

**DUVAL COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
&  
VISIT JACKSONVILLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN PRESENTATION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, June 16 2025, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
City Hall - Lynwood Roberts Room**

**I. Welcome & Call to Order**

**TDC Chair White  
City Council President**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and announced there would be a hard stop meeting time at 4:00 p.m.

**II. Self-Introduction of TDC & VJ Board Members**

**TDC Chair White**

Chair White welcomed the Visit Jacksonville board members and asked them to introduce themselves for the record. All other attendees then introduced themselves for the record.

**III. Tourism Strategic Plan Presentation**

**Joseph St. Germain, President  
Erin Dinkle, Director of Research  
Downs & St. Germain Research**

The Chair welcomed Joseph St. Germain, President of Downs & St. Germain Research, and Erin Dinkle, Director of Research with Downs & St. Germain Research, to provide the Tourism Strategic Plan Presentation.

Mr. St. Germain expressed personal and professional gratitude to Council President White, Visit Jacksonville, and the members of the TDC for their work over the course of this project that spanned approximately 18 months. Ms. Dinkle led the presentation and Mr. St. Germain provided additional commentary throughout as needed.

Ms. Dinkle began by explaining that the presented tourism plan is the result of an 18-month research process, heavily focused on the past few months. She emphasized the collaborative nature of the plan's development, highlighting the importance of stakeholder input. To achieve this, seven stakeholder focus groups with over 80 participants were held, supplemented by over 140 survey responses. Further research included a resident sentiment survey of 400+ local residents and a survey of 400+ past and potential visitors to gather diverse perspectives. This comprehensive engagement aimed to build a plan grounded in the views of stakeholders, residents, and visitors, providing a holistic approach. The culmination of this research identified six key investment opportunities.

Ms. Dinkle provided the six key investment opportunities for Jacksonville tourism, identified through various sources and aligned with the city's unique characteristics. These opportunities, designed to be feasible within the existing Tourist Development Council (TDC) and Visit Jacksonville structure, focus on enhancing visitor experience, supporting tourism growth, and ensuring local relevance. The six areas are: *destination marketing and messaging*; *event development and support*; *tourism infrastructure and capital investment*; *meetings, conventions, and group tourism*; *neighborhood and business engagement*; and *visitor experience enhancements*. These initiatives are intended to be implemented strategically over time, beginning with simpler, readily achievable tactics before progressing to larger-scale projects. The discussion emphasizes that marketing remains a crucial tool for Visit Jacksonville and should be expanded upon, as indicated by stakeholder feedback and potential visitor input.

#### *Destination Marketing and Messaging:*

The conversation under this area was centered around expanding the branding and storytelling of Jacksonville as a destination, focusing on neighborhood-based narratives. Ms. Dinkle shared that one action item that could be done and built on is to develop itineraries based on interests and traveler groups. Mr. St. Germain and Ms. Dinkle detailed that while it is understood that Jacksonville is very large and lacked a central “identity”, a tourism strength would be to position Jacksonville through its diverse neighborhoods.

#### *Event Development and Support:*

Ms. Dinkle stated that the development of the event grant structure and support should evolve to consider cultural relevance and geographic reach instead of just focusing on hotel room nights and tourist draw. Additionally, the TDC could consider micro grants for events to help incorporate this change in structure. She shared that the TDC should support and develop one or two iconic events to define Jacksonville. This would help shape the destination brand authentically and benefit both visitors and residents, fostering community pride.

#### *Tourism Infrastructure and Capital Investment:*

The next area focused on creating a framework to prioritize smaller-scale improvements that enhance the visitor experience, such as signage, pathways, and restroom access. It was also shared that the TDC should develop a capital improvement grant program for larger infrastructure projects. Applicants must demonstrate alignment with TDC goals and projected tourism outcomes, geographic diversity is encouraged (connecting neighborhoods), and clear application guidelines and evaluation criteria are necessary.

#### *Meetings, Conventions, and Group Tourism:*

Jacksonville can grow its meeting sector beyond convention center expansion. Ms. Dinkle emphasized showcasing nontraditional, community-based venues to disperse visitors and enhance the experience. It was said that a community-based venue strategy promotes immersive meeting experiences. This involves using unique venues like university auditoriums or art galleries. Visit Jacksonville should create a self-service portal for partners to upload venue details. This standardized information will help with working with meeting planners and the RFP processes. This expands meeting options, creating more authentic experiences.

### Neighborhood and Business Engagement:

This area expressed excitement about engagement and wanting more involvement in tourism. While appreciating existing Visit Jacksonville resources, some partners lacked awareness of them. Ms. Dinkle shared that with an expanded outreach and a formalized partnership program, this could help to ensure access to resources. Stakeholders suggested providing print materials (one-sheeters) at their businesses, supplementing the Tourism Ambassador Program. This would allow businesses to directly answer visitor questions and enhance the visitor experience. The discussion highlighted the need to increase partner awareness of existing resources.

### Visitor Experience Enhancements:

In this last section of the plan, it was shared that visitor experience enhancements culminate previous initiatives. Ms. Dinkle focused on showcasing progress and improvements to excite visitors. Immediate investments include improved lighting and signage in key areas. Activating the riverfront is a major interest, though its governance remains unclear. The TDC and Visit Jacksonville should collaborate to communicate ongoing changes and improvements. Larger-scale activations, potentially through the capital improvement grant, can be implemented later. This initiative aims to enhance the visitor experience at every touchpoint. The goal is to improve accessibility for visitors across the city's large and spread-out areas. The discussion focused on making various neighborhoods, including the downtown area, more accessible and appealing to visitors who may not have done prior research. The aim is to present a comprehensive overview of the city's attractions, highlighting different experiences offered in various areas like downtown and San Marco. It was emphasized that downtown revitalization efforts will continue, and this new strategy complements those efforts by integrating other aspects of the city's offerings.

## **IV. Discussion + Q&A**

**Joseph St. Germain**  
**Erin Dinkle**

With the conclusion of the presentation, Ms. Dinkle and Mr. St. Germain thanked everyone for their time and opened it up for comments and questions.

Mr. Kuverji raised concern about the accessibility of audio and video capabilities at city owned venues. Event organizers highlighted the significant cost of providing such accessibility. This was acknowledged as a potential area for future investment.

Mr. Thompson asked about ideas for new amenities and attractions, specifically regarding capital improvement grants and microgrants. Responses include riverfront attractions like a river cruise, pathway improvements with lighting, and shaded areas along the riverfront.

Amber Sesnick, Museum of Contemporary Art, asked about incorporating downtown into the neighborhood-focused strategy, given its current state of transition. Ms. Dinkle shared that Downtown is still considered a neighborhood, but the strategy aims to make the broader city more accessible to visitors.

A question from Mr. Thompson was raised about the plan's potential impact on sports tourism funding, given the TDC's past focus. Ms. Dinkle clarified that the plan doesn't diminish sports tourism but complements it.

Mr. Nooney highlighted the omission of a new kayak launch from a downtown map, suggesting its inclusion in future neighborhood-focused initiatives.

Ms. Dinkle shared that music and food festivals, such as Gastrofest, are highlighted as potential iconic events.

**V. Next Steps**

**TDC Chair White**

The presentation concluded with a discussion on the next steps. Suggestions included creating a one-pager summarizing key items, incorporating the plan into TDC decision-making, especially grant processes, and using it to guide Visit Jacksonville's annual budget and marketing strategy. A more user-friendly document with measurable goals was also proposed, with a plan to revisit the topic in the August meeting.

**VI. Public Comment as Time Permits**

**TDC Chair White**

John Nooney highlighted that only 10% of Duval County's waterways are public, expressing concern about this low percentage. He would like to advocate for more public access on the city's waterways.

**VII. Closing Comments & Adjournment**

**TDC Chair White**

Information was provided that the presentation given during this meeting would be available online later that afternoon on the City of Jacksonville website, TDC page.

The next regular TDC meeting will be on August 25, 2025, in the Lynwood Roberts Room of City Hall at 10:00 a.m.

The chair declared the meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.

*Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by Brett Nolan, TDC Administrator*

*These minutes were approved at the TDC Regular Board meeting on September 4, 2025*
















SPECIAL TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, June 16, 2025, 3:00 p.m.



Attendance Record Sign-In Sheet

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE
CP Randy White, TDC Chair	
CVP Kevin Carrico, TDC Vice Chair	
CM Ron Salem, TDC Member	
Mark VanLoh, TDC Member	
Jitan Kuverji, TDC Member	
Dennis Chan, TDC Member	
Dennis Thompson, TDC Member	
Shawn LeNoble, TDC Member	
Michael Jenkins Jr., TDC Member	
Carol Brock, TDC Executive Director	
Brett Nolan, TDC Administrator	
Phillip Peterson, Asst. Council Auditor	
Jim McCain, OGC	













EVIDENCE!

## REQUEST TO SPEAK CARD

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Please print and complete:

NAME: John T. Nooney 2023-0819 DATE: 6/16/2025

ADDRESS: 8356 Batcom Rd. PHONE: 904-434-0839

REPRESENTING: Joe VT Public Park 137044-0000 (FIND) on Fort Meigs Creek

THAT IS CATEGORY 2 WITNESSES MEAT TO A STUNT WOODMAN, TOWN FARM, AROUND  
1: ROBBIE HEARING BILL NUMBER: NOAH RAY FARM House in District 4) CPAC-3

I SUPPORT (or) I OPPOSE THIS LEGISLATION

School Board  
District 3, Flanders

2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC SUBJECT: Tourism on our waterfronts.

Starkidg A. Toe, VT Board Resolution Relocating Nooney's efforts  
in advancing the FND- (Flanders Flanders Navigation District) Port of

NO SPEAKER MAY GIVE OR TRANSFER HIS/HER TIME TO ANOTHER PERSON  
SPEAKING TIME IS LIMITED

Land Acquisition Projects 158833-0000, 134059-0000 & 137044-0000 THAT

(Please read the reverse side for instructions on speaking)

Would Benefit All the citizens of VT- DANA County, Jacksonville,

**RULES OF THE JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL – ADOPTED FOR THIS MEETING**

**RULE 4.301(b) COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** Comments from the public given during the public comment times of the meeting, except scheduled public hearing comments, shall be limited to three minutes per person and no person shall be allowed to give or transfer his/her time to speak to another person.

**RULE 4.806 PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR**

(a) General Exclusion: No person, except Council Members and working employees of the Council, shall be admitted within the rail unless permitted by the presiding officer.

(b) Addressing Council: By permission of the presiding officer, the privilege of the floor shall be extended to a citizen or citizens to address the Council on any matter pending before it or which needs the attention of the Council.

**Rule 3.604 ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL.** At public hearings required by law or fixed by the Council, the presiding officer shall extend the floor to a reasonable number of proponents and opponents of the subject matter of the public hearing, and those filing written requests to be heard with the Chief of Legislative Services shall be heard prior to other persons who appear at the hearing. Each person addressing the Council shall proceed to the place assigned for speaking, give his/her name in an audible tone of voice for the records, (if the person has not filled out a speaker's request card and returned it to the Chief of Legislative Services before addressing the Council, the person shall also give his/her address in an audible tone of voice for the records), and limit his/her address to three minutes, unless a lesser time if fixed for all speakers by the presiding officer, or further time is granted by the Council. All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and not to any member thereof. No person other than a Council Member or the person having the floor shall be permitted to enter into any discussion, either directly or through a member of the Council, without the permission of the presiding officer. All questions to the Council shall be directly through the presiding officer.

**RULE 4.505 DISRUPTION OF MEETING** Any person, not a Council Member, making personal, impertinent or slanderous remarks or who shall become boisterous while the Council is in session, shall forthwith be barred from further audience before the Council by the presiding officer in his/her discretion. No demonstrations of approval or disapproval from the audience shall be permitted, and if such demonstrations are made, the audience shall be cleared from the Council Chambers. The presiding officer shall call upon the Sergeant-at-Arms to enforce directions given by the presiding officer for any violation of this Rule.