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# Town of Longboat Key, FL
# Citizen Survey
# Final Report: April 2024

**Prepared for:**

Town of Longboat Key

**Prepared By:**

The Florida Institute of Government
at the University of South Florida

# 2024 Citizen Survey

## Town of Longboat Key, FL

Final Report, April 2024


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*Disclaimer: This study was conducted on behalf of the Town of Longboat Key, FL as part of the Town's ongoing quality improvement efforts. The findings of this study should not be construed as generalizable research.*

# Contents

# Executive Summary

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: 2024 CITIZEN SURVEY

This report summarizes responses to the Town of Longboat Key's 2024 Citizen Survey. Building on prior iterations of the survey, the 2024 initiative focused on recurring themes (such as quality of life on Longboat Key, community amenities, government services, and future policy priorities), as well as on emerging policy topics/issues (such as hurricane preparedness, canal usage, and lawn maintenance). The "Complete Report" – provided in the following pages – summarizes the research methodology and survey responses. A copy of the questionnaire is also provided in the Appendix to this report. Below is an abridged overview of the key themes and takeaways that emerged from the 2024 survey responses.

### *Quality of Life and Community Satisfaction*

- The 2024 survey responses showed a continuation of the high levels of satisfaction observed in prior iterations of the survey with regard to residents' quality of life on Longboat Key. This included high levels of satisfaction with the aesthetics, safety, and reputation of the community. Specifically, over 98% of respondents rated the overall quality of life on Longboat Key as either "excellent" or "good", which compares very favorably to other communities throughout the region and state.

### *Traffic and Infrastructure*

- Traffic congestion remained a significant concern among residents, with a notable percentage of respondents expressing dissatisfaction. For example, 59% of residents reported dissatisfaction with the flow of traffic and congestion in the community, while 63% identified traffic as one of the most important issues facing the community. This suggests a need for additional improvements in traffic management and infrastructure maintenance moving forward.

### *Municipal Services Satisfaction*

- Respondents conveyed high levels of satisfaction with the Town's emergency services, public safety, and the maintenance of parks and recreational facilities. Emergency services and public safety both received over 85% satisfaction rates, underscoring their effectiveness and importance to residents.

### *Community Engagement and Communication*

- Residents provided mixed feedback on the Town's communication efforts and their familiarity with community initiatives, suggesting an opportunity for additional efforts and strategies to reach the community with vital information and engagement opportunities. While 73% of respondents feel adequately informed by the Town, there are opportunities to improve engagement through more interactive and accessible platforms, as well as to raise awareness of the valuable Town initiatives, such as the Annual Hurricane Seminar, the "Talk of the Town" Video Series, and resident's opportunities to serve on Town Boards.

### *Hurricane Preparedness*

- Respondents demonstrated high overall levels of hurricane preparedness, though the responses indicated some areas for increased education and engagement. For example, nearly half (49%) said that they are "very prepared" for a major hurricane, while another 45% reported being at least "somewhat prepared". However, less than half reported being familiar with the Town's annual hurricane seminar.

### *Development and Growth Management*

- Concerns over the pace and nature of development highlight the need for balanced growth strategies that preserve the community's character. In open-ended responses, a significant portion of residents expressed concerns about the impact of new developments on the Town's character.

### *Lawn Maintenance*

- The data indicate varying levels of compliance with Town ordinances related to lawn maintenance practices, highlighting an opportunity for the Town to enhance education and enforcement efforts. Initiatives could include community workshops on sustainable landscaping, incentives for switching to electric lawn equipment, and clearer communication of maintenance ordinances to ensure widespread adherence and promote a healthier and more sustainable community environment.

### *Public Transit*

- Public transit services were identified as a crucial area for improvement, with only 19% of respondents expressing satisfaction with current offerings. In open-ended comments, the primary issues cited include limited routes, infrequent schedules, and inadequate coverage of the Town. When asked about their likelihood of using "on-demand" transit services, a large majority (78%) said that they would use such a service for airport transit, while 57% said that they would be at least "somewhat likely" to use the same service for "on-island" transportation. This feedback points towards a significant opportunity for the Town to expand and enhance public transit options, potentially including the introduction of more eco-friendly transport solutions to align with community values around environmental conservation.

# Complete Report

# INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from the Town of Longboat Key's 5th annual Citizen Survey, conducted in 2024. On behalf of the Town Manager and Commission, the survey was conducted by the Florida Institute of Government (FIOG) in order to gather feedback from residents on the quality of life on Longboat Key, satisfaction with municipal services, and future policy considerations. Collaboratively developed by FIOG and Town officials, the survey questionnaire addressed eleven distinct themes, which included recurring topics such as the overall quality of life, community amenities, government services, Town communications, and future policy priorities. Additionally, the survey addressed specific policy areas such as hurricane preparedness, canal usage, and airport transportation. The subsequent sections summarize the data collection methodology employed in this survey, followed by a detailed analysis of the responses.

# DATA AND METHODS

The 2024 Citizen Survey followed up on previous questionnaires (2020 to 2023) and was developed by FIOG in collaboration with Town leaders. The Appendix to this report contains a copy of the survey instrument. As in prior years, invitations to participate were disseminated via postal mail to all residential addresses, directing residents to the Town's designated online portal hosting the survey. The list of residential addresses was furnished to FIOG by the Town, with each address assigned a unique personal identifier/code (included in the invitations). Individuals who didn't receive an invitation were offered the opportunity to obtain the code from FIOG upon verification of their identity and address. This measure ensured that only responses from property owners and residents were included in the analysis and that only one response was accepted per household.

Additionally, survey access was promoted through various channels, including local media and the Town's official social media platforms. Of the 8,817 mailers distributed, 1,392 completed and valid questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 16% with a margin of error of +/- 2.46. Table 1 summarizes respondent demographics. As in prior years, the predominance of responses came from homeowners who reside on Longboat Key for at least half of the year, although there is a diverse representation regarding length of residency. Notably, more than a third of respondents (36%) reported not participating in the 2023 Citizen Survey. At the Town's request, data on age, income, and race/ethnicity were not collected in order to ensure respondents' anonymity.

**Table 1. Profile of Survey Respondents**

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| *What is your gender?* | | |
| Male | 722 | 52.2% |
| Female | 587 | 42.4% |
| No Answer | 74 | 5.4% |
| | | |
| *What type of home do you live in?* | | |
| Apartment | 24 | 1.7% |
| Town House of Condominium | 886 | 63.9% |
| Single Family Home | 458 | 33.0% |
| Other | 19 | 1.4% |
| | | |
| *Do you rent or own your home?* | | |
| Own | 1,382 | 99.7% |
| Rent | 4 | 0.3% |
| | | |
| *How long have you lived on Longboat Key?* | | |
| Less than 5 years | 391 | 28.2% |
| 5-10 years | 383 | 27.6% |
| 11-20 years | 277 | 20.0% |
| More than 20 years | 337 | 24.3% |
| | | |
| *How much of the year do you spend on Longboat Key?* | | |
| 11-12 months | 451 | 32.5% |
| 8-10 months | 182 | 13.1% |
| 6-7 months | 320 | 23.1% |
| 3-5 months | 274 | 19.7% |
| 1-2 months | 154 | 11.1% |
| None of the Year | 7 | 0.5% |

# 2024 CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS

The sub-sections below provide a condensed summary of the survey findings. These are outlined in accordance with the survey questionnaire, to include: (1) the overall quality of life on Longboat Key, (2) satisfaction levels concerning community amenities, (3) satisfaction with government services, (4) satisfaction with Town interactions, (5) the overall direction being taken by the Town, (6) Town communications, (7) future policy priorities, (8) hurricane preparedness, (9) utilization of canals/waterways, (10) transportation services to and from the airport, and (11) lawn maintenance practices. Notable trends, in comparison to previous years' surveys, are highlighted where relevant.

## *Quality of Life*

Table 2 summarizes citizens' perceptions of their quality of life on Longboat Key. As in prior years, a significant majority of respondents rated their quality of life positively, with 67% considering it "excellent" and 32% rating it as "good". Similarly, Longboat Key was regarded favorably by residents as a place to live and retire, with 67% and 66% of respondents rating it as "excellent", and another 30% and 29% describing it as "good", respectively. As a place to visit, Longboat Key receives high praise from residents, with 69% rating it as "excellent" and 26% as "good", indicating its appeal as a tourist destination despite subsequent concerns over traffic and overall congestion.

**Table 2. Citizen Ratings of Quality of Life on Longboat Key**

| *How would you rate the Town of Longboat Key in each of the following areas:* | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Quality of Life | 66.6% | 31.7% | 1.6% | 0.1% | - |
| As a Place to Live | 66.9% | 29.5% | 2.6% | 0.4% | 0.6% |
| As a Place to Retire | 66.2% | 28.7% | 3.0% | 0.7% | 1.5% |
| As a Place to Work | 11.5% | 16.8% | 17.2% | 6.0% | 48.5% |
| As a Place to Visit | 68.6% | 26.3% | 3.0% | 0.2% | 2.0% |

Residents' positive assessments of the Town – particularly as it pertains to quality of life – are in line with those observed in prior years. Figure 1 shows the response trend from 2020 – 2024, indicating that these sentiments have remained largely consistent over the 5 years during which the survey has been conducted.

**Figure 1. Quality of Life on Longboat Key, 2020 - 2024**

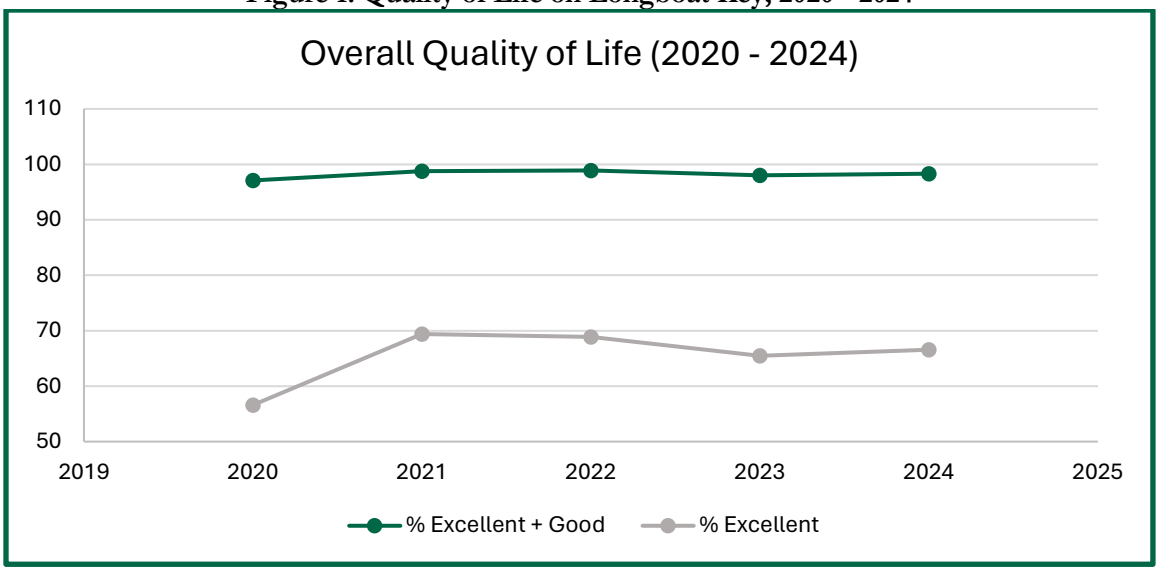



Table 3 summarizes residents' satisfaction with several key attributes of the community. Overall, respondents express high levels of satisfaction with the community's reputation, aesthetics, and safety, with 76%, 65%, and 81% respectively indicating that they are "very satisfied" with the community in these areas. However, opinions diverge sharply when it comes to traffic flow and congestion, with a notable 42% saying that they are "somewhat dissatisfied" with traffic related issues, while another 18% were "very dissatisfied".

**Table 3. Citizen' Satisfaction with Characteristics of Longboat Key**

| *Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following characteristics of Longboat Key?* | Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Neither Satisfied / Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Reputation of the Community | 75.6% | 22.1% | 1.8% | 0.3% | 0.1% |
| Overall Aesthetics of the Community | 65.4% | 30.6% | 2.9% | 1.1% | 0.0% |
| Overall Safety of the Community | 80.7% | 16.6% | 1.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% |
| Flow Traffic and Congestion | 3.0% | 17.0% | 20.6% | 41.6% | 17.8% |
| Access to Public Transportation | 5.4% | 13.1% | 54.2% | 18.5% | 8.8% |
| Access to Retail, Dining, & Entertainment | 24.8% | 44.4% | 17.0% | 12.4% | 1.4% |

Access to public transportation also garnered mixed feedback, with only 5% of respondents saying that they are "very satisfied", while a majority of 54% indicated that they are "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" and 27% said that they were "dissatisfied. In sum, the community's reputation, aesthetics, and safety were highly regarded by residents, though persistent concerns regarding traffic congestion and access to public transportation remain high.

When considered in the context of other communities throughout the region and state, Longboat Key continues to enjoy higher than average perceptions when it comes to quality of life. Table 4 depicts the 2024 responses in comparison to other communities who have conducted similar studies over the past 3 years. As the data underscore, the Town boasts significantly higher quality of life ratings from residents than are typically seen in communities throughout Florida.

**Table 4. Quality of Life, Comparative Analysis**

| *Quality of life responses compared against other communities in Florida.* | **Excellent** | **Good** | **Excellent + Good** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Longboat Key (2024) | 67% | 32% | 98% |
| Sarasota County (2023) | 49% | 49% | 88% |
| Hillsborough County* (2021) | - | - | 87% |
| City of Lakeland (2023) | 28% | 56% | 84% |
| Fort Lauderdale (2021) | 18% | 50% | 68% |
| Coral Springs* (2021) | 28% | 52% | 80% |
| *measured as % very + somewhat satisfied; | | | |

As in prior years, residents were asked to share additional comments to help Town officials better understand their responses, particularly the factors that influence their quality of life on Longboat Key. A sample of these responses (n=300) was analyzed using an emergent coding technique. This analysis was augmented by the use of a generative AI tool (*OpenAI:* ChatGPT 3.5) in order to identify the most common themes, as well as the tone and tenor of these responses. Figure 2 provides an overview of the 5 most common themes identified through this analysis. As in prior years, traffic congestion stood out as the most common concern that residents have about their quality of life on Longboat Key, with 79% of respondents voicing concerns over congestion, traffic safety, and/or the impacts of traffic on their quality of life. In general, the tenor of these comments was decidedly negative. A comprehensive analysis of these responses is provided in Table 5.

**Table 5. Analysis of Open-Ended Responses (Quality of Life)**

| Topic | Themes | Frequency | Sentiment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Traffic Congestion | *Frustration with Congestion*: Residents express frustration with the increasing traffic congestion, particularly during peak seasons. They mention difficulties turning onto main roads, long wait times to exit subdivisions, and challenges accessing amenities due to traffic.<br><br>*Unsafe Driving Behaviors*: Concerns are raised about unsafe driving behaviors, including speeding, aggressive tailgating, illegal passing, and running red lights. Residents report witnessing dangerous driving incidents, which contribute to a sense of insecurity on the roads.<br><br>*Impact on Quality of Life*: Traffic congestion is seen as a significant detractor from the quality of life on Longboat Key. It leads to longer commute times, difficulty making restaurant reservations, and heightened stress levels for residents and visitors alike. | 79% | 42% negative<br>50% neutral<br>8% positive |
| Infrastructure Concerns | *Drainage Issues*: Residents highlight drainage problems, particularly in areas like the Village, Buttonwood, and Dream Island Road. Flooding during heavy rainfall or high tides is a recurring issue, impacting road safety and property conditions.<br><br>*Road Conditions and Construction*: Comments mention the need for road maintenance and improvements, especially in areas prone to congestion. Ongoing construction projects, such as roadwork and utility upgrades, are also cited as sources of disruption for residents. | 61% | 34% negative<br>60% neutral<br>6% positive |
| Quality of Life Impacts | *Coastal Flooding*: Concerns about coastal flooding are prevalent, with residents experiencing property damage and safety hazards. The frequency and severity of flooding events, attributed to climate change, negatively impact residents' enjoyment of island living.<br><br>*Noise Pollution*: Residents express annoyance with noise pollution from lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and construction activities. Responses suggest that this detracts from the island's tranquility. | 38% | 52% negative<br>42% neutral<br>6% positive |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Development and Change*: Some residents lament the loss of Longboat Key's charm and character due to excessive development. They express nostalgia for a quieter, more idyllic island lifestyle and fear further degradation of their environment. | | |
| Retail, Dining, and Entertainment | *Desire for More Options*: While acknowledging existing retail and dining establishments, residents express a desire for more diverse and affordable choices. They seek additional year-round restaurants, family-friendly entertainment options, and unique boutiques to enhance their island experience.<br><br>*Concerns about Pricing*: High prices and limited competition are cited as drawbacks, prompting some residents to shop online or travel to Sarasota for better deals. The lack of affordable dining options is also mentioned as a barrier to enjoying island life. | 26% | 18% negative<br>80% neutral<br>2% positive |
| Public Transportation | *Limited Use and Accessibility*: Public transportation is not widely used or considered essential by most residents. However, there are calls for improved accessibility, particularly for off-island destinations like the airport. Suggestions include reinstating an end-to-end trolley service or providing shuttle options for residents and visitors. | 16% | 20% negative<br>72% neutral<br>8% positive |
| **Note: Analysis conducted on sample of 300 comments with *OpenAI: ChatGPT 3.5*** | | | |

Concerns over infrastructure – particularly drainage and road construction – were also a common theme in these responses, as were considerations such as noise pollution, the availability of public transportation, and the overall pace of growth/development on the island. A complete list of the open-ended responses has been provided to Town officials for further analysis and consideration.

## *Community Amenities*

Table 6 summarizes residents' familiarity with key amenities provided at different locations within the Town of Longboat Key. As in prior years, Bayfront Park and Durante Park are relatively well-known among respondents, with 46% and 41% respectively indicating they are "very familiar" with them, while large majorities were at least "somewhat familiar" with each. However, familiarity with the Quick Point Nature Preserve remained considerably lower, with only 18% of respondents indicating that they are "very familiar" with the amenity. Similarly, familiarity with the Tennis Center and Town Center was somewhat mixed, with 26% and 30% respectively indicating they are "very familiar" with these offerings, while 29% reported not being familiar with the Town Center, and 41% said the same about the Tennis Center.

**Table 6. Familiarity with Town Amenities**

| *How familiar are you with the Town of Longboat Key amenities provide at the following locations?* | Very Familiar | Somewhat Familiar | Not Very Familiar | Not at All Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bayfront Park | 46.3% | 38.0% | 10.1% | 5.5% |
| Durante Park | 40.9% | 31.8% | 17.4% | 9.9% |
| Quick Point Nature Preserve | 17.5% | 24.5% | 33.3% | 24.7% |
| Tennis Center | 26.2% | 32.9% | 23.6% | 17.3% |
| Town Center | 29.7% | 41.2% | 20.5% | 8.7% |

Table 7 summarizes residents' satisfaction with these same amenities, along with the Town's beaches. As the results suggest, Longboat Key's beaches and way-finding signage receive high satisfaction ratings, with 65% of respondents indicating they are very satisfied with both (93% overall satisfaction for the Town's beaches). A majority of residents also expressed satisfaction with Bayfront Park (79%), Durante Park (73%), and the Town Center (57%). A majority of respondents expressed neutral opinions when asked about the Quick Point Nature Preserve and the Town's Tennis Center, underscoring the lack of familiarity associated with these amenities.

**Table 7. Citizen' Satisfaction with Town Amenities**

| *Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following characteristics of Longboat Key?* | Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Neither Satisfied / Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beaches | 65.0% | 27.8% | 3.3% | 2.8% | 1.0% |
| Bayfront Park | 42.5% | 36.5% | 19.3% | 1.4% | 0.3% |
| Durante Park | 40.2% | 33.1% | 26.0% | 0.5% | 0.2% |
| Quick Point Nature Preserve | 20.8% | 27.8% | 50.1% | 1.0% | 0.3% |
| Tennis Center | 21.0% | 26.3% | 51.5% | 1.1% | 0.1% |
| Town Center | 20.4% | 36.9% | 40.1% | 1.9% | 0.7% |
| Way-Finding Signage | 65.0% | 27.8% | 3.3% | 2.8% | 1.0% |

As in prior years, respondents were asked to provide input about the use of the Town Center, including their preferences for future events and activities at the Town Center Green. Specifically, residents were prompted that *"The Town is planning a variety of events at the Town Center this season, to include markets, concerts, an art show, and a community open-house. Do you have any suggestions for future events at the Town Center Green or its new stage?"* Table 8 summarizes responses to this question. Once again, a sample of responses was analyzed using both manual coding and a generative AI program in order to identify and summarize the most common themes and suggestions. The results highlight an appreciation for the quality and diversity of the Town's current offerings, though these sentiments are tempered by concerns over the impacts of these events on traffic and congestion.

**Table 8. Analysis of Open-Ended Responses (Town Center Activities and Events)**

| Topic | Themes | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Appreciation for Existing Events | Respondents in this category expressed satisfaction with the existing events and activities on Longboat Key, such as farmers markets, concerts, art shows, and community gatherings. They viewed these events positively and were supportive of their continuation and expansion. | 70% |
| Diversity of Event Offerings | Respondents in this category emphasized the importance of diversity in event offerings to cater to the varied interests and preferences of the Longboat Key community. They suggested a wide range of events, including cultural festivals, music concerts, art shows, and educational programs. | 60% |
| Desire for Community Engagement | This category includes respondents who emphasized the importance of community engagement events. They expressed interest in activities that bring residents together, foster a sense of belonging, and promote interaction among neighbors. | 50% |
| Concerns about Traffic and Development | This category encompasses respondents who expressed concerns about the potential negative impacts of increased traffic and development associated with new events and projects on Longboat Key. They highlighted the need for careful planning to address traffic congestion and minimize disruptions to residents' daily lives. | 40% |
| Mixed Opinions on Development Projects | Respondents in this category expressed mixed opinions about ongoing development projects, such as the Town Center Green. While some welcomed the initiatives, others raised concerns about their impact on traffic, aesthetics, and the overall character of Longboat Key. | 30% |
| **Note: Analysis conducted on sample of 300 comments with *OpenAI: ChatGPT 3.5*** | | |

## *Government Services*

Table 9 summarizes respondents' satisfaction with the quality of core public services provided by the Town of Longboat Key. Police services, fire/ambulance, and emergency management services received high overall satisfaction ratings, with 55%, 57%, and 54% respectively indicating they are "very satisfied" with these services. Maintenance of streets and sidewalks, solid waste services, and parks and town facilities were also rated positively, with a significant proportion of respondents expressing they are at least "somewhat satisfied" with these services.

**Table 9. General Satisfaction with Longboat Key's Public Services**

| *Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the quality of the following services provided by the Town of Longboat Key:* | Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Neither Satisfied / Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Police Services | 55.4% | 29.9% | 13.0% | 1.3% | 0.3% |
| Fire & Ambulance Services | 57.1% | 24.2% | 18.3% | 0.3% | 0.1% |
| Emergency Management | 54.3% | 30.0% | 13.8% | 1.4% | 0.6% |
| Maintenance of Streets/Sidewalks | 33.4% | 39.2% | 12.7% | 10.8% | 3.9% |
| Solid Waste Services | 46.6% | 40.0% | 11.2% | 1.9% | 0.3% |
| Parks and Town Facilities | 44.9% | 41.6% | 12.2% | 1.1% | 0.1% |
| Water & Wastewater Utilities | 35.4% | 44.6% | 16.7% | 2.5% | 0.9% |
| Storm Water Management | 23.4% | 34.1% | 23.3% | 12.5% | 6.7% |
| Permitting | 20.5% | 29.4% | 41.5% | 6.5% | 2.2% |
| Code Enforcement | 21.9% | 28.4% | 42.6% | 4.9% | 2.2% |
| General Town Administration | 32.7% | 41.3% | 23.5% | 1.7% | 0.8% |

Conversely, assessments of the Town's stormwater management, permitting, and code enforcement services were more mixed, with relatively few respondents indicating they are "very satisfied" with these offerings. Overall, residents have positive opinions of the Town's essential services such as emergency response and waste management. While services such as code enforcement and permitting continue to show room for improvement in meeting residents' expectations, it's important to note that respondents did not voice significant levels of dissatisfaction with these services, as a plurality in each case expressed neutral opinions, which may reflect lack of familiarity with these services rather than any underlying dissatisfaction.

In order to better understand residents' experiences with and perceptions of these services, the survey asked respondents to indicate whether they have personally used or interacted with several key departments over the past year. Table 10 summarizes satisfaction with some of the same core services but is limited to those residents who report having used these services over the past 12 months. As the data show, residents who have utilized and interacted with specific Town departments are generally satisfied with these same departments. In each case, a majority indicated being satisfied with the services they've utilized, including 93% with Parks and Town Facilities, 98% with Fire and Ambulance Services, and 90% with Police Services. Only Permitting and Code Enforcement received more than 10% "dissatisfied" responses (18% and 14% respectively). Given the nature of the work done in these departments, these numbers can be interpreted as positive overall.

**Table 10. End-User Satisfaction with Longboat Key's Public Services**

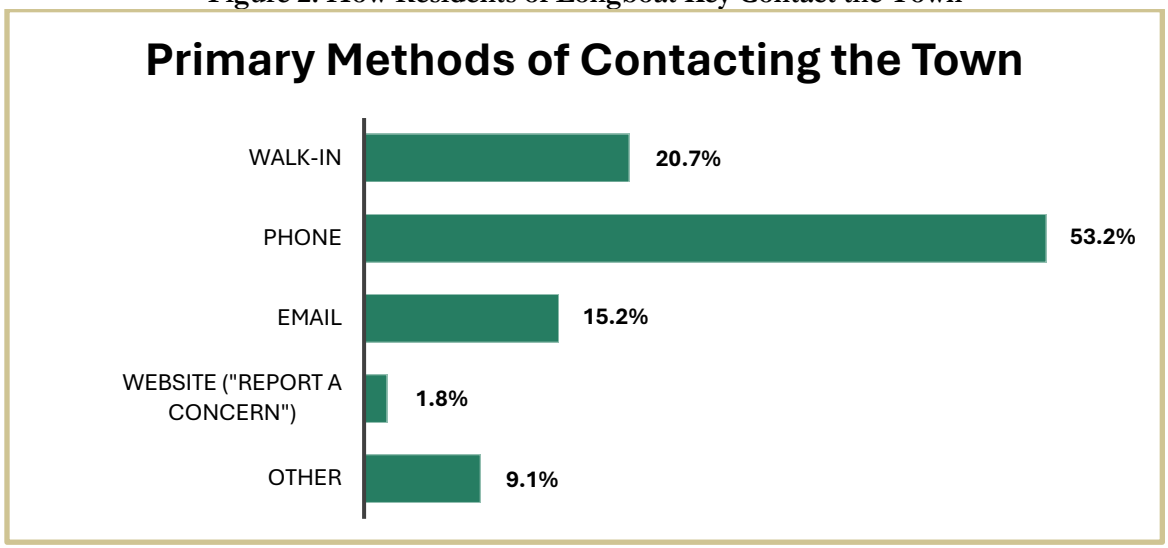
| *Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the quality of the following services provided by the Town of Longboat Key:* | **Very Satisfied** | **Somewhat Satisfied** | **Neither Satisfied / Dissatisfied** | **Somewhat Dissatisfied** | **Very Dissatisfied** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Police Services (n=237) | 69.2% | 20.7% | 5.5% | 3.4% | 1.3% |
| Fire & Ambulance Services (n=165) | 86.7% | 11.5% | 1.2% | 0.0% | 0.6% |
| Parks and Town Facilities (n=916) | 50.9% | 41.6% | 6.1% | 1.3% | 0.1% |
| Permitting (n=341) | 30.8% | 37.5% | 17.3% | 11.7% | 2.6% |
| Code Enforcement (n=204) | 30.4% | 33.8% | 18.1% | 11.3% | 6.4% |
| General Town Administration (n=445) | 43.4% | 39.1% | 13.5% | 2.7% | 1.4% |

## *Town Interactions*

As in previous years, respondents were also asked to indicate whether they have contacted the Town for assistance at any point over the past 6 months. Among the 1,392 respondents, 439 reported having done so (32%). These respondents were asked a series of follow up questions about their most recent contact with the Town in order to better understand how residents are connecting with Town staff and services, as well as how satisfied they are with the assistance they receive.

Figure 2 shows that most residents continue to contact the Town by phone for assistance (53%), while another 21% choose to walk-in to Town facilities for support when needed. While many resident concerns do require this level of interaction, others can be more easily and efficiently resolved using digital platforms such as the Town's online "Report a Concern" portal. However, digital interactions between Town staff and residents were decidedly limited, with only 15% of respondents saying that they contacted the Town via email, while only 2% utilized the online "Report a Concern" link when reaching out to Town staff for assistance. Better visibility and promotion of these tools may help to facilitated more efficient communications and resolutions for residents in need of assistance from the Town.

**Figure 2. How Residents of Longboat Key Contact the Town**




Next, those residents who have contacted the Town for assistance in the past 6 months were asked to provide feedback about their most recent interaction with the Town. Table 11 summarizes these responses. According to the data, a majority of respondents found it easy to contact the appropriate Town official or department, with 52% "strongly agreeing" and 38% "agreeing" that it was easy to do so. Similarly, a significant portion indicated that their concerns were addressed in a reasonable time (51% strongly agree, 33% agree), and that Town employees were courteous and respectful (64% strongly agree, 29% agree). Roughly three in four respondents reported that their concerns were completely resolved (43% strongly agree, 30% agree), and a similar number expressed satisfaction with their overall experience (52% strongly agree, 27% agree). Notably, a small proportion disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements, suggesting some areas where improvements can be made to enhance citizen satisfaction with town services, though overall the responses suggest a positive service experience for those residents who contact the Town for assistance.

**Table 11. Satisfaction Related to Interactions with Town Officials**

| *Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:* | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree / Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It was easy to contact the appropriate town official or department | 51.6% | 38.2% | 4.6% | 4.3% | 1.4% |
| My concern was addressed in a reasonable time | 50.7% | 32.6% | 7.3% | 6.9% | 2.5% |
| My concern was completely resolved | 42.5% | 30.1% | 12.9% | 8.5% | 6.0% |
| Town employees were courteous and respectful | 64.1% | 29.3% | 5.5% | 0.7% | 0.5% |
| Town employees were knowledgeable | 57.1% | 30.3% | 8.5% | 3.4% | 0.7% |
| I was satisfied with my experience | 51.8% | 26.7% | 9.5% | 8.1% | 3.9% |

## *Overall Direction of the Town*

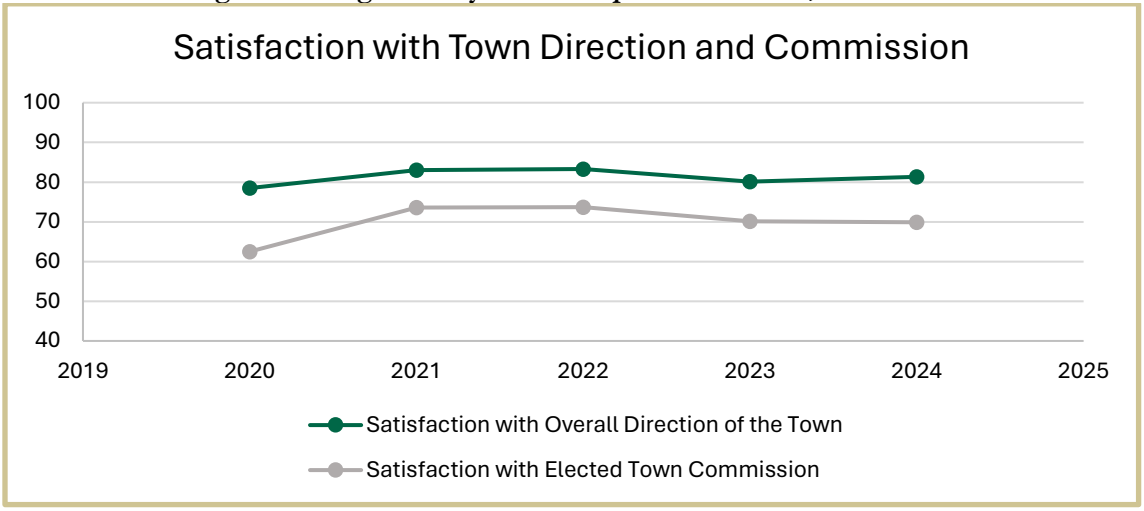
Table 12 summarizes respondents' satisfaction levels with the overall direction being taken by the Town of Longboat Key, as well as with the performance of the elected Town Commission. Regarding the Town's direction, a significant proportion of respondents expressed satisfaction, with 30% indicating they are "very satisfied" and 51% saying that they are "satisfied". However, a notable portion also expressed neutrality on the matter, with 15% stating they are "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" with the direction being taken by the Town at this time. A slightly smaller majority expressed satisfaction with the elected Town Commission's performance, with 24% indicating they are "very satisfied" and 46% saying that they are at least "satisfied" with the job currently being done by the Town Commission. Again, a considerable proportion of respondents expressed neutrality towards the Commission's performance (26% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), which may suggest some opportunities to better inform residents about the work being done on their behalf by the Commission, as well as the efforts underway to improve the community moving forward.

**Table 12. Satisfaction Related to Interactions with Town Officials**

| *How satisfied are you with…* | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neither Satisfied / Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The overall direction that the Town of Longboat Key is taking | 30.0% | 51.3% | 14.5% | 3.7% | 0.5% |
| The job that the elected Town Commission is doing to serve the residents of Longboat Key | 23.7% | 46.3% | 25.8% | 3.5% | 0.7% |

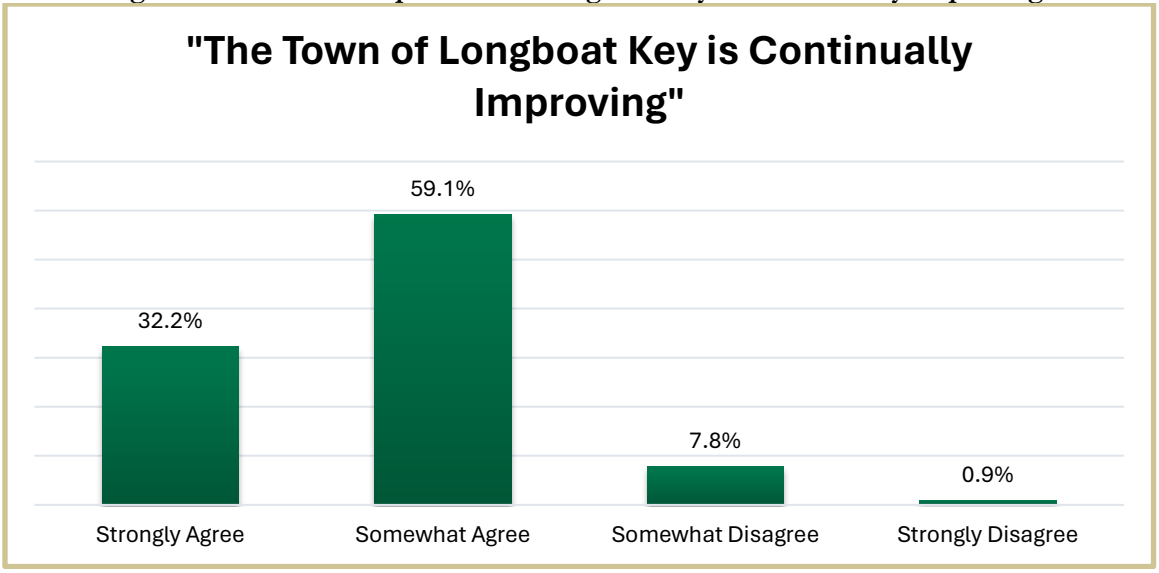
When compared with the results of prior years' surveys, these responses are generally consistent. While there was a slight uptick in satisfaction with the overall direction being taken by the Town (compared with 2023), both metrics remain slightly below the previous highs observed in 2021 (Figure 3, below).

**Figure 3. Longboat Key Leadership and Direction, 2020 - 2024**




Building on these responses, an additional question added to the 2024 survey asked residents whether they agree that the Town of Longboat Key is "continually improving". The results – shown in Figure 4 below – indicate that a large majority of residents (91%) agree with this statement, though only one in three (32%) say that they "strongly agree". Overall, these responses bode well for the Town and suggest strong support among residents for the Town's ongoing effort and initiatives.

**Figure 4. Citizen' Perceptions that Longboat Key is "Continually Improving"**




## *Town Communications*

Table 13 summarizes respondents' satisfaction levels with Town communications, including their access to information and opportunities for citizen engagement within the Town of Longboat Key. A majority indicated being satisfied with their access to Town information, with 34% saying they were "very satisfied" and 38% being "somewhat satisfied". Similarly, a majority expressed satisfaction with the Town's efforts to keep citizens informed (42% "very satisfied"/35% "somewhat satisfied"). Satisfaction levels were notably lower when it came to opportunities to participate in Town government and the effectiveness of the Town's social media sites. In each case, a majority of respondents expressed neutrality on these matters, indicating potential areas for improvement in promoting civic engagement and enhancing communication channels within the community.

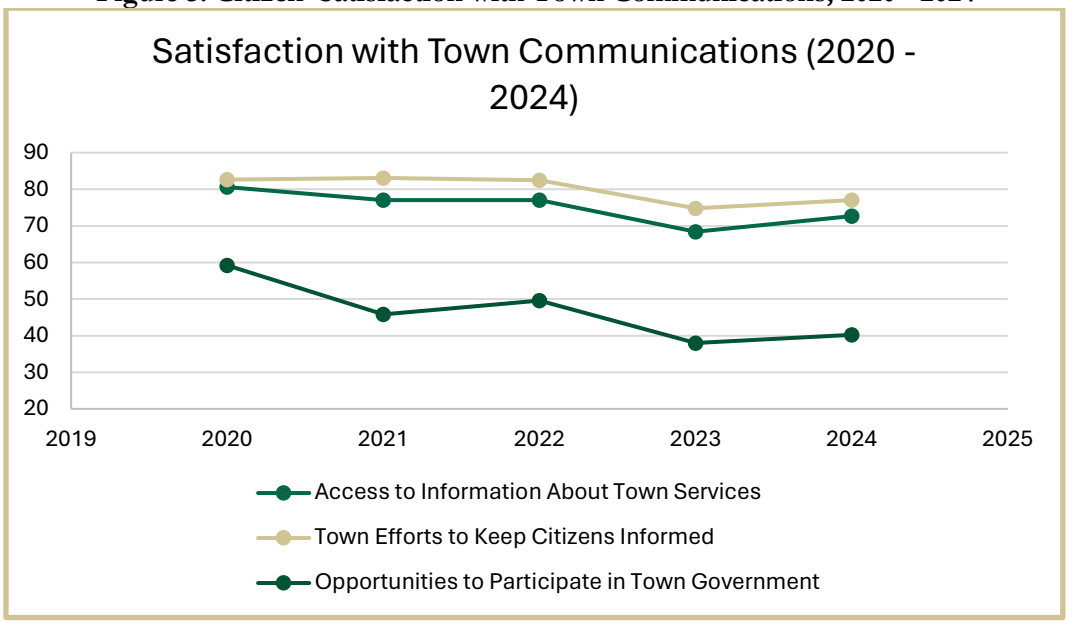
**Table 13. Satisfaction with Town Communication Efforts**

| *Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following:* | Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Neither Satisfied / Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access to information about Town services | 34.2% | 38.4% | 24.1% | 2.7% | 0.5% |
| Town efforts to keep citizens informed | 41.6% | 35.4% | 18.2% | 4.1% | 0.8% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Opportunities to participate in Town government | 20.8% | 19.4% | 55.9% | 2.8% | 1.2% |
| The Town's social media sites | 14.9% | 25.0% | 57.9% | 1.7% | 0.6% |

In general, satisfaction with these communication efforts improved slightly over the levels observed in 2023, though the numbers remain slightly below highs observed over the past 5 years. The overall 5-year trend appears to be relatively stable and consistent (Figure 5, below).

**Figure 5. Citizen' Satisfaction with Town Communications, 2020 - 2024**




In an effort to improve upon the Town's communication efforts, respondents were also asked to identify the information sources that they rely on the most to stay up to date and informed about Town issues/events. The results – presented in Figure 6, below – are consistent with those observed in prior years. Namely, local newspapers continue to be a preferred information source for a large majority of residents (75%). A significant number also report using the Town's E-Notification system (49%) and website (43%). Conversely, only a small percentage of respondents engage with the Town on social media for these updates. The data also suggest opportunities to improve the visibility and impact of organization level communication efforts, such as the Town Manager's Brief (14%).

**Figure 6. Citizen' Methods of Staying Informed About Town Issues and Events**

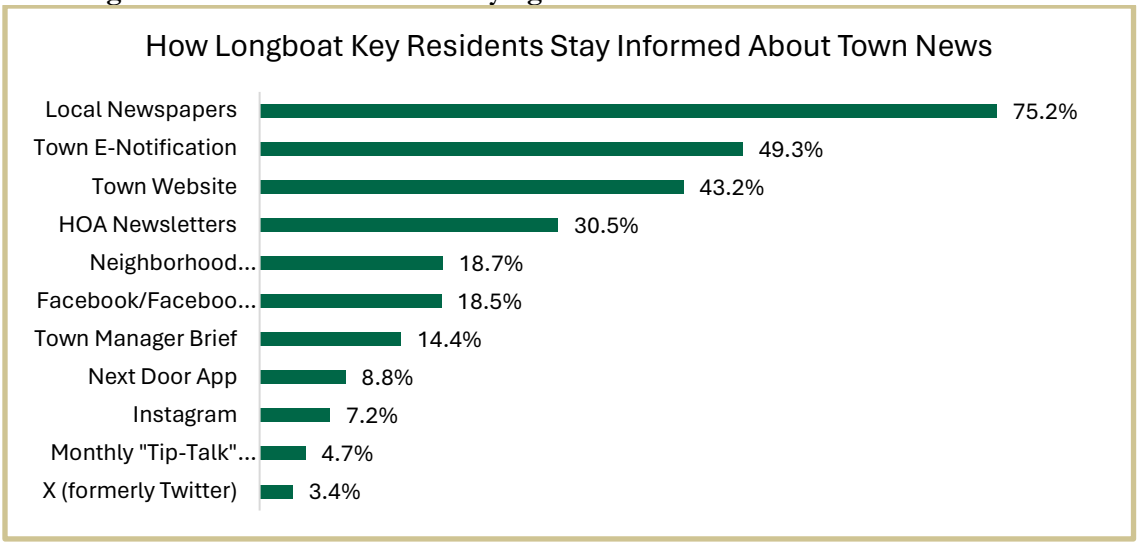



Table 14 summarizes feedback from residents who have utilized the Town's website in the past six months, focusing on their perceptions of its usability and effectiveness. A majority of respondents agree that the website is easy to navigate, with 40% "strongly agreeing" and 52% "somewhat agreeing" that it's easy to find needed information. Similarly, a significant portion of respondents agrees that the website design meets contemporary standards, with 39% "strongly agreeing" and 55% "somewhat agreeing". Additionally, respondents indicate overall satisfaction with the website's provision of current news and important information (46% strongly agree/48% somewhat agree). Finally, the website is generally perceived as user-friendly, as indicated by 38% "strongly agreeing" and 54% "somewhat agreeing". Overall, the feedback suggests a positive online experience among residents who have used the Town's website.

**Table 14. Citizen perceptions of the Town's website**

| *Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Town's website?* | **Strongly Agree** | **Somewhat Agree** | **Somewhat Disagree** | **Strongly Disagree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| It's easy to find the information you need. | 40.0% | 52.1% | 6.9% | 1.1% |
| The design is relevant to today's standards. | 38.7% | 54.7% | 5.9% | 0.7% |
| The site provides current news and important information. | 46.2% | 47.7% | 5.2% | 0.9% |
| The site is "user-friendly". | 37.9% | 53.7% | 7.0% | 1.4% |

Table 15 summarizes respondents' levels of familiarity with various Town of Longboat initiatives and ordinances. The data reveals that the "Lights Out" ordinance is the most well-known among respondents, with a significant majority (59%) indicating they are "very familiar" with it. Conversely, initiatives such as the Chamber of Commerce & Town's Annual Hurricane Seminar, the Town's Annual Citizen Academy, and the Town Manager's Monthly Brief show lower levels of familiarity, with only 15%, 7%, and 11% respectively indicating that they are "very familiar". These initiatives also exhibit relatively high proportions of respondents indicating they are "not at all familiar", suggesting potential areas for improvement in public awareness and outreach efforts. Similarly, ordinances and initiatives such as the Town's Short-Term Rental Restrictions, the Town Fertilizer Ordinance, and the "Talk of the Town" Video Series show varied levels of familiarity among respondents, with notable proportions indicating they are "not very familiar" or "not at all familiar", highlighting the need for enhanced communication strategies to increase public awareness of these measures.

**Table 15. Familiarity with Town Initiatives**

| *How familiar are you with each of the following Town of Longboat efforts?* | Very Familiar | Somewhat Familiar | Not Very Familiar | Not at All Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Chamber of Commerce & Town's Annual Hurricane Seminar | 14.5% | 28.9% | 25.9% | 30.8% |
| The Town's Annual Citizen Academy | 7.3% | 13.6% | 29.3% | 49.8% |
| Opportunities to Serve on Town Board's | 6.9% | 21.5% | 33.3% | 38.2% |
| The Town's Short-Term Rental Restrictions | 29.2% | 42.1% | 15.3% | 13.4% |
| The Town Manager's Monthly Brief | 10.9% | 22.7% | 28.0% | 38.4% |
| The "Talk of the Town" Video Series | 5.2% | 11.1% | 29.4% | 54.4% |
| The Town Fertilizer Ordinance | 7.2% | 14.4% | 24.4% | 54.1% |
| "Lights Out" Ordinance | 59.3% | 27.8% | 7.3% | 5.7% |

Moreover, respondents were relatively less familiar with opportunities to serve on Town boards and commissions, with only 7% indicating they are "very familiar" with these opportunities. This indicates a potential need for increased promotion and outreach to encourage civic engagement and participation in local governance. Overall, the data underscores the importance of proactive communication and engagement efforts by the Town to ensure that residents are informed about key initiatives and ordinances, fostering a more informed and engaged community.

## *Policy Priorities*

As in prior years, residents were presented with a list of possible policy priorities and asked how important it was for the Town of Longboat Key to focus on each in the coming years. The survey results indicate that residents prioritize certain issues more than others. The top priorities include Traffic (Congestion/Safety), with an overwhelming 86% of respondents considering it "very important", followed closely by Beach Management/Shoreline Protection (82%), and Infrastructure Upkeep (80%). These issues are deemed critical by the vast majority of the community, signaling a strong desire for the Town to focus on traffic management, preserving the shoreline, and maintaining infrastructure. Fiscal Sustainability also ranks high on the list of priorities, with 75% of respondents identifying it as "very important", alongside Street Flooding (69%), underscoring concerns related to financial health and climate resilience.

**Table 16. Importance of Town Policy Priorities (as % of row total)**

| *In your opinion, how important is it for the Town of Longboat Key to address each of the following issues in the coming years?* | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Neither Important / Unimportant | Somewhat Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beach Management/Shoreline Protection | 82.4% | 15.5% | 1.7% | 0.3% | 0.1% |
| Sea-Level Rise (Adaptation Plan) | 62.1% | 22.7% | 9.2% | 2.9% | 3.1% |
| Canal Dredging | 36.5% | 39.0% | 17.8% | 3.4% | 3.4% |
| Street Flooding | 69.3% | 24.2% | 5.1% | 1.1% | 0.3% |
| Redevelopment of Aging/Non-Conforming Properties | 31.0% | 38.4% | 18.2% | 7.1% | 5.4% |
| Infrastructure Upkeep | 80.4% | 17.8% | 1.6% | 0.3% | 0.0% |
| Fiscal Sustainability | 75.2% | 20.4% | 3.4% | 0.7% | 0.4% |
| Traffic (Congestion/Safety) | 85.8% | 11.9% | 1.8% | 0.4% | 0.1% |
| New Waste-Water Line to the Mainland | 56.7% | 32.8% | 8.8% | 0.7% | 1.0% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bayfront Rec Center Replacement | 12.8% | 32.5% | 35.1% | 11.4% | 8.1% |
| Environmental Initiatives | 47.0% | 30.7% | 14.2% | 5.7% | 2.3% |

On the other end of the spectrum, the survey reveals areas that residents consider less critical. The Bayfront Rec Center Replacement has the least support, with only 13% of respondents viewing it as "very important" and 35% considering it "neither important nor unimportant". Similarly, the Redevelopment of Aging/Non-Conforming Properties doesn't seem to be a pressing issue for a majority, with only 31% identifying it as "very important". Canal Dredging and New Waste-Water Line to the Mainland are seen as somewhat moderate priorities, with 37% and 57% considering them "very important", respectively. This indicates that while there is some interest in these areas, they do not command the same level of urgency as traffic, environmental protection, and infrastructure concerns among the residents.

Residents were asked to rate the top 3 "most important challenges facing the Town of Longboat Key at this time". Table 17 highlights the Top 3 most important concerns – as identified by residents – compared with those observed in prior years. As in the past two years, Traffic Congestion was identified as the most pressing issue facing the Town (63%). Property Insurance Costs increased significantly as an area of concern for the second year in a row, with 58% identifying it as one of the top 3 issues facing the down (up from 52% in 2023). Finally, Beach Erosion was identified as a top issue facing the Town by just over a third of respondents (36%). Red-Tide, which was the third most commonly cited issue in 2023, ranked fourth in 2024, with 32% selecting it this year.

**Table 17. Three Year Trend of Most Important Issues Facing Longboat Key**

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Traffic Congestion (63.6%) | Traffic Congestion (69.7%) | Traffic Congestion (62.7%) |
| Red-Tide (50.8%) | Property Insurance Costs (51.8%) | Property Insurance Costs (58.2%) |
| Beach Erosion (40.9%) | Red-Tide (44.1%) | Beach Erosion (35.8%) |

## *Alert Longboat and Hurricane Preparedness*

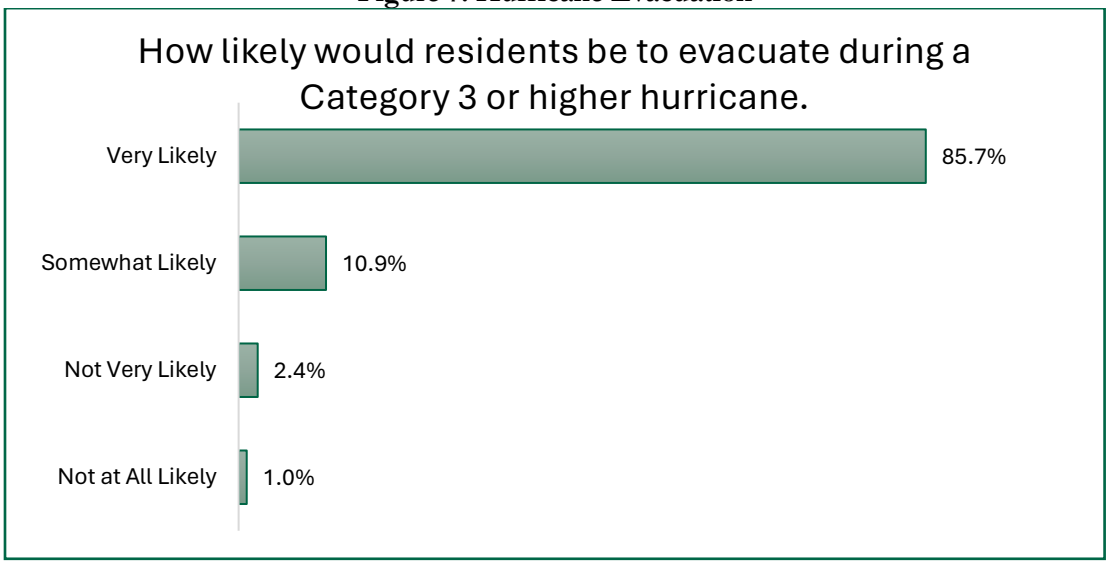
Following up on last year's iteration of the Citizen Survey residents were asked a series of questions about their household's readiness for a major hurricane, as well as how likely they would be to evacuate if a major storm were to threaten Longboat Key. Table 18 shows that most residents feel that they are prepared for a major hurricane, with 49% saying that they are "very prepared", while 45% say that they are at least "somewhat prepared". The data highlighted above show that familiarity with the Town's Annual Hurricane Seminar is relatively low. Increasing awareness of and attendance at this event could help to improve overall readiness on the island and increase the proportion of households that are "very prepared" for a major storm.

**Table 18. Town Residents' Hurricane Preparedness**

| *How prepared is your household if a major hurricane were to impact Longboat Key* | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very Prepared | 674 | 48.5% |
| Somewhat Prepared | 625 | 45.0% |
| Not Very Prepared | 60 | 4.3% |
| Not at All Prepared | 15 | 1.1% |
| Unsure | 15 | 1.1% |

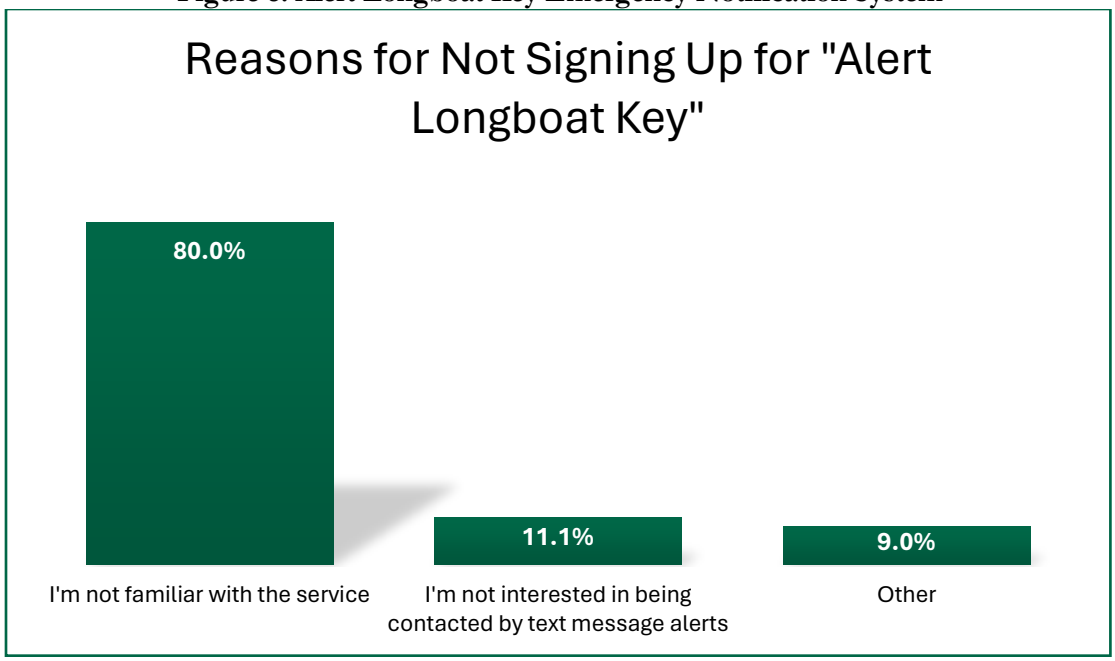
Figure 7 summarizes responses to the following prompt: *"In the future, if Longboat Key were threatened by a Category 3 or higher hurricane and an evacuation order was issued, how likely would you be to evacuate?"* As the data suggest, the overwhelming majority of residents would be likely to evacuate under these conditions. In total, nearly 97% say that they would be at least "somewhat likely" to evacuate for a Category 3 or higher storm, with 86% saying that they would be "very likely" to do so. Overall, these responses are consistent with those observed in 2023, when 89% of respondents said that they would be "very likely" to evacuate under the same circumstances, while 9% said that they would be "somewhat likely" to do the same.

**Figure 7. Hurricane Evacuation**



Additionally, residents were asked whether they have signed up for the Town's Alert Longboat Key Emergency Notification System to receive emergency updates. In total, 77% indicated that they have signed up for the service, while another 9% said that they weren't sure whether or not they'd done so. Of the 14% who have not signed up for the service, most (80%) indicated that they are not familiar with it, while a small percentage (11%) said that they are not interested in receiving updates via text message (Figure 8).

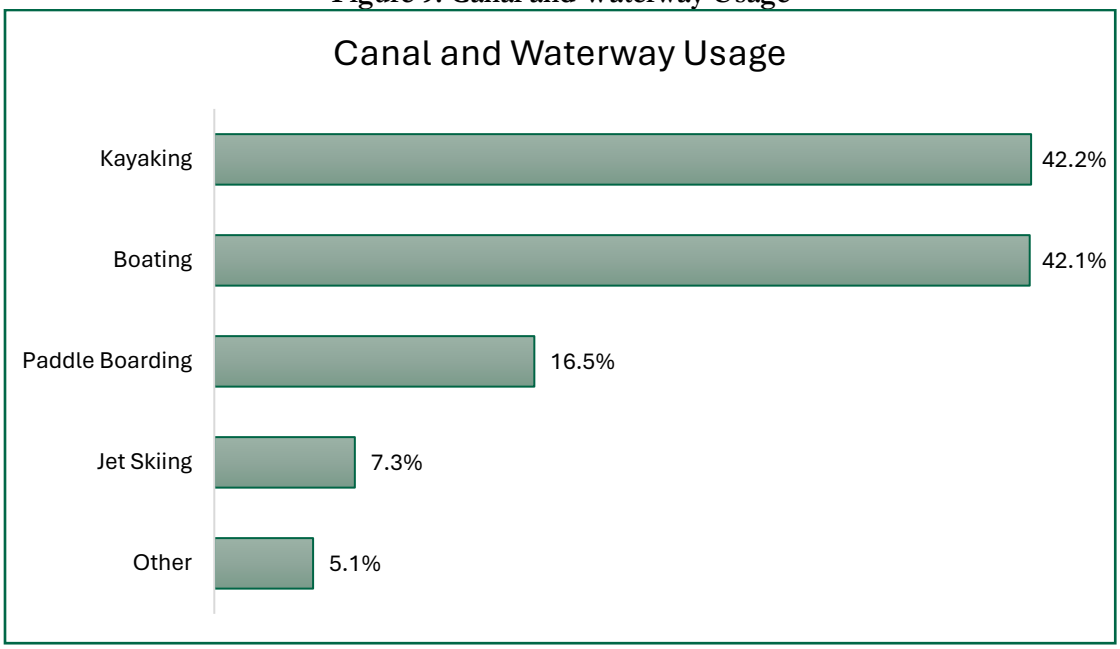
**Figure 8. Alert Longboat Key Emergency Notification System**




## *Canal Usage*

Following up on the 2024 survey, residents were again asked to identify which, if any, water-based activities they regularly engage in on the Town's network of canals and waterways. As was the case in 2023, kayaking (42%) and boating (42%) were the most commonly cited activities, with only a small percentage (7%) suggesting that they use the Town's waterways for jet skiing (Figure 9).

**Figure 9. Canal and Waterway Usage**




As a follow up, residents were asked what, if any, barriers they face in accessing and making use of the Town's canals and waterways. A sample of these responses was analyzed using both manual coding and a generative AI program in order to identify and summarize the most common themes and suggestions. The results highlight concerns over the maintenance and navigability of the Town's waterways, as well as safety related concerns (such as speeding watercraft, unmarked shoals, and oversized boats). Additionally, a number of residents voiced a desire for more watercraft storage options to improve their access and the usability of the Town's waterways.

**Table 19. Analysis of Open-Ended Responses (Accessing Canals and Waterways)**

| Topic | Themes | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Accessibility and Storage Concerns | Many residents express a need for more kayak storage options and easier access to launches for kayaks, paddle boards, and small boats. This includes a desire for more public access points, better signage, and additional rental options on the island. | 21.6% |
| Dredging and Maintenance Issues | A significant number of responses highlight the need for canal dredging to address shallow waters that restrict access during low tides. Residents also report issues with debris, mangrove encroachment, and sediment buildup that hinder navigation and enjoyment. | 18.9% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Safety and Navigation | Concerns about boat traffic, speed limits, and the presence of large boats in narrow canals affecting safe navigation were mentioned. Additionally, unmarked shoals and sandbars in Sarasota Bay pose dangers. | 18.9% |
| Public Transportation and Geographic Barriers | Limited by the lack of personal transport or reliance on public transportation, some residents find it difficult to transport equipment like kayaks or to access rental locations, particularly those without direct access to the canals or living far from accessible points. | 13.5% |
| Environmental and Regulatory Concerns | Environmental issues such as red tide, manatee protection, and water quality are noted, alongside a desire for regulations that ensure canal navigability and address the impact of docks and boats on canal space. | 10.8% |
| **Note: Analysis conducted on sample of 300 comments with *OpenAI: ChatGPT 3.5*** | | |

## *Airport Usage and Transit*

Following up on the 2023 survey, residents were also asked to identify which, if any, local airport they prefer when flying to and from the region, as well as their interest in on-demand transportation options (both for airport transit and "on-island" use). As was the case in 2023, an overwhelming majority (90%) of respondents identified the Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport (SRQ) as their preferred airport for traveling to and from the region. A small percentage (6%) also identified the Tampa International Airport (TPA) as their preferred travel hub in the region (Table 20).

**Table 20. Preferred Regional Airport**

| *What is your preferred airport when flying in and out of the region?* | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Sarasota-Bradenton International (SRQ) | 1,253 | 90.2% |
| Tampa International (TPA) | 87 | 6.3% |
| St. Pete-Clearwater International (PIE) | 8 | 0.6% |
| Other | 11 | 0.8% |
| I don't fly in and out of the region | 30 | 2.2% |

As a follow-up, respondents were asked whether they would regularly utilize on-demand public transit services if they were available for transportation to and from the airport, as well as around the island of Longboat Key. A majority of residents expressed an interest in on-demand airport transit, with 49% saying that they would be "very likely" to use such as service, while another 28% indicated that they would be at least "somewhat likely" to use the service. Residents were slightly less enthusiastic about using an "on-island" transit service, thought a small majority (57%) did say that they would be at least "somewhat likely" to use such a service if it were available.

**Table 21. Likelihood of Using On-Demand Public Transit Services (as % of row total)**

| *How likely would you be to use…* | **Very Likely** | **Somewhat Likely** | **Not Very Likely** | **Not at All Likely** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| An on-demand public transportation option for trips to and form the airport. | 49.2% | 28.4% | 15.2% | 7.2% |
| An on-demand transportation service throughout the island of Longboat Key | 20.6% | 36.4% | 32.2% | 10.8% |

## *Lawn Maintenance*

Finally, an additional section was added to the 2024 survey to measure issues related to the environmental impact of lawn maintenance activities on the island. Respondent were asked about their use of gas vs. electric-powered lawn equipment, as well as their adherence to the Town's fertilizer and "Lights Out" ordinances. Among those residents who reported using lawn equipment (either directly or through a contractor), a plurality reported only using gas-powered lawn equipment (44%), while another 26% reported using a mix of both gas and electric-powered equipment. One-in-ten respondents (10%) reported using only electric-powered equipment, while another 20% were "unsure".

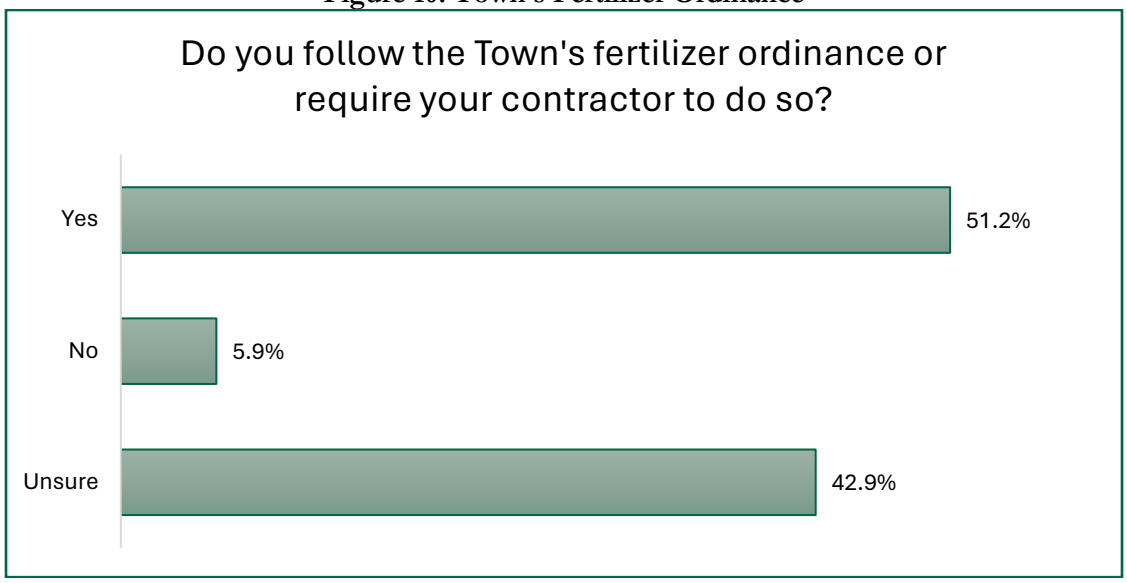
**Table 22. Gas vs. Electric-Powered Lawn Equipment**

| *Do you use electric or gas-powered lawn equipment?* | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| I use only electric-powered lawn equipment | 59 | 10.1% |
| I use only gas-powered lawn equipment | 256 | 43.8% |
| I use both gas and electric-powered lawn equipment | 151 | 25.9% |
| Unsure | 118 | 20.2% |

*Note: Residents how use contractors for all or part of their lawn care needs were instructed to answer – as best they could – about the equipment used by their contractor.*

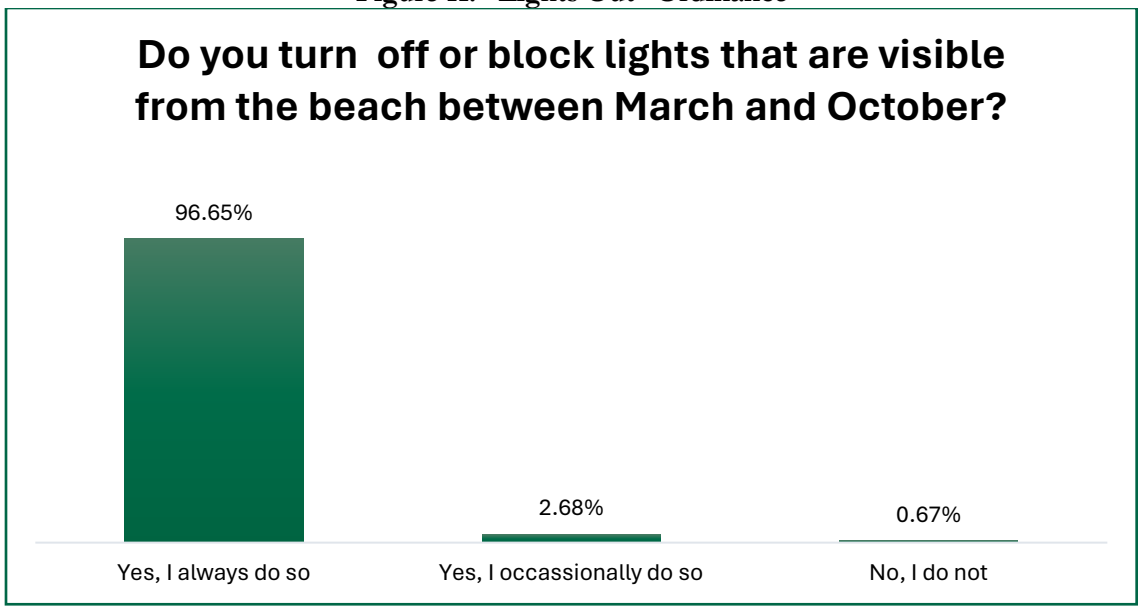
As a follow-up, residents were asked whether they follow the Town's fertilizer ordinance. (Those who use outside contractors for their lawn-care services were asked whether they require their contracts to follow the ordinance.) As shown in Figure 10, a small majority (51%) say that they do follow the ordinance, while only 6% indicated that they do not. However, another 43% indicated that they were "unsure", suggesting a possible need for better communication of the ordinance to residents moving forward.

**Figure 10. Town's Fertilizer Ordinance**




Finally, residents were asked whether they regularly follow the Town's "Lights Out" ordinance by turning off and/or blocking lights that are visible from the beach between March and October in order to protect nesting sea-turtles. As shown in Figure 11, an overwhelming majority of those residents who have lights visible from the beach (97%) report following the ordinance "always", while less than 1% say that they do not follow the ordinance at all.

**Figure 11. "Lights Out" Ordinance**



# CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The 5th annual Longboat Key Citizen Survey (2024) has highlighted both the strengths of the community and Town government, as well as some areas for improving public service delivery and Town communications moving forward. The high quality of life, satisfaction with municipal services, and strong community values provide a solid foundation for addressing challenges and embracing opportunities for growth and improvement. This concluding section offers a restatement of the key findings and themes that emerged from the survey analysis, as well as a series of general recommendations by which the Town can pursue continual improvements moving forward.

## *Key Themes and Takeaways*

Below is an abridged overview of the key themes and takeaways that emerged from the 2024 survey responses. A copy of the questionnaire is also provided in the Appendix to this report.

### *Quality of Life and Community Satisfaction*

- The 2024 survey responses showed a continuation of the high levels of satisfaction observed in prior iterations of the survey with regard to residents' quality of life on Longboat Key. This included high levels of satisfaction with the aesthetics, safety, and reputation of the community. Specifically, over 98% of respondents rated the overall quality of life on Longboat Key as either "excellent" or "good", which compares very favorably to other communities throughout the region and state.

### *Traffic and Infrastructure*

- Traffic congestion remained a significant concern among residents, with a notable percentage of respondents expressing dissatisfaction. For example, 59% of residents reported dissatisfaction with the flow of traffic and congestion in the community, while 63% identified traffic as one of the most important issues facing the community. This suggests a need for additional improvements in traffic management and infrastructure maintenance moving forward.

### *Municipal Services Satisfaction*

- Respondents conveyed high levels of satisfaction with the Town's emergency services, public safety, and the maintenance of parks and recreational facilities. Emergency services and public safety both received over 85% satisfaction rates, underscoring their effectiveness and importance to residents.

### *Community Engagement and Communication*

- Residents provided mixed feedback on the Town's communication efforts and their familiarity with community initiatives, suggesting an opportunity for additional efforts and strategies to reach the community with vital information and engagement opportunities. While 73% of respondents feel adequately informed by the Town, there are opportunities to improve engagement through more interactive and accessible platforms, as well as to raise

awareness of the valuable Town initiatives, such as the Annual Hurricane Seminar, the "Talk of the Town" Video Series, and resident's opportunities to serve on Town Boards.

*Hurricane Preparedness*

- Respondents demonstrated high overall levels of hurricane preparedness, though the responses indicated some areas for increased education and engagement. For example, nearly half (49%) said that they are "very prepared" for a major hurricane, while another 45% reported being at least "somewhat prepared". However, less than half reported being familiar with the Town's annual hurricane seminar.

*Development and Growth Management*

- Concerns over the pace and nature of development highlight the need for balanced growth strategies that preserve the community's character. In open-ended responses, a significant portion of residents expressed concerns about the impact of new developments on the Town's character.

*Lawn Maintenance*

- The data indicate varying levels of compliance with Town ordinances related to lawn maintenance practices, highlighting an opportunity for the Town to enhance education and enforcement efforts. Initiatives could include community workshops on sustainable landscaping, incentives for switching to electric lawn equipment, and clearer communication of maintenance ordinances to ensure widespread adherence and promote a healthier and more sustainable community environment.

*Public Transit*

- Public transit services were identified as a crucial area for improvement, with only 19% of respondents expressing satisfaction with current offerings. In open-ended comments, the primary issues cited include limited routes, infrequent schedules, and inadequate coverage of the Town. When asked about their likelihood of using "on-demand" transit services, a large majority (78%) said that they would use such a service for airport transit, while 57% said that they would be at least "somewhat likely" to use the same service for "on-island" transportation. This feedback points towards a significant opportunity for the Town to expand and enhance public transit options, potentially including the introduction of more eco-friendly transport solutions to align with community values around environmental conservation.

## *Recommendations*

Based on the results discussed above, the following recommendations are offered to Town leaders. These recommendations aim to address the most common and impactful concerns raised in the survey in an effort to ensure that Longboat Key remains a regional leader in quality of life.

*Recommendation 1: Improving Traffic Management and Infrastructure*

- Explore advanced traffic management solutions to alleviate congestion and improve flow, especially during peak seasons.

- Explore smart traffic management systems that use real-time data to optimize traffic light timings, reduce congestion, and improve pedestrian safety. Consider the implementation of traffic apps that provide residents with congestion updates and alternate route suggestions.

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current infrastructure to identify critical areas for improvement. When/if resources allow, focus on upgrading roads, bridges, and public transport facilities to support efficient traffic flow and accommodate future growth.

*Recommendation 2: Enhancing Communication and Engagement*

- Encourage more use of digital communication platforms to ensure broader community access to information and participation in Town affairs. This could include the development of a more interactive mobile app that allows residents to report issues, access information on Town services, and participate in regular forums or polls.

- Promote and increase awareness of current Town initiatives and efforts, such as the Annual Hurricane Seminar, the Town's annual Citizen Academy, and Opportunities for residents to serve on Town Boards. Increased participation in these initiatives can help to improve community relations as well as desired policy outcomes.

*Recommendation 3: Strengthening Environmental and Preparedness Initiatives*

- Increase awareness of and participation in environmental protection and emergency preparedness programs through educational campaigns and community events. These could include educational materials aimed at promoting the community benefits of electric-powered lawn equipment, as well as regulations such as the Town's fertilizer ordinance.

- Review the Town's comprehensive preparedness plan in light of evolving weather patterns. This could include strengthening the community's emergency preparedness through more detailed planning and community drills, as well as enhancing communication strategies to ensure that all residents are aware of and understand their role in emergency situations, including evacuation routes, shelter locations, and emergency supply kits.

*Recommendation 4: Balancing Development with Community Character*

- Ensure that the Town has clear and strategic guidelines for development that preserve Longboat Key's unique character while accommodating desired growth and improvements.

- Engage residents, business owners, and stakeholders in a collaborative planning process to ensure development aligns with community values and needs.

- Foster a "Community-Driven Planning Process" by encouraging residents to participate in the planning process. This can be achieved through the use of workshops, surveys, and public consultations to gather input and ensure development projects align with the community's vision and values.

By focusing on these strategies, Longboat Key can address current challenges while laying the foundation for a sustainable, engaged, and thriving community for years to come. These recommendations are designed to be adaptable and scalable, ensuring that the Town can continue to evolve in response to new opportunities and challenges as they emerge.

# Appendix: Survey Instrument

Dear Town of Longboat Key Resident,

You are receiving this survey because we want to know what you think about the quality of the services you receive from the Town and the amenities available to you here on Longboat Key. We also want to hear your thoughts about the Town's most important priorities for the coming year and into the future. Your input will be very helpful as we set priorities for the future and make sure we continue to provide the highest level of service possible within our existing resources.

In order to collect this important feedback, we have contracted the Florida Institute of Government (FIOG) at the University of South Florida. We would like to request that one member of each household complete the survey. This questionnaire will only take 10-15 minutes of your time to complete, and your responses will be entirely confidential. We are greatly appreciative of your time and participation in this important effort!

For questions, please contact us at:

Carolyn Brown
Town of Longboat Key
Support Services Director
CBrown@longboatkey.org

Stephen Neely, PhD
University of South Florida
Associate Professor
srneely@usf.edu

Sincerely,

Howard Tipton
Town Manager

Please enter your unique survey access code from your survey invitation in the space below.

_____

How would you rate your overall quality of life on Longboat Key?

- ○ Excellent
- ○ Good
- ○ Fair
- ○ Poor

How would you rate the Town of Longboat Key in each of the following areas?

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| As a place to live | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| As a place to retire | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| As a place to work | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| As a place to visit | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following characteristics of Longboat Key:

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The overall reputation of the community | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The overall aesthetics of the community | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The overall safety of the community | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The flow of traffic and congestion | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Your access to public transportation | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Your access to retail, dining, and entertainment | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

In the space below, please provide any additional information that you would like us to know about your responses to the questions above and your quality of life on Longboat Key.

_____

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_____

Are you familiar with the Town's current ordinances regarding the use of "car carriers", namely that it is illegal to load and unload "car carriers" on Gulf of Mexico Drive and that doing so can lead to heavy fines?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

How familiar are you with the Town of Longboat Key amenities provided at the following locations?

| | Very Familiar | Somewhat Familiar | Not Very Familiar | Not at All Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bayfront Park | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Durante Park | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Quick Point Nature Preserve | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Tennis Center | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Town Center | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the quality of the following Town of Longboat Key amenities:

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beaches | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Bayfront Park | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Durante Park | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Quick Point Nature Preserve | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Tennis Center | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Town Center | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Way-Finding Signage | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

In the space below, please share any information that would help us to better understand your responses to the previous two questions

_____

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_____

Compared to a year ago, have you been leaving the island for appointments and recreation more often, less often, or about the same.

- ○ More Often
- ○ About the Same
- ○ Less Often

The Town is planning a variety of events at the Town Center this season, to include markets, concerts, an art show, and a community open-house.

Do you have any suggestions for future events at the Town Center Green or its new stage?

_____

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_____

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In the past year, have you personally used any of the following services provided by the Town of Longboat Key? (please choose 'yes' or 'no' for each service)

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Police Services | ○ | ○ |
| Fire and Ambulance Services | ○ | ○ |
| General Town Administration | ○ | ○ |
| Parks and Town Facilities | ○ | ○ |
| Permitting (i.e. Planning and Building) | ○ | ○ |
| Code Enforcement | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the quality of the following services provided by the Town of Longboat Key:

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Police Services | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Fire and Ambulance Services | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Emergency Management and Preparedness | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintenance of Streets and Sidewalks | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Solid Waste Services (i.e. Trash and Recycling) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Parks and Town Facilities | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Water and Waste Water Utilities | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Storm Water Management | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Permitting (i.e. Planning and Building) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Code Enforcement | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| General Town Administration | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please provide any additional information that you would like us to know about your responses to the question above.

_____

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_____

Have you contacted a Town official or department in the **past six months**?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*Skip To: End of Block If Have you contacted a Town official or department in the past six months? = No*

For the following questions, please answer based on **your most recent contact** with a Town official or department.

How did you first contact the Town for your most recent inquiry?

- ○ Walk-In
- ○ Phone
- ○ Email
- ○ Website ("Report a Concern" Link)
- ○ Other (Please Specify in the Box Below)

_____

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements (as they pertain to your most recent contact with a Town official or department):

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It was easy to contact the appropriate Town official or department | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| My concern was addressed in a reasonable time | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| My concern was completely resolved | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Town employees were courteous and respectful | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Town employees were knowledgeable | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I was satisfied with my experience | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please feel free to share any additional information that you would like us to know about your most recent contact with the Town.

_____

Have you visited the Town's website in the **past six months**?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*Skip To: Q23 If Have you visited the Town's website in the past six months? = No*

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Town's website?

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| It's easy to find the information you need | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The design is relevant to today's standards | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The site provides current news and important information | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The site is "user-friendly" | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Do you currently follow the Town of Longboat Key on any of the following social media platforms?

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Facebook | ○ | ○ |
| Instagram | ○ | ○ |
| X (formerly Twitter) | ○ | ○ |

Which of the following sources do you use to stay informed about Town issues, services, and events? (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Town Website
- ☐ HOA Newsletter
- ☐ Neighborhood Newsletter
- ☐ Facebook/Facebook Groups
- ☐ X (formerly Twitter)
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Next Door App
- ☐ Town E-Notification (i.e. Email Announcements)

- [ ] Local Newspapers
- [ ] Town Manager Brief
- [ ] Monthly "Tip Talk" Videos

How familiar are you with each of the following Town of Longboat Key efforts?

| | Very Familiar | Somewhat Familiar | Not Very Familiar | Not at All Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Chamber of Commerce & Town's annual hurricane seminar | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The Town's annual Citizen Academy | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Opportunities to serve on Town Boards | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The Town's Short-Term Rental Restrictions | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The Town Manager's Monthly Brief | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The "Talk of the Town" video series | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The Town Fertilizer Ordinance | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| "Lights Out" Ordinance (During Turtle Nesting Season) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following:

| | Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access to information about Town services | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Town efforts to keep citizens informed | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Opportunities to participate in Town government | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The Town's social media sites | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please provide any additional information that you would like us to know about your responses to the previous question.

_____

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Are you familiar with the Town's Vacation Rental Registration, which requires any property that is rented in a residential zone district for 6 months or less must register with the Town and obtain a Business Tax Receipt as well as an inspection?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

In your opinion, how important is it for the Town of Longboat Key to address each of the following issues in the coming years?

| | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Neither Important nor Unimportant | Somewhat Unimportant | Not at All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beach Management/Shoreline Protection | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sea-Level Rise (Adaptation Plan) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Canal Dredging | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Street Flooding | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Encourage the Redevelopment of Aging Nonconforming Properties | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Infrastructure Upkeep (i.e. Roads, Utilities, Town Facilities, etc. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Fiscal Sustainability | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Traffic (Congestion/Safety) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| New Waste-Water Line to the Mainland | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Bayfront Rec Center Replacement | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Environmental Initiatives | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

In your opinion, what are **the three most important challenges** facing the Town of Longboat Key at this time? (Please select no more than three).

- ☐ Beach Erosion
- ☐ Sea-Level Rise
- ☐ Infrastructure Upkeep and Development
- ☐ Hurricane/Emergency Preparedness
- ☐ Red Tide
- ☐ Fiscal Sustainability
- ☐ Illegal Rentals
- ☐ Taxes
- ☐ Property Insurance Costs

- [ ] Cell Phone Coverage
- [ ] Traffic Congestion
- [ ] Other (Please Specify in the Box Below)

_____

How satisfied are you with the overall direction that the Town of Longboat Key is taking?

- ○ Very Satisfied
- ○ Satisfied
- ○ Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- ○ Dissatisfied
- ○ Very Dissatisfied

Do you agree or disagree that the Town of Longboat Key is continually improving?

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

How satisfied are you with the job that the elected Town Commission is doing to serve the residents of Longboat Key?

- ○ Very Satisfied
- ○ Satisfied
- ○ Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- ○ Dissatisfied
- ○ Very Dissatisfied

How likely are you to recommend the Town of Longboat Key as a place to live to your family, friends, and/or colleagues?

- ○ Very Likely
- ○ Somewhat Likely
- ○ Not Very Likely
- ○ Not at All Likely

*Skip To: End of Block If How likely are you to recommend the Town of Longboat Key as a place to live to your family, frien... != Very Likely*

What are some reasons why you might <u>not</u> recommend Longboat Key as a place to live to your family, friends, and/or colleagues?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have you signed up for the **Alert Longboat Key Emergency Notification System**?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

*Skip To: Q38 If Have you signed up for the Alert Longboat Key Emergency Notification System? != No*

Please let us know why you haven't signed up for the **Al**ert Longboat Key Emergency Notification System.

- ○ I'm not familiar with the service
- ○ I'm not interested in being contacted by text message alerts
- ○ Other (Please Specify) _____

How prepared is your household if a major hurricane were to impact Longboat Key?

- ○ Very Prepared
- ○ Somewhat Prepared
- ○ Not Very Prepared
- ○ Not at All Prepared
- ○ Unsure

In the future, if Longboat Key were threatened by a Category 3 or higher hurricane and an evacuation order was issued, how likely would you be to evacuate?

- ○ Very Likely
- ○ Somewhat Likely
- ○ Not Very Likely
- ○ Not at All Likely

What, if any, steps can the Town of Longboat Key take in the future to help you safely evacuate if the island is threatened by an extreme weather event?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The Town of Longboat Key has 82 canals, which creates the opportunity for water based recreational activities. Which of the following activities do you participate in on Longboat Key's waterways? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Boating
- ☐ Kayaking
- ☐ Jet-Skiing
- ☐ Paddle Boarding
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) _____
- ☐ None of the Above

What, if any, barriers do you face in accessing and making use of Longboat Key's canals and waterways?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is your preferred airport when flying in and out of the region?

- ○ SRQ (Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport)
- ○ TPA (Tampa International Airport)
- ○ PIE (St. Pete/Clearwater International Airport)
- ○ Other (please specify) _____
- ○ I don't fly in and out of the region

If an on-demand public transportation option was available for trips to and from the airport, how likely would you be to use this service?

- ○ Very Likely
- ○ Somewhat Likely
- ○ Not Very Likely
- ○ Not at All Likely

If an on-demand transportation service was available throughout the island of Longboat Key, how likely would you be to use this service on a regular basis?

- ○ Very Likely
- ○ Somewhat Likely
- ○ Not Very Likely
- ○ Not at All Likely

Do you use electric or gas-powered lawn equipment?

Note: if you use a contractor for all or part of your lawn care needs, please answer as best your able based on the equipment used by the contractor.

- ○ I use only electric-powered lawn equipment
- ○ I use only gas-powered lawn equipment
- ○ I use both gas and electric-powered lawn equipment
- ○ I do not use any lawn equipment
- ○ Unsure

Do you follow the Town's fertilizer ordinance or require your contractor to do so?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

Do you turn off or block lights that are visible from the beach between March and October in order to protect nesting sea-turtles (in compliance with the Sea Turtle Protection Ordinance)?

- ○ Yes, I do so always
- ○ Yes, I do so occasionally
- ○ No, I do not
- ○ I do not have lights visible from the beach on my property

How long have you lived on Longboat Key?

- ○ Less than 5 years
- ○ 5-10 years
- ○ 11-20 years
- ○ More than 20 years

Which of the following best describes how much of the year you typically spend living on Longboat Key?

- ○ 11-12 months
- ○ 8-10 months
- ○ 6-7 months
- ○ 3-5 months
- ○ 1-2 months
- ○ None of the year

Where do you expect to be living in 5 years?

- ○ Longboat Key
- ○ Another community in the Tampa Bay region
- ○ Another community in Florida
- ○ Outside of Florida
- ○ Unsure

*Skip To: Q53 If Where do you expect to be living in 5 years? = Longboat Key*

Please tell us why you don't expect to be living in Longboat Key in 5 years?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What type of home do you live in?

- ○ Single Family Home
- ○ Town House or Condominium
- ○ Apartment
- ○ Other

Do you currently own or rent your home?

- ○ Own
- ○ Rent

What is your gender?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Prefer not to answer

Did you respond to the Town's 2023 Citizen Satisfaction Survey?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No