

City of Pensacola

Land Development Code Update

Online Public Engagement Summary

INTRODUCTION

The City of Pensacola, through Inspire Placemaking Collective, Inc., launched the Pensacola Land Development Code (LDC) Update project website (<https://www.inspire-engagement.com/pensacola-ldc>) on January 27th, 2025. The site featured three interactive tools designed to facilitate virtual public engagement: a survey, an idea wall, and an interactive map. Collectively, those tools generated 220 public contributions before being deactivated on October 20th, 2025.

The following summary highlights key findings from the online engagement process, providing insights into community priorities and preferences related to the LDC update.



ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Community input collected through the project website revealed a broad range of perspectives and ideas. The sections below summarize the primary topics and recurring themes identified for each activity. Participation levels varied across the three tools: the survey received 130 responses, the idea wall 59 contributions, and the interactive map 31 comments.

SURVEY

The online survey provided valuable insights into the familiarity and interactions of the contributors with the Pensacola LDC. Respondents were asked nine questions about the current LDC and what they would like from a new LDC. Respondents that had previously used the LDC were asked three additional questions for feedback on their experience with the code. Most survey contributors live in Pensacola and use the LDC on either a frequent or sparingly basis.

A total of 130 surveys were submitted. The key takeaways from the survey are listed below. Appendix A provides graphics depicting the breakdown of responses for each question.

About the contributors (questions 1 to 3):

- 92% live or own property within the City
- 75% are above the age of 45
- 65% are familiar with Pensacola's land development regulations

How contributors feel about the LDC (questions 3a, b, c, and 4):

- 50% of contributors rate the current land development code difficult to use/understand

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- 51% rate the current land development code as restrictive
- 54% feel that the code has been allowing overdevelopment and 59% do not think the LDC balances growth with environmental protection. The great majority (just over 60%) also feel that the code produces auto-oriented development which limits walkability.
- 48% of respondents feel that the code is inadequate for changing urban development trends and needs
- 41% think the current LDC is NOT producing or encouraging the “right” type and form of development and 34% think that it is, but only in certain areas of the city.

What the contributors want from the LDC (questions 5 and 6):

- 68% of contributors are proponents of clear and predictable regulations that guide how new development or redevelopment occurs
- 28% of contributors think owners should be allowed to reopen a non-conforming building “as is,” as long as there is viable economic activity.

Current Land Use and Zoning (question 7): Respondents disliked the following aspects of land use and zoning in Pensacola the most:

- Unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists (59% of respondents)
- Insufficient preservation of historic or cultural sites (57% of respondents)
- Environmental concerns (e.g., destruction of natural environment) (55% of respondents)

Biggest Challenges (question 8): Respondents believe that the following are the biggest challenges the City of Pensacola will face in the next decade:

- Poor maintenance and development of infrastructure (e.g., roads, utilities) (65% of respondents)
- Flooding and natural disasters (61% of respondents)
- Lack of affordable housing (60% of respondents)

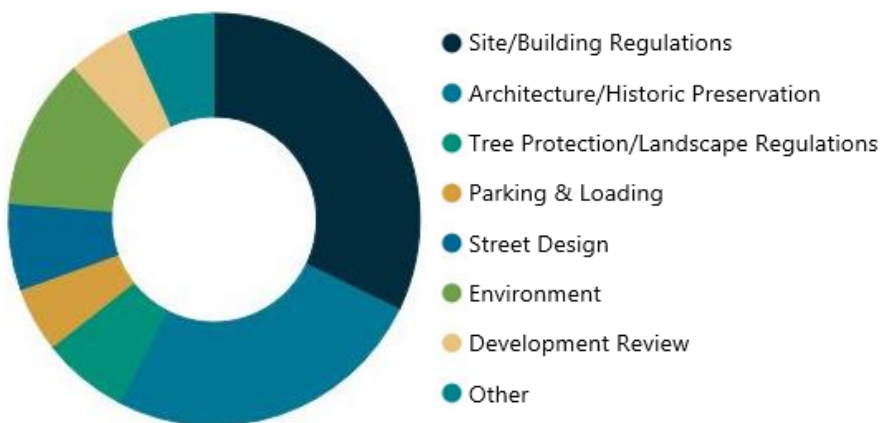
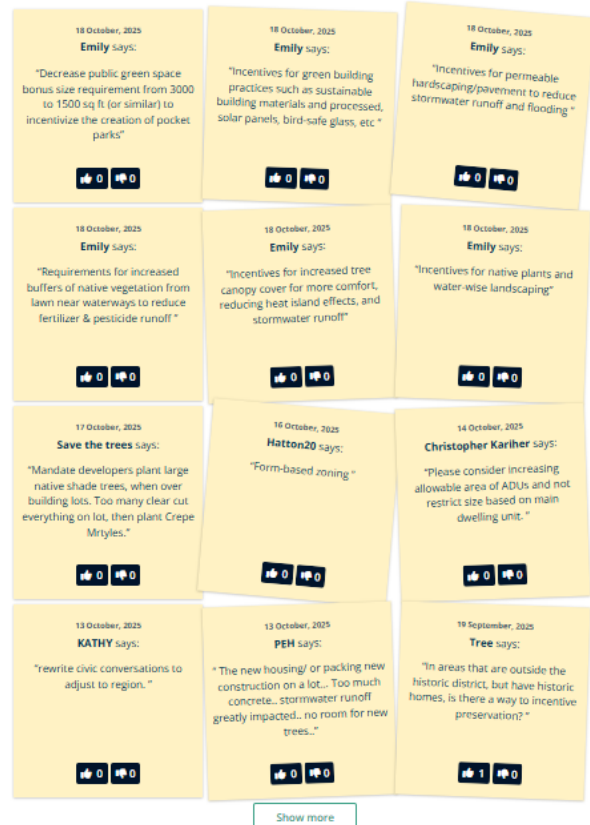
Pensacola in 20 Years (question 9): Respondents chose the following statements to describe their vision of Pensacola 20 years from now:

- Preservation of historic areas and cultural landmarks (70% of respondents)
- Vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods (residential, commercial, recreational) (70% of respondents)
- Improved public transportation and walkability (70% of respondents)

IDEA WALL

This activity allowed attendees to provide input on what should be included or changed in the LDC. It asked respondents to select a category from a list to express an idea in writing, and like or dislike other respondents' ideas. A total of 59 ideas were posted by 27 contributors. 279 total likes/dislikes were distributed with an average of 6.6 likes/dislikes per contributor. Appendix B includes all posted ideas and the likes/dislikes they received.

The categories offered related to specific areas of the LDC (see image below). Most ideas provided fit the Site/Building Regulations category, followed by Architecture/Historic Preservation. The Ideas expressed by the participants can be summarized into three key themes: Housing Flexibility and Affordability, Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Character, and Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Urban Design.



Housing Flexibility and Affordability

This theme garnered suggestions to expand housing types, reduce barriers to smaller or more affordable homes, and modernize outdated zoning requirements.

Key related comments:

- Support for duplexes, triplexes, and starter homes in traditionally single-family zones
- Removing minimum dwelling size requirements
- Allowing multi-lot divisions to build smaller homes
- Opposition to "subdivision-style" homes in historic neighborhoods

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- Concerns about new construction impacting existing property values

Underlying goals:

- Promote diverse, age-friendly, and affordable housing options
- Allow contextual infill that aligns with neighborhood character

Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Character

Respondents expressed strong interest in maintaining the historic character of neighborhoods through better design standards, incentives, and protective measures.

Key related comments:

- Protection of heritage trees and historic homes
- Calls to prevent demolition of historic properties
- Promote vernacular architecture even outside designated historic districts
- Complaints about abandoned properties and signs diminishing neighborhood quality

Underlying goals:

- Ensure development respects the city's historic identity
- Encourage restoration over demolition
- Prevent aesthetic and cultural degradation of neighborhoods

Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Urban Design

A focus on environmentally sensitive planning, walkability, and modern urban infrastructure emerged strongly across many comments.

Key related comments:

- Eliminate/reduce parking minimums, add shared parking models
- Tree-lined boulevards, street canopies, and green buffers
- Require onsite stormwater retention, trash nets, and align with state stormwater rules
- Solar access protection and bird-friendly building standards
- Sidewalks, walkability, and reorienting commercial buildings toward the street
- Urban tree protection

Underlying goals:

- Improved stormwater management and waterfront protection
- Build a greener, safer, and more resilient city
- Modernize infrastructure to support climate adaptation and livability
- Promote human-scale design and reduce dependence on cars

Most liked Ideas

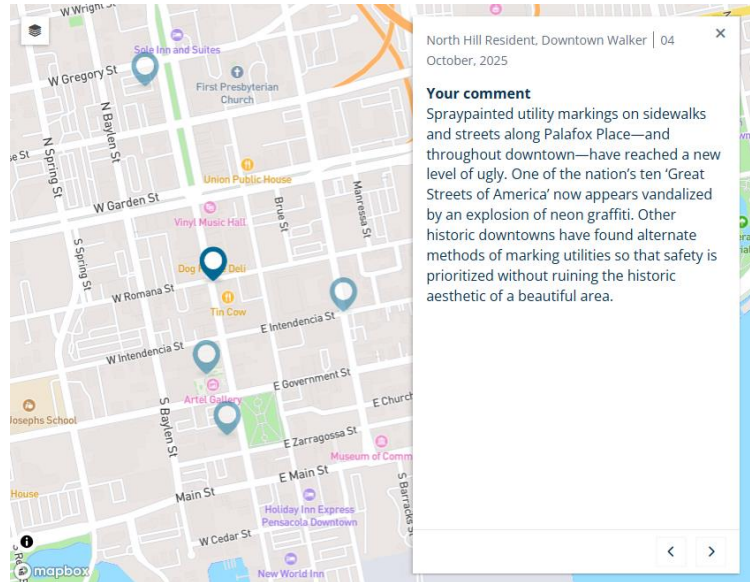
- "Protect our big heritage trees. Heritage Trees can be identified (like what Texas has) on an interactive map" (15 likes)
- "Lack of sidewalks along common pedestrian paths is a big concern. Would be great for community health and engagement to improve walkability." (14 likes)
- "Commercial developments should build toward the street and put the parking lots in the rear of the buildings to encourage walkability." (13 likes)

INTERACTIVE MAP

This activity consisted of an interactive map where respondents could leave a pin with a comment where they felt an LDC related issue was most relevant. 31 pins with comments were posted by 17 contributors. Appendix C includes a map and a list of those comments.

The comments primarily involved historic home regulations and commercial uses in residential areas. Most pins were in and around the downtown area, west of Bayou Texar and south of Blount St., with a high concentration in and around the neighborhoods of Old East Hill and East Hill.

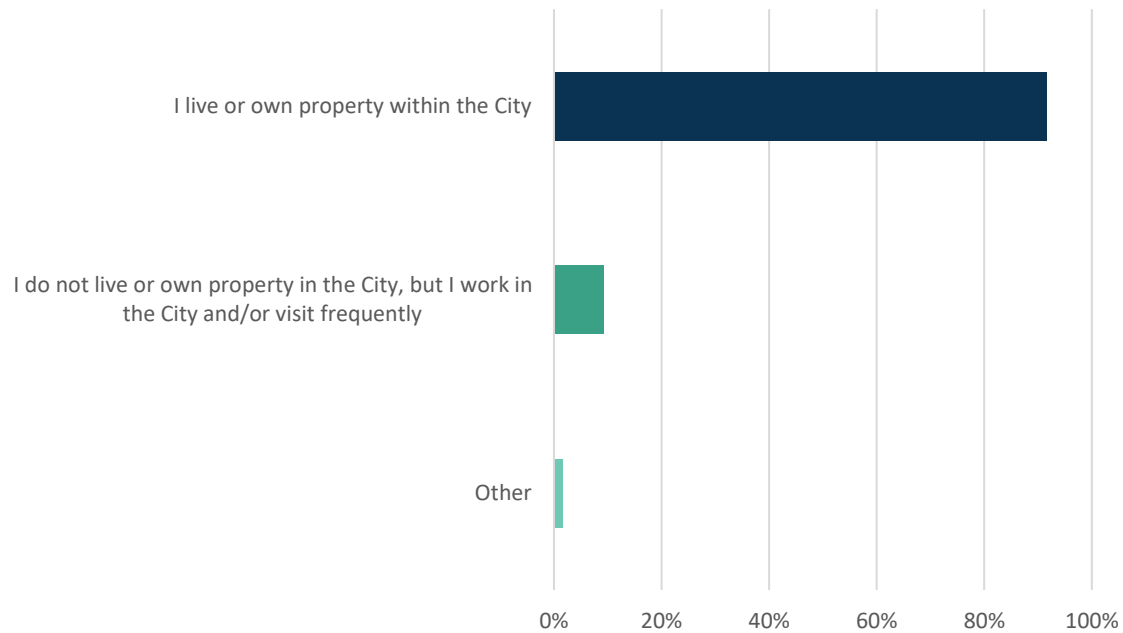
Additional comments regarding traffic safety, including pedestrian crossings and intersection signage were placed throughout the central part of the city.



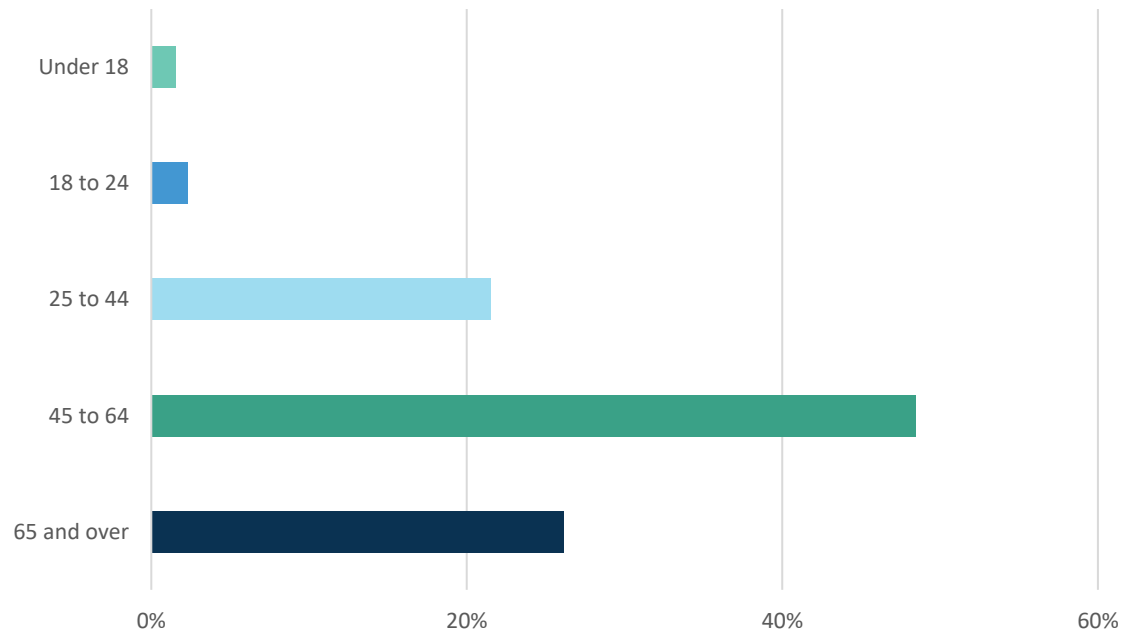
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Appendix A: Survey Responses

Question 1: What is your relationship to the City of Pensacola?

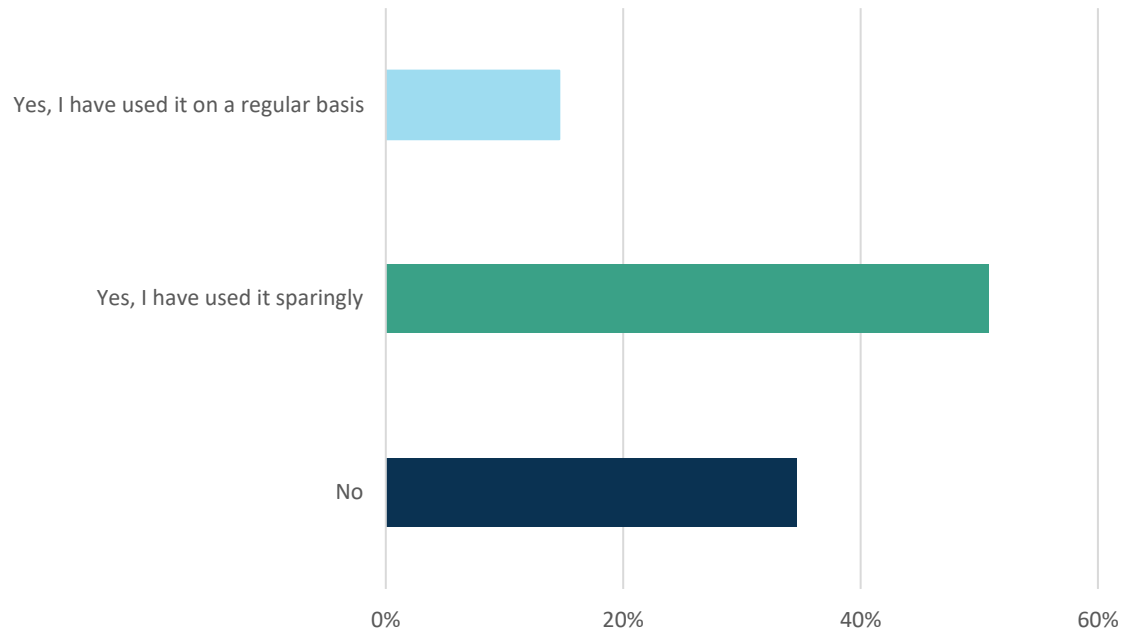


Question 2: What is your age?

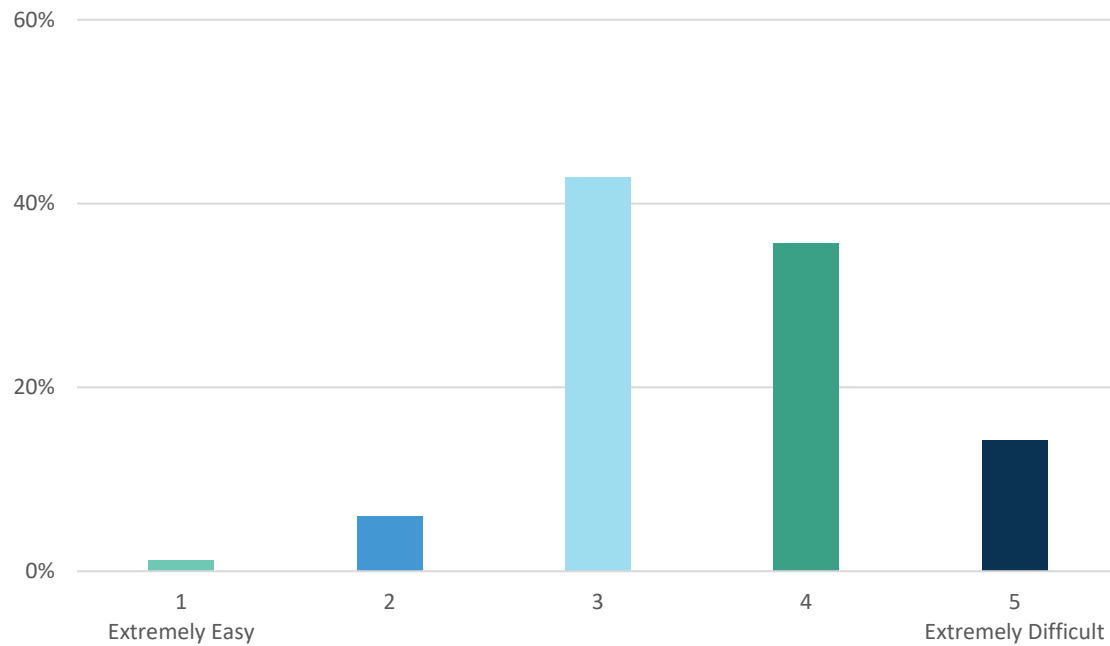


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Question 3: Are you familiar with Pensacola's land development regulations?

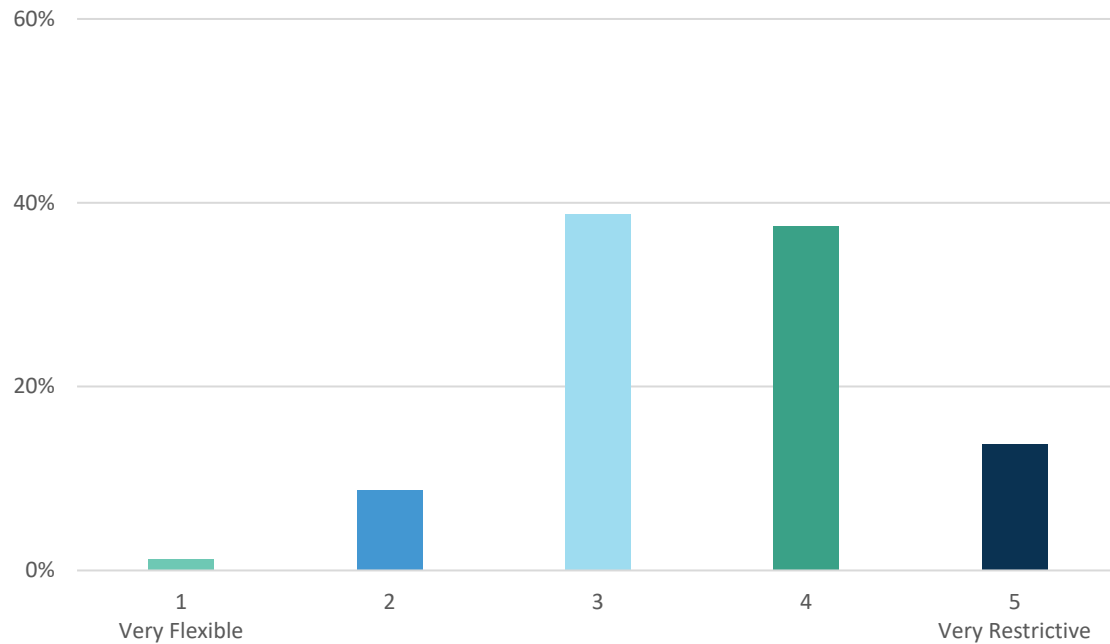


Question 3a: If you have used the code, on a scale of 1 to 5, how easy to use/understand is the land development code?

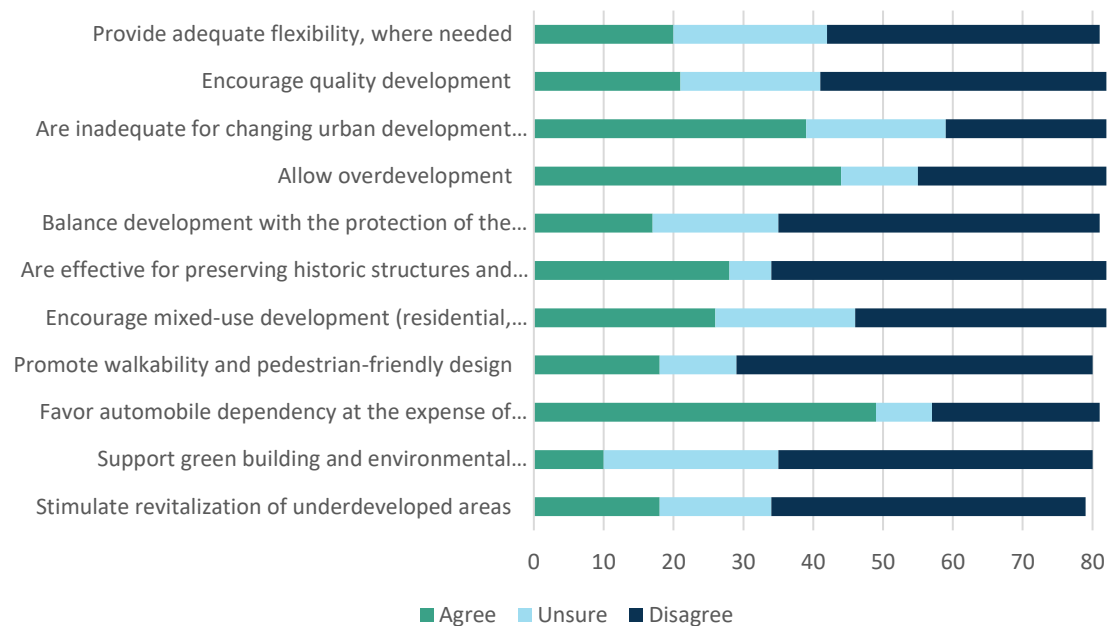


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Question 3b: If you have used the code, on a scale of 1 to 5, how flexible/restrictive are the land development regulations?

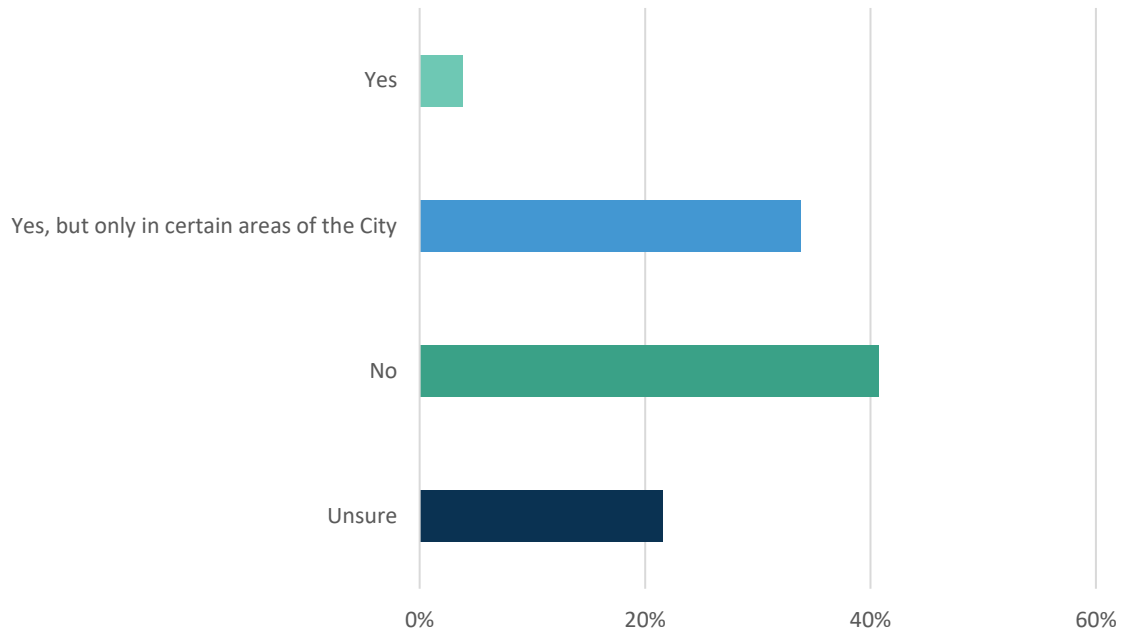


Question 3c: If you have used the City's land development code in the past, please respond to the following:

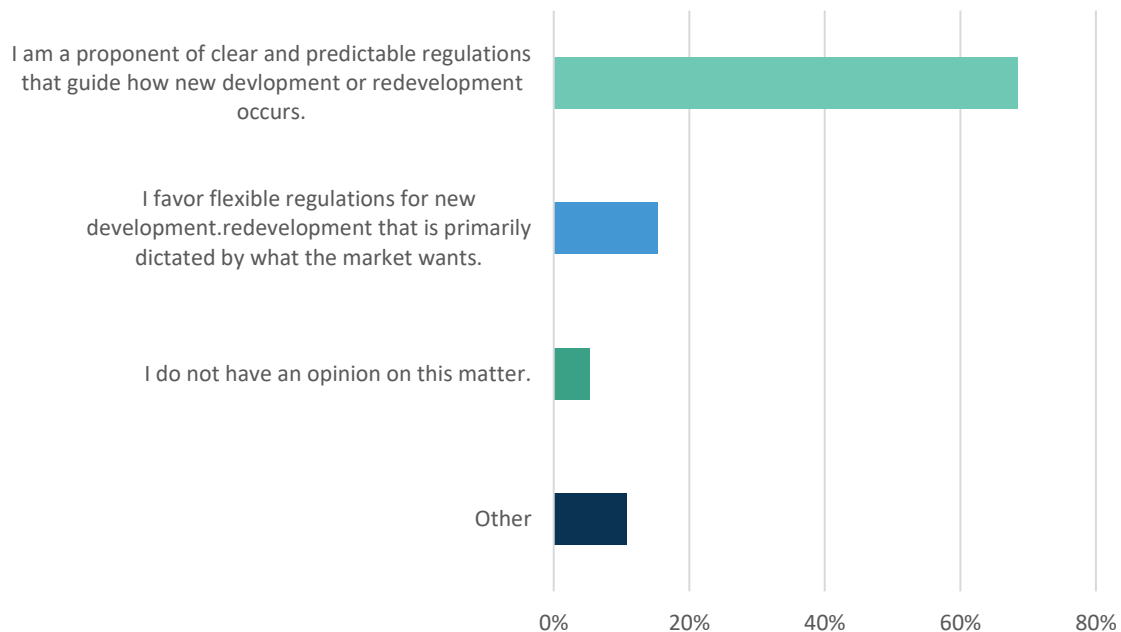


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Question 4: Do you think the current Pensacola land development regulations are producing or encouraging the “right” type and form of development?

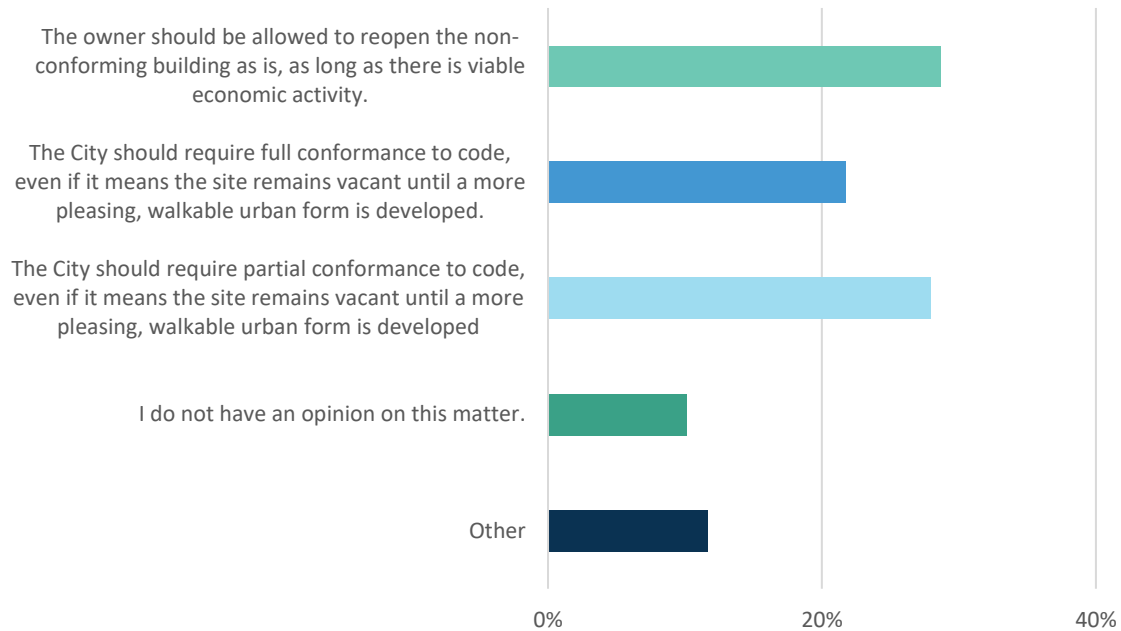


Question 5: How would you describe your stance on City regulations for new development or redevelopment?

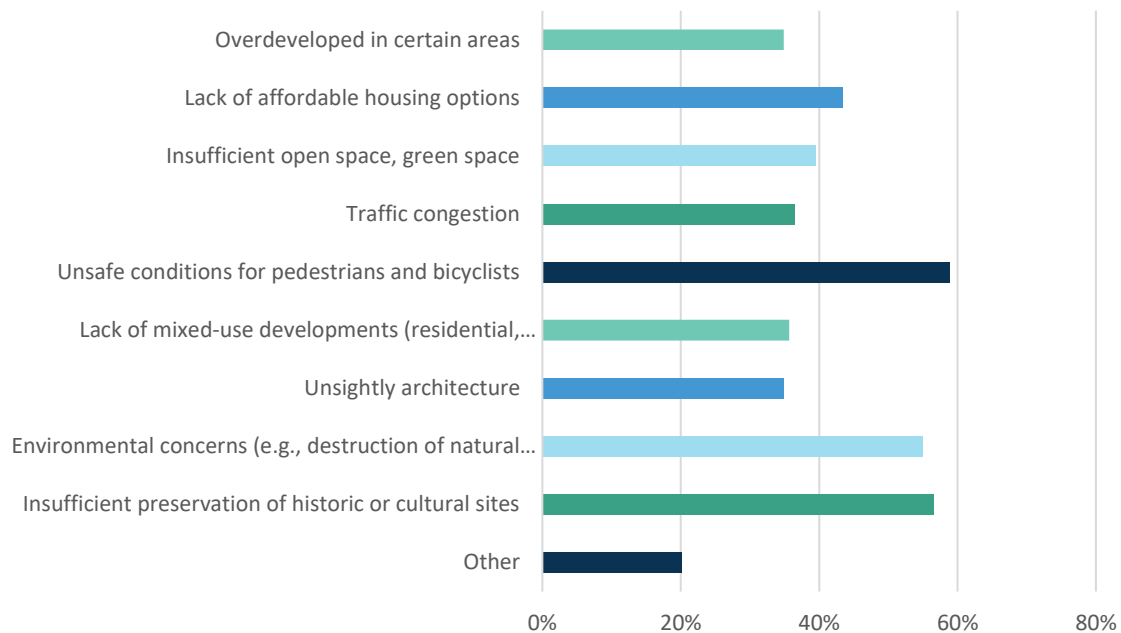


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Question 6: How should the City regulate the redevelopment of non-conforming sites/buildings (i.e., development that does not meet current code requirements)?

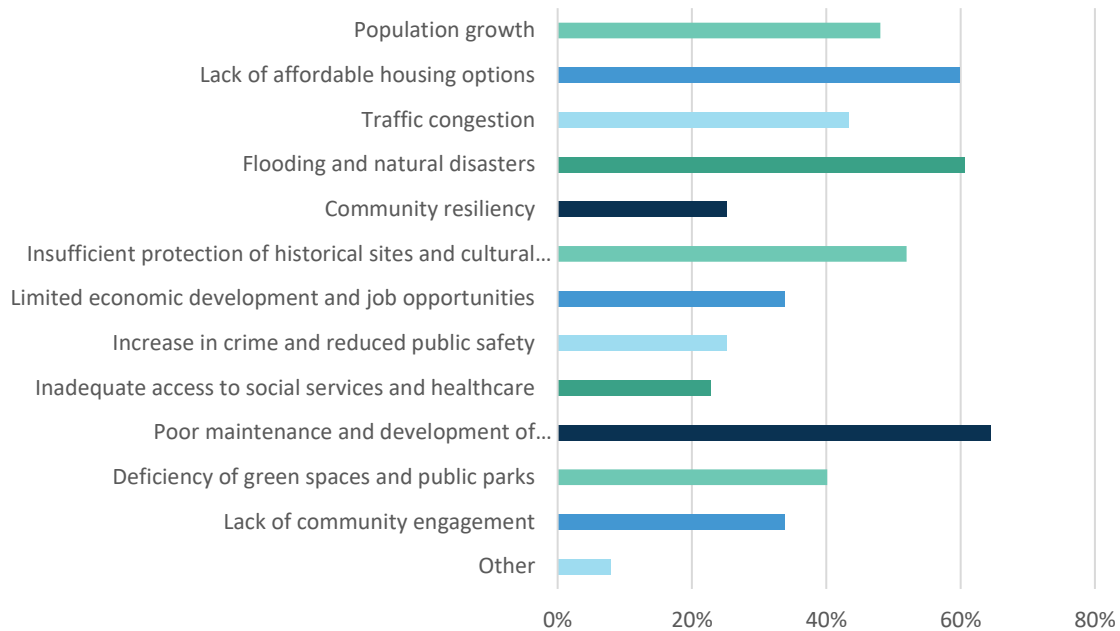


Question 7: What land use and zoning aspects of Pensacola do you dislike the most?

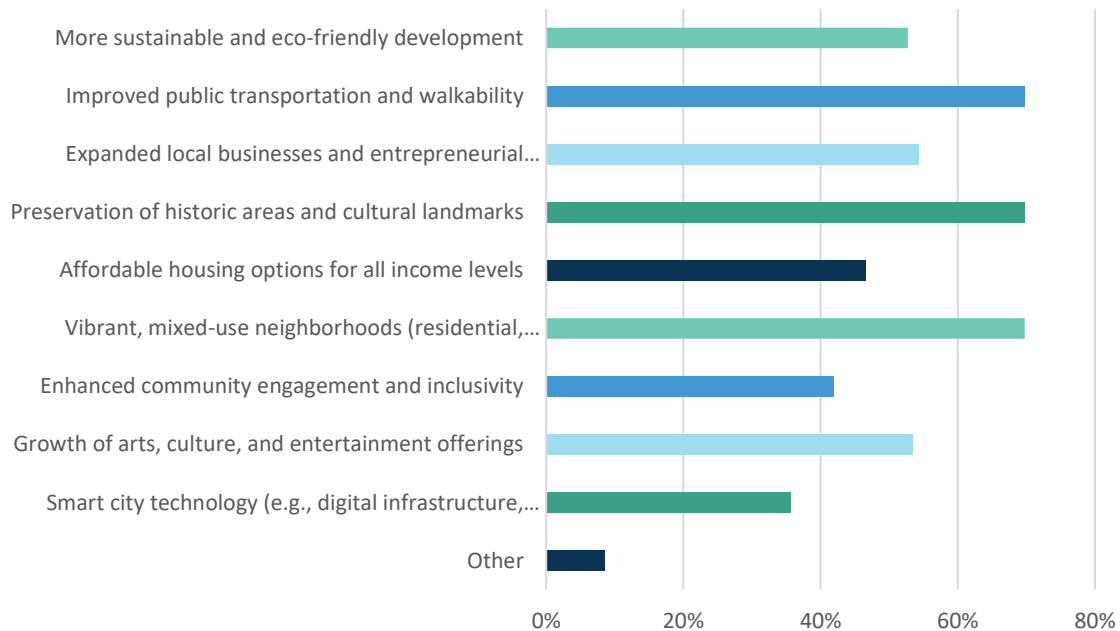


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Question 8: What are the biggest challenges you believe the City will face in the next decade?



Question 9: If you could describe your vision of Pensacola 20 years from now, what would it look like?



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Appendix B: Idea Wall Comments by Category

Site/Building Regulations (32% of comments)

Comments			TOTAL
Allow homeowners to divide their East Hill multi-lot property so they can build smaller, age in place, & sell off the primary house/lot	0	0	0
Ban chain link fences over 3 1/2 feet within city limits.	2	0	2
Add a de minimis section for stormwater to coincide with the state requirements.	0	0	0
Remove all minimum dwelling size reqs. in all residential zones so starter homes can be built, keep reasonable with setback/lot coverage	2	0	2
Update the ordinance to permit duplexes and triplexes in all residential zones where single-family homes are allowed	2	0	2
Porches and related structures should be able to project into front setbacks for a max of ten feet city-wide, similar to the CRA allowance.	5	0	5
Require commercial buildings to bury back flow preventers.	5	1	6
We need more commercial / R-NC zoning on the streets adjacent to the Hollice Williams Park area to support local small business enterprise.	7	0	7
Commercial developments should build toward the street and put the parking lots in the rear of the buildings to encourage walkability	11	0	11
American Birding Association window standards for glass to reduce bird strikes and migratory bird fatalities.	0	4	4
Abandoned properties (7th across from Cobb Ctr, Churches Chicken 9th/Blount). Can the LDC help rectify these situations?	2	0	2
Abandoned signs (two examples at 9th at E Blount) of abandoned businesses are eyesores. When a business goes out, the old signs need to go.	2	0	2
Billboard Ban and commercial signage height restrictions. These are eyesore and scars upon the landscape.	9	0	9
Don't allow new construction to decrease the market value of the existing adjacent homes. Roof heights and set backs matter.	10	4	14
Incentives for green building practices such as sustainable building materials and processed, solar panels, bird-safe glass, etc.	0	0	0
Mandate developers plant large native shade trees, when over building lots. Too many clear cut everything on lot, then plant Crepe Myrtles	0	0	0
Form-based zoning	0	0	0
Please consider increasing allowable area of ADUs and not restrict size based on main dwelling unit.	0	0	0
The new housing/ or packing new construction on a lot... Too much concrete. stormwater runoff greatly impacted. no room for new trees.	0	0	0

Architecture/Historic Preservation (25% of comments)

Comments			TOTAL
New residential duplexes should be permitted in PR-1AAA (massing consistent with surrounding structures). Numerous historic examples exist.	0	0	0

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Comments			TOTAL
ARB -- remove reference to West Fl. Hist. Pres. Inc advisor --City has professional staff to handle this. If not, define the roll	0	0	0
Review Code Sec. 12-12-3 --ARB -- remove subjectivity from decisions, provide clear guidance so applicants have realistic expectations.	1	0	1
Please look at Riverside Avondale neighborhood in Jax. They are a vibrant community since the 20's AND WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION	1	0	1
Vernacular architectural standards for commercial properties should be required even outside of historic districts.	3	1	4
"Subdivision" homes (garage doors on front of house) need to be prohibited in East Hill. Ruining the character of the older designs.	7	0	7
If building meets Historic requirements, it shouldn't be allowed to be demolished! Regardless if not in Preservation District/CRA overlay!	4	1	5
Include parts of EastHill in CRA overlay	1	0	1
Grandfather property tax credits for home owners to add on to/update older homes (50y+). Mandating home owner maintains the existing style.	4	0	4
Tax incentives for homeowners to renovate historic structures, similar to those given to businesses!	7	0	7
Offer city renovation loans for historic homes and building in need of repair that can't get traditional conventional loans to prevent demo.	12	0	12
Protect properties along the waterfront and Bayview park if current owner wants to establish a historic or similar type of recognition	6	0	6
Update the discriminatory and outdated regulations in LDC that prohibit tattoo studios from operating in historic district PC-1.	1	11	12
Most of the multistory historic homes are well over the 35' building height max. The LDC needs to take this in account for new construction	10	5	15
In areas that are outside the historic district, but have historic homes, is there a way to incentive preservation?	1	0	1

Tree Protection/Landscaping Regulations (7% of comments)

Comments			TOTAL
Canopy Street Protection. Tallahassee & Gainesville do a GREAT job with this. We can, too! 12th, E Blount 9th to 14th.	0	0	0
Stronger protection of Heritage Trees: Decrease tree diameter for developers Increase developer fines for removing trees (\$1,000 is low!)	6	1	7
Provide incentives for home owners who protect/maintain heritage trees on their property.	6	1	7
Protect our big heritage trees. Heritage Trees can be identified (like what Texas has) on an interactive map	14	0	14

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Parking and Loading (5% of comments)

Comments			TOTAL
Parking minimums are antiquated and should be eliminated/severely reduced across the entire city. Let the market decide how much is good.	6	1	7
Avoid another “Lilly Hall” type issue where parking requirements are waived and nearby residents and their guests have no parking	1	0	1
Parking lot sizes should be limited, business should be encouraged to share parking rather than mandating parking spaces for each business	9	0	9

Street Design (7% of comments)

Comments			TOTAL
4 Way stops on Gonzalez and Davis, MLK. Street parking impedes visibility which causes many accidents, and too many people speed thru here.	2	0	2
Replace painted medians and oversized turn lanes with tree lined boulevards. Plant trees in road verge. Allow canopies to cover streets.	4	0	4
Lack of sidewalks along common pedestrian paths is a big concern. Would be great for community health and engagement to improve walkability.	13	0	13
Decrease public green space bonus size requirement from 3000 to 1500 sq ft (or similar) to incentivize the creation of pocket parks	0	0	0

Environment (12% of comments)

Comments			TOTAL
Require onsite retention of storm water, especially for commercial development	1	0	1
Become a pesticide free parks. Chemicals on our lands affects everything.. plants, humans, pets.	8	0	8
Add catch nets to storm drain outfalls along Bayou Texar, tons of trash gets in the water with every rainstorm.	11	0	11
Incentives for permeable hardscaping/pavement to reduce stormwater runoff and flooding	0	0	0
Requirements for increased buffers of native vegetation from lawn near waterways to reduce fertilizer & pesticide runoff	0	0	0
Incentives for increased tree canopy cover for more comfort, reducing heat island effects, and stormwater runoff	0	0	0
Incentives for native plants and water-wise landscaping	0	0	0

Development Review (5% of comments)

Comments			TOTAL
COM should not have Landscape buffer if entirely in COM. Alternatively buffer should be on residential LU if home built in commercial zoning	0	0	0
Existing rooftop solar should be protected from new high buildings and shadows. Or, owners of existing solar should be compensated.	0	4	4

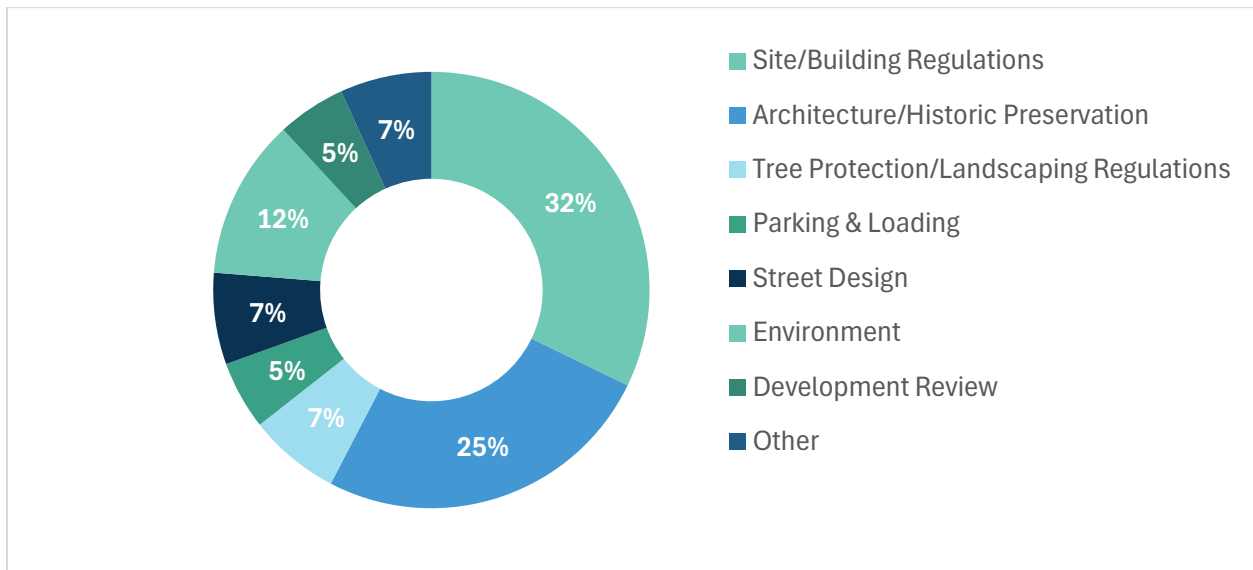
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Comments	👍	👎	TOTAL
12th Ave commercial areas need a master plan and an LDC that promotes infill and gets away from large expanses of asphalt lots.	4	0	4

Other (7% of comments)

Comments	👍	👎	TOTAL
Parking minimums are antiquated and should be eliminated/severely reduced across the entire city. Let the market decide how much is good.	3	0	3
Avoid another Lilly Hall type issue where parking requirements are waived and nearby residents and their guests have no parking	1	0	1
Parking lot sizes should be limited, business should be encouraged to share parking rather than mandating parking spaces for each business	7	0	7
rewrite civic conversations to adjust to region.	0	0	0

Posts by Category



Appendix C: Interactive Map Comments

Address	Comment
708 West Main Street	We need a Pedestrian crossing at Clubbs and Main Street (Flashing lights). Crest Apartments is under construction on Clubbs Street and will add 282 units. The only exit for this Apartment complex is onto Clubbs Street. Just across Main Street is our newest park, "Bruce Beach" which is about 12 Acres. It is widely used and the new residents in Crest Apartments are 1/2 block away.
844 North a Street	There is a lack of turn signals at the intersection of "A" Street and West Cervantes Street.
819 West Garden Street	The intersection of "A" Street and Garden Street only has a left turn signal for traffic going East on Garden Street. It allows traffic to turn North onto "A" Street. The entire intersection should be upgraded by having four appropriate turn lanes and four turn signals.
610 North 9th Avenue	Crosswalk with lighted warning for pedestrians and cyclists needed.
11 East Romana Street	Spraypainted utility markings on sidewalks and streets along Palafox Place—and throughout downtown—have reached a new level of ugly. One of the nation's ten 'Great Streets of America' now appears vandalized by an explosion of neon graffiti. Other historic downtowns have found alternate methods of marking utilities so that safety is prioritized without ruining the historic aesthetic of a beautiful area.
321 South Palafox Street	The sidewalk tables take up so much space that it's difficult to walk even in single file, especially when the waitstaff is crossing. The setup is certainly not accessible for wheelchairs or strollers. I'm not opposed to some outdoor seating, as long as it allows for adequate sidewalk access for all citizens.
1216 East Lee Street	As we age we hope to remain in East Hill, however maintaining this 117 y.o. home is exceeding our time, energy, and resources. Our goal is to build a modest, hurricane-rated one- or two-story home on the unused portion of our second lot while preserving the existing house for new neighbors.
1001 North Guillemard St	I would like the Long Hollow neighborhood to be included in a future CRA
405 East Gonzalez Street	We need a 4-way stop here. The street parking and privacy fences block the view of oncoming traffic and there are many accidents here. This will also help with the speed of traffic.
510 East Gonzalez Street	We need a 4-way stop here. The street parking and privacy fences block the view of oncoming traffic and there are many accidents here. This will also help with the speed of traffic.
1102 North Hayne Street	We need more commercial zoning on Hayne St now that the Hollice Williams park is moving forward. The Eastside neighborhood should have the opportunity to incorporate small restaurants/coffee shops to recapture the business income that has been stripped from this community over the years and the number of people that will revisit this park will support this zoning.
844 North a Street	A left hand turn lane should be added at the south bound lane of A street turning east onto Cervantes street

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Address	Comment
1 West Gregory Street	City should add a parking deck to this city owned parking lot
400 South a Street	Need left hand turn lane into JoePatti's for traffic traveling east on Main St.
499 Bayfront Parkway	Need traffic calming so pedestrians can safely cross Bayfront Parkway
925 East Blount Street	Allowing this house to be demo'd and 2 two-story houses to replace it, will seriously impact the 4 Heritage Live Oaks on the property. Developers should not be allowed to remove a 200/300yr old Protected tree for only a \$1,000 fine. Nor should they be allowed to severely butcher the tree, which will cause its early demise.
1910 East Strong Street	Do not allow this HISTORIC home to be demolished!
502 East Wright Street	If property owners of Historic buildings don't maintain property and allow them to fall into disrepair, the City should be able to take over the property. Save the Train Station!
116 Altamont Road	All neighborhoods outside of Downtown, Uptown and the CRA's deserve inclusion in the new LDC. These neighborhoods will be the focus of future development and are the present and future homes of moderate and low income taxpayers (the Pensacola workforce).
520 North 6th Avenue	Preserve this historic home
200 East Gregory Street	Have the old Grand Hotel dealt with and save the old train station. Require owners to maintain it rather than let it fall into disrepair.
221 South Palafox Street	Height restrictions on new development to keep our skyline open to maintain our small downtown charm.
520 North 6th Avenue	Owners of historic contributing structures must abide by preservation district rules in regards to restoration/remodel.
317 North 8th Avenue	This home is an example of what will most likely be demo by neglect. Owners must be held accountable via better regulation - fines, other penalties. This would prevent squatters and unsafe conditions for surrounding neighbors.
415 North Alcaniz Street	More specific regulations on properties becoming hotels/restaurants inside established neighborhoods. A boutique hotel and small restaurant were approved, but an addition of an outdoor smoker, food truck, and music for outdoor dining added after the fact have affected quality of life for immediate neighbors. Insufficient parking and signage to point customers to overflow parking are non-existent.
1284 North 12th Avenue	Historic homes being demolished to build extremely large houses with almost zero lot lines.
1111 East Blount Street	New tall builds, too close to existing neighbors property
604 East Scott Street	Needs revitalizing
200 East Gregory Street	Parking in this area is difficult for residents due to the increase in commercial establishments and events at the Bay Center. Permit parking for residents would assist in our ability to park close to our residence. Could this be considered?

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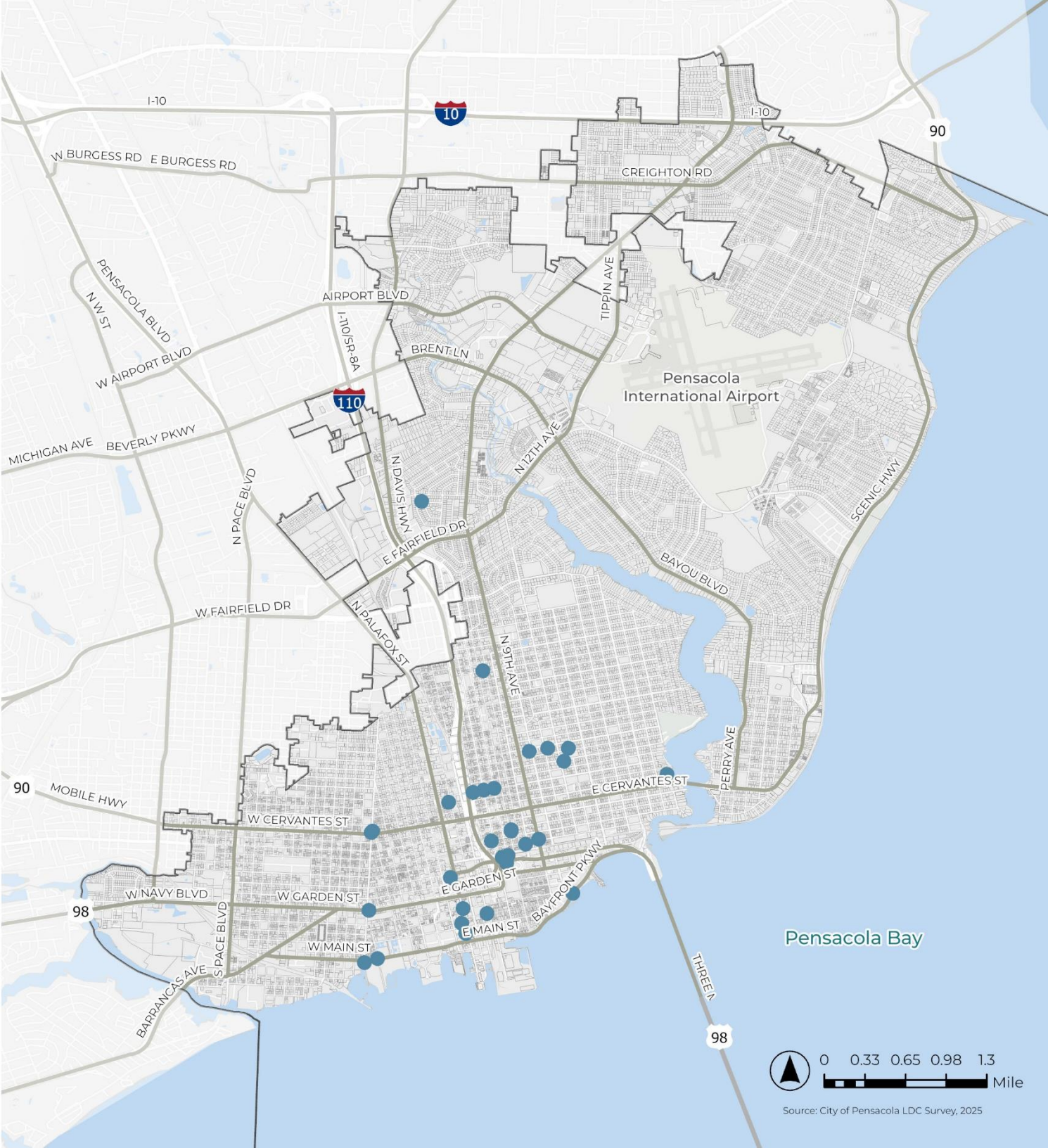
Address	Comment
New Warrington Spur	Why is so much of Pensacola, not actually within city limits? My curving street has about 10 houses not in the city, while all the others are. It just seems that by bringing in all of the area addresses, the city would be able to flourish uniformly.
200 South Tarragona St	End train routes downtown.

INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENT MARKERS

MAP

Legend

- City of Pensacola
- Water Bodies
- Major Roadway
- Parcel
- Pinned Comment



Pensacola Bay



0 0.33 0.65 0.98 1.3
Mile

Source: City of Pensacola LDC Survey, 2025