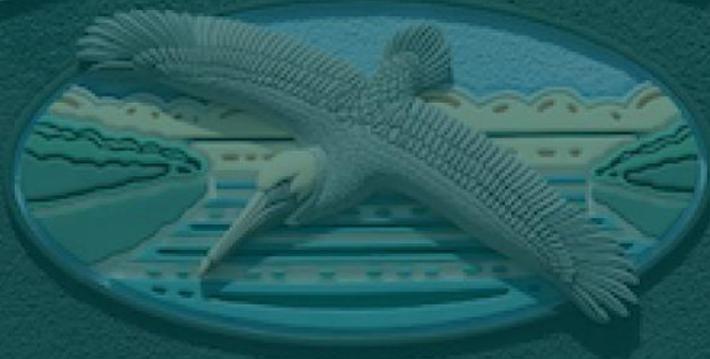


**CITY OF SEBASTIAN**  
Comprehensive Plan

**2040**



WELCOME TO  
**SEBASTIAN**



HOME OF  
**PELICAN ISLAND**  
*FRIENDLY PEOPLE*  
*& SIX OLD CROUCHES*

**INTRODUCTION**

EST.  
1924



The **City of Sebastian Comprehensive Plan 2040 (Plan)** has been prepared to not only address regulatory changes since the last comprehensive plan was adopted but also provide a document that:

- Creates a community-wide vision to guide growth and development including redevelopment.
- Improves the stability, physical condition, and economic well-being of the City.
- Makes Sebastian a more livable and sustainable community of choice between now and 2040 by implementing a wide range of resiliency and livability standards.
- Emphasizes the importance of not only creating a plan, but translating it into real action and tangible results.
- Adds a strategic perspective to what is otherwise developed as a guide to the City's long-term vision over the next 10 to 20 years.
- Underscores the need to keep the plan relevant through reviews and periodic updates.

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040 ELEMENTS

The **City of Sebastian Comprehensive Plan 2040** is comprised of 9 Elements each addressing a specific topic or series of interrelated topics. Due to the nature of the Plan, specific policies may cross one or more Elements and is referenced as such including the Element and respective Objective and or Policy. The Plan is comprised of the following Elements:

1. Land Use
2. Transportation & Mobility
3. Housing
4. Infrastructure
5. Conservation & Coastal Management
6. Parks & Recreation
7. Governance & Implementation
8. Public Schools
9. Economic Development



# INTRODUCTION

## Plan Framework

The **City of Sebastian Comprehensive Plan 2040** was developed through a process that incorporated an assessment of the City's existing Comprehensive Plan, analysis of existing conditions, a series of community meetings, input from City of Sebastian Departments/staff, and work sessions with both the Planning Commission and the City Council. This Plan analyzed, and has been amended to reflect, not only changes in Florida Statutes since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted, it also included a review and elimination of land development code provisions, removal of inconsistencies, updates to references including use of terms and agencies. Specifically, the following items were reviewed as part of the initial Comprehensive Plan review and documented as part of a review matrix that is included in the Appendix:

- Growth Management (GM) Change (changes in Florida Statutes)
- Regulatory (Code related)
- Consistency (with Other Elements and/or Policies)
- Studies/Dates
- Master Plans
- Other/Planning Areas
- Undefined Topics
- Insufficient Guidance

Each Element contains a series of Goals, Objectives, and Policies, (GOPs) that provide the guidance and framework of the Element and the Plan as a whole. Following the GOPs, the supporting DIA documentation is presented including any supporting studies, reports, maps, data, and/or references.

The Comprehensive Plan is the City's **FRAMEWORK** for the future. The Plan and its strategies (expressed as Goals, Objectives, and Policies) are crucial when preparing for opportunities such as land use, transportation/mobility, natural resources, housing and redevelopment. The City's residents and its visitors need a safe and secure place to live, a healthy economy that provides jobs and services, ways to get around the City (bike, pedestrian, car, transit), and quality recreational features. It is the responsibility of the City to provide the necessary public services and facilities, develop strategies, coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions (e.g. Indian River County) as well as regional, state and federal agencies, and adopt regulations and standards that implement this framework. The Comprehensive Plan is an umbrella document in that it guides other City plans, capital projects, and programs which affect the community in large and small ways. This Plan promotes the City's neighborhoods, vibrancy of its downtown, recognition and preservation of its natural systems, and opportunities for multimodal connectivity, all of which are integrated into the larger regional context.

Comprehensive plans may be perceived as being relatively general in nature; however, Comprehensive Plans form the legal basis for community development and redevelopment within a jurisdiction. Comprehensive Plans are complex policy documents required by Florida Statutes that account for the relationships among the various community issues through required and optional Elements. The City must think adaptively to craft a bold yet flexible Plan that advances a vision with goals, objectives and policies to address emerging issues such as continued growth with an emphasis on redevelopment of targeted areas, transportation opportunities, density, infrastructure, natural systems preservation and capital improvements. This includes policies and land



development regulations, which focus on balancing residential and nonresidential land uses consistent with changing market demands. The existing suburban development pattern is proposed to be transformed and adapted to more efficient land use patterns emphasizing a mix of uses, compact urban forms, buffers and connected systems (natural habitat, pedestrian and vehicular).

## Legal Status

The legal status of the Comprehensive Plan requires that all Goals, Objectives, and Policies will be considered in making legal determinations of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to State Laws and Statutes.

## Vested Rights

In accordance with Chapter 163, Section 163.3167, nothing in this Comprehensive Plan shall limit or modify the rights of any person to complete any development that has been authorized by the City. See the City's Land Development Code for the City's vested rights determination process.

## Graphics and Images

The use of graphics, images, photographs or similar throughout the **City of Sebastian Comprehensive Plan 2040** are for illustrative purposes only and not intended to convey or require a specific element(s).

## Use of Terms: "Shall", "Should", "Will" and "May"

The terms "shall", "should", "will", and "may" are included within this Comprehensive Plan and are understood to be used in the following manner:

**Shall:** provisions or items that are mandatory.

**Will:** declares a purpose to accomplish an item in the future.

**Should/May:** items that are more flexible in nature and are non-mandatory but encouraged.

## Plan Interpretation

- A. The Planning Director (hereinafter referred to as the Director) or his or her designee shall interpret the Comprehensive Plan and its application to public and private land and to activities permitted thereon. Plan interpretations are to be based on the applicable text, maps, figures and tables within the adopted Comprehensive Plan along with the Data Inventory and Analysis (DIA) developed to support the Comprehensive Plan.
- B. Use and Status of Support Documentation – The DIA is not adopted as part of the Plan but may be used in any review, interpretation and update of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- C. Interpretation of Conflicts – Conflicts shall be judged under the following guidelines:
  1. In the event of any difference of meaning or implication between the text of the Plan and any caption, illustration, graphic, summary table, or illustrative table, the text shall control.
  2. In the event of an apparent conflict between the Future Land Use Map and any other map or figure in the adopted Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use Map shall control.
- D. Interpretation of Undefined Terms – Terms not otherwise defined in the Comprehensive Plan shall be interpreted first by reference to the relevant provisions of the Community Planning Act Part II, Chapter 163 F.S., or other relevant and appropriate State Statutes if specifically defined therein; secondly, by



reference to terminology adopted by City Ordinance; thirdly, by reference to terminology generally accepted by Federal or State agencies; fourthly, by reference to terminology generally accepted by the planning profession; and otherwise according to the latest edition of Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary.

- E. Administrative Interpretations – It is the responsibility of the Director to make Comprehensive Plan administrative interpretations. Applications for an administrative interpretation together with the appropriate fee as may be required by resolution of the City Council shall be filed with the Director. Administrative interpretations may be required as a result of one of the following actions:
  1. *Failure to obtain a Comprehensive Plan consistency finding based on submission of a development order application:* In the event a development order application is found inconsistent with the Plan, the application may be forwarded to the Director for an administrative interpretation. The building permit, subdivision or site plan application, or conditional use application shall serve as the application for an administrative interpretation.
  2. *Request for interpretation of land use designation boundaries:* Written requests are required for administrative interpretations related to land use designation boundaries. The request shall include a legal description of the parcel(s) and depending on the circumstance a current survey may be required. The applicant may submit additional materials that he feels supports his application and the Director may ask for additional information to explain said request.
  3. *Any other action that would require a Comprehensive Plan interpretation:* Any affected party may make application for an administrative interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the application shall include a written statement which clearly identifies the section or sections of the Plan for which an interpretation is required along with references to text, maps, figures and support document(s) which the applicant feels supports the application.
- F. Administrative Interpretation of Plan Consistency and its Relationship to the Concurrency Provisions of the Infrastructure Element – an administrative interpretation resulting in a determination of consistency does not constitute a determination.
- G. Appeal of an Administrative Interpretation – Any administrative interpretation made by the Director under the provisions of this Chapter may be appealed in accordance with Section 86-23 of the Land Development Code.

## Plan Amendments

All amendments to the Comprehensive Plan shall be reviewed and adopted in accordance with the Community Planning Act, Part II, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes.

## Plan Update

The City’s Comprehensive Plan may be amended at any time. The State of Florida requires municipalities to review and update, where appropriate, their Comprehensive Plan at least every seven (7) years to reflect changes in Growth Management Laws, changing conditions within the community, updates to policies which may no longer be accurate or effective as well as based on where the community thinks the Plan is working or not working.

The City of Sebastian is scheduled to provide the State Land Planning Agency with its review and direction of the current Comprehensive Plan by \_\_\_\_\_ with adoption of the EAR-Based Amendments (Evaluation and



Appraisal Report) within one year of that date. However, municipalities are not limited to this schedule and may undertake a review prior to this date if, in the municipality's opinion, the review and update is warranted.

In 2019, the City undertook a major step in updating the Comprehensive Plan when it prepared and subsequently adopted the *City of Sebastian, Coastal Resiliency Plan, Prepared By: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., March 2019* (Coastal Resiliency Plan) and corresponding amendments to the Coastal & Conservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The City noted that the current Comprehensive Plan (2009 Adopted Plan) was not adequately providing guidance for a number of reasons including:

- a lack of clear understanding and direction in the previous plan,
- an increased number of regulatory policies typically reserved for the City's Zoning Codes/Land Development Codes,
- studies and sub-plans required per the Plan were either not completed or have since been completed,
- allow for a more realistic build out (development) scenario that is sustainable by the City, consistent with community comments,
- changes in the Florida Growth Management Laws which have either rendered certain policies moot or would require an update to existing policies for the Plan to be in compliance. Note: changes to the currently adopted Comprehensive Plan based on regulatory changes are identified within the Appendix.

The City took this opportunity to redefine its land uses and their related policies, develop a Plan that was based simple yet direct and easy to use resulting in series of core initiatives centered on the following:

**Efficient and Effective Public Services** – a commitment to providing programs and services to the community in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible without sacrificing responsiveness and quality.

**Responsible Growth Management and Development** - a commitment to maintaining and developing healthy communities and sustainable neighborhoods to foster economic and social stability, provide for the safety and welfare of residents, provide affordable housing, and ensure access to employment, education, recreation and public services.

**Economic Development** - supporting efforts to develop effective economic development strategies that will position the City to take advantage of current and future economic conditions by identifying key opportunities for recruitment of businesses, industries, and services that provide jobs and meet the needs of the community.

**Quality of Life** – a recognition that an enhanced quality of life is essential to attract visitors and residents to the City of Sebastian. To that end, the City recognizes and supports programs, services and activities that enhance the City's diverse natural habitats and open spaces, recreation facilities and amenities; exercising environmentally sound and prudent management of growth.

## Public Engagement Process

Key to the update of the City's Comprehensive Plan is an inclusionary public engagement process.

Understanding community values today ensures that this plan supports and advances those priorities over the long term. As noted above, the planning process began in 2018 with the development of the City's Coastal



Resiliency Plan and related updates to the Comprehensive Plan, and then moved to the update of the entire Comprehensive Plan in 2019-2020. The City's community involvement approach was simple:

- to create a strategy that achieves desirable results over the next 10 to 20 years,
- understand the City's successes and challenges since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan,
- take a community snapshot to reassess the vision and priorities expressed by the community and its leadership.

The Comprehensive Plan helps achieve success by recognizing a set of community initiatives that are clear, relatable, and important to City leaders and residents. Upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the City will then undertake the required process to amend (update) the City's Land Development Code.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

The Comprehensive Plan provides a broad vision of the City's future. By identifying issues and opportunities facing the City of Sebastian today, the City can proactively address those issues and capitalize on possibilities to improve the quality of life for its citizens.

In addition, the plan presents strategies for achieving that vision. The understanding of community dynamics and the outcomes of public engagement opportunities were critical pieces in the creation of the City of Sebastian Comprehensive Plan 2040. A common theme that emerged from the planning process is the community's understanding that the physical environment of the City—it's neighborhoods, buildings, streets, utilities, and natural resources—have a far-reaching impact on economic vitality and cultural legacy.

Interested persons were afforded the opportunity to provide comments, formally or informally, in writing for the duration of planning process, including during the four Planning Commission Workshops and two Board Workshops that targeted specific components of the Plan in an orderly manner. This input supplemented the data and analysis derived throughout the process. Throughout the update, the City, through the Planning Commission workshops culminated in the final Plan that was reviewed and forward to the City Council for their review and ultimate approval.

