memorandum, “The current Appearance Review section of the code, including its intent, **does not align with State Statute**. More specifically, the term Harmony is **too subjective and lacks clarity for implementation purposes**. Additionally, codified implementation standards are **lacking in the current regulatory framework**.”

Thus, staff advised Town Council of their concerns that our code does not comply with state law, can't be fairly and consistently applied as written, and can't legally be enforced using the methods being employed, i.e., applying zoning regulations (metrics) that were never approved by Town Council through the requisite public hearing process and adopted as law. **Because the Town Council establishes public policy and members have fiduciary responsibilities as trustees of public funds, these are significant problems, as the Town incurs a variety of potential legal and financial exposures by maintaining the status quo.**

A follow-up [staff memorandum](#) presented at the May 28, 2025, Town Council meeting highlighted recommended actions based on outcomes from the May 02 meeting. These actions included repeal of language in our code that is inconsistent with state law and impossible for staff to implement fairly, transparently, and consistently, as reported by staff to Council. However, two recommendations authorized by Council included new metrics. When the state passed [SB180](#) in July 2025, the proposed metrics could not be legally implemented. Attorney Len Rubin prepared an SB180 [memorandum](#), reporting in part that the proposed new metrics would not be allowed under the new state law.

While SB180 **did not** preclude moving forward with solving the procedural problems and legal compliance issues requiring immediate attention, staff were directed to continue with the status quo and return to a future meeting (tonight) with a [comprehensive listing of potential tools](#) that could be used in addition to or in lieu of an architectural pattern book.

Regardless of which tools, if any, Town Council chooses to support, resolution to the procedural and legal compliance matters needs to be solved without further delay.

The Facts: Fun Fact

With each newsletter, I 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. Of note, I am available to meet with community members to discuss any topic of interest – just reach out to schedule: rcole@juno-beach.fl.us.

This image is my Fun Fact contribution for this week's edition of *The Facts*. We all have some point in life when we feel as though we're [carrying a lot of weight](#), figuratively speaking. As public servants, public service professionals and local elected officials carry substantial burden throughout their public service careers.

Our roles are challenging and the decisions we make are not always popular, yet we must nonetheless make them – ethically, transparently, and with a high degree of accountability.

