

PALM COAST MAYOR DAVID ALFIN

2022 STATE OF THE CITY

What an honor it is for me to greet all of you in this enthusiastic group today at the Palm Coast Community Center! I am extremely eager to stand at this podium to welcome you to our 2022 City of Palm Coast's Annual State of the City gathering.

As your Mayor, I'd like to open my address by asking you just one question.

What inspires you to love where you live? When you are out and about in our town, what are some of the elements of your daily life that put a smile on your face?

Is it the safety you feel in our neighborhoods?

The restoration of the roads and bridges that you travel each day

Or perhaps it's the peace and beauty you enjoy on our trails?

Each of these answers are indeed convincing. However, I believe that actual cities don't really makes us happy: we make ourselves happy in our cities. Contentment comes from being passionate about all the progress of the proficiencies around us and this frequently includes the following:

- Innovation that creates exciting new paths for living and growing
- Restoration that provides more efficient improvements for us to navigate easier
- Recreation that refreshes our souls and spirit with pleasure NEXT SLIDE

Loving where you live can often take time to develop. In my case, I fell in love with Palm Coast the moment I moved here. For others, it may take time to become familiar with the rhythm of our lives here. Feedback we've received from many surveys reveal that so many of you are supportively engaged in Palm Coast.

So as Palm Coast's Mayor, I can report to you with certainty that the State of our City in 2021-22 is exceedingly sound and durable. Your City Council strives every single day to collaborate with consensus to build solid and compelling community confidence. As you observe this presentation, I know you will agree and share my pride in this wonderful City. There can be nothing more important.

Let's now take a look back on a year that inspired us to love where we live. I want to elaborate on some of our most glowing examples of the innovation, restoration and recreation that progressed in 2021.

Here at the City of Palm Coast we like to talk about innovation. But, what does innovation look like to you in your life? Is it a new slow cooker? Is it a RING doorbell? USB wall chargers? What does progress look like in your home?

For me, innovation means moving forward. Opening new doors to new paths that create a better tomorrow for each of us. A place where if we can dream it, we can do it. Together.

Innovation means investing in our local business communities and working to make Palm Coast a Regional Destination. And in 2021, I am so proud to say that your City brought in some truly innovative businesses that will change the way we live our daily lives.

Businesses like Metronet whose multimillion-dollar investment in Palm Coast will bring future-proof fiber directly to homes and businesses throughout Palm Coast. Also making Palm Coast Florida's second certified gigabit city. We are not waiting around for the rest of the state or the country to take advantage of this opportunity, we are at the front of the line, leading the way!

But it didn't stop there with Metronet, we welcomed so many new and exciting innovative businesses in 2021 that it would simply take too much time to go over every one. But I invite you to do that yourself by visiting the Palm Coast Be Local Buy Local Business directory located at palmcoast.gov

Innovation also means investing in our most valuable resource; our residents. I believe that in Palm Coast we have some of the most talented kids in the entire country. If you don't think so just look at the artwork inside this very room. These are kids with big ideas and even bigger dreams. Wouldn't it be nice if we could offer these kids the kind of opportunities that enabled them to accomplish their goals and make their dreams a reality right here, in the community that we all love so much?

Well, I am happy to say that in 2021 we made some major moves to accomplish just that by striking partnerships with universities like Daytona State College, Jacksonville University, and the University of North Florida that will offer our students the opportunity to learn, train, grow, and eventually work where they already love to live.

In 2021, we hosted the first-ever UNF Mednexus Innovation Challenge, a team-based entrepreneurship competition that showcased top regional high school students tasked to pitch their solutions to Florida's evolving healthcare needs. The winners of the competition were awarded scholarships to continue their education.

Also in 2021, we were honored to partner with Jacksonville University to bring their award-winning healthcare education programs to our Palm Coast students.

This partnership offers students the opportunity to study Graduate programs not offered anywhere else in the region and also marks the university's first satellite campus in 86 years.

This past year we also welcomed the inaugural class to the all-new Daytona State Palm Coast Campus's Nursing Program.

The associate degree nursing program at the Flagler campus began in 1999 with 30 students. Now there are about 100 students in the program locally. The new facility will increase the program's capacity to 120.

Students will now be able to complete their associate degrees in nursing entirely at the Flagler/Palm Coast campus!

And in a time where the need for nurses has never been higher, this is great news for not just the students but the people who need their care the most.

Our incredible Palm Coast Fire Department also offered high-school students a hands-on experience at learning about a career in firefighting and public safety. Students can stay involved until 18 years of age

where they will have all of the knowledge and abilities to complete their state test requirements for firefighters and EMTs, affording them a career.

Our continued hope is to train these incredible young minds and not only offer them a place to learn but a place to live, work and play as well.

This will be achieved by nurturing partnerships with companies like AdventHealth who began construction in 2021 on their new hospital located on Palm Coast Parkway.

And with Flagler Health Plus who also announced plans to build another state of the art comprehensive health complex, including an inpatient hospital located on the corner of US-1 and Palm Coast Parkway.

These new facilities mean great things for our community in multiple regards.

1. When you're not the only game in town, providers usually compete to offer consumers a better deal.
2. JOBS! But not jobs exclusive to the medical field. These facilities will have many roles to fill including security, hospitality management, administration, and more.

Innovation is more than just a means to progress forward. It is a vital piece of the human experience. To innovate is to provide paths through imagination. To instill hope again and again and again. Now, and for generations to come.

Speaking of generations to come, this might be a good time to talk about legacy. What is your legacy? Have you ever thought about it? While we are busy dreaming and working and building towards the future, it is so important that we never forget all of those who came before us and help to lay the foundation.

When we talk about restoration, it doesn't always mean that something is broken. Quite the contrary. It often means that something is working, but can be made even better.

In 2021, your City was dedicated to improving Palm Coast's infrastructure, roadways, and pedestrian bridges.

In the past year, your Public Works department completed several special projects that directly affected our residents. Projects like the rehabilitation of some of our very popular, and much traveled pedestrian bridges. The rehabilitation of these pedestrian bridges is of vital importance as some are used daily by our children on their way to and from school.

This year we also introduced an all new Emergency Trail System designed to help keep residents and visitors safe while traveling on our over 130 miles of trails. This was a tremendous undertaking and a great example of team work between your city staff, the Flagler County Sheriff's Office, Flagler County EMS, and the Palm Coast Fire Department.

Your Public Works department was also recognized at the American Public Works Association (APWA) Florida Chapter meeting, where they were awarded the APWA 2020 Public Works Project of the Year Award for their incredible work in completing the Indian Trails Sports Complex Baseball Fields project.

This project was prompted by the needs of a growing little league organization in the City of Palm Coast that had outgrown the amount of fields available for their organization to utilize during the season. In order to accommodate the need.

During the year, your Stormwater & Engineering department also accomplished many special projects.

In 2021, the Stormwater and Engineering Department's outstanding work on the construction and design of the Palm Coast Community Center was recognized and awarded LEED certification at the silver level for Generator Landscape Screening & LEED certification work completed.

This recognition is another acknowledgement to your City's continued commitment to safe, sustainable, and green building practices.

The Stormwater and Engineering department also completed basketball court resurfacing projects at Ralph Carter & Seminole Woods Park. Ensuring that many more games will be played amongst friends on these courts for years to come.

Additionally in 2021, the Stormwater and Engineering Department received the Regional Award of Excellence in Resilience from North East Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) for their Floodplain and Stormwater Management Program and the Florida Stormwater Association Outstanding Achievement award for the City's enhanced stormwater program.

In 2021, your Utility department was selected to receive the 2020 Drinking Water Plant Operations Excellence Award from the Florida Department of Environmental.

Also in 2021, the Palm Coast Water Treatment Plant #2 was selected to receive the 2020 Outstanding Membrane Large Plant Award from the Southeast Desalting Association (SEDA) as well as the Florida Water Environment Association Class B Third Place Award for 2021.

These achievements are worth being celebrated because they reinforce two things that we already know to be true;

1. Our employees are some of the best and brightest in the country.
2. When we take care of where we live, we take care of each other.

Every project that I just spoke about, every award that I just mentioned, every photograph from an on-the-job crew that you just saw- and there are plenty more that we just do not have the time to go over- those moments were all the response to a single question that each of our employees comes to work ready to answer each day.

And that question is; how can I make Palm Coast better? How can I make this City a better place for our children to grow up in? How can I make Palm Coast a place where you love to live?

Their answer? Putting in the work and getting the job done - Together.

We sure do like to work here in Palm Coast, but we like to pay even harder.

In 2021, we were thrilled to welcome back so many of our residents to the over 466 programs we have to offer here in Palm Coast.

Have you ever wanted to step outside of your comfort zone? What have you always wanted to try but thought it was just beyond your reach? Maybe you wanted to pick up tennis? Or how about paint a picture? Well I have some great news for you, we have amazing programs that offer all this and more. But don't take my word for it, take yours.

That is a great question. 'What are you waiting for?' Well, if you are looking for fun and engaging programs, the wait is over. If you're looking for wide-open spaces to enjoy all the beautiful scenery that Florida has to offer, the wait is over. If you are looking for one-of-a-kind community events to share with your friends and family, I am happy to say that the wait is over. We are ready for you, so come and join in!

In 2021, your Parks and Recreation department hosted 446 programs attended by over 27,000 residents. Your City is also dedicated to providing you with first-class amenity centers that can be enjoyed by all and in 2021 these facilities were reserved by our residents 1,309 times.

2021 also saw the return of many much-missed in-person events like Movies in the Park, Food Truck Tuesday, our Memorial Day Celebration, Fireworks in the Park, our annual Veterans Day celebration, Starlight Festival, and more.

We were delighted to get back to enjoying these special events together and being able to assist you and your family in creating special moments and memories that will last a lifetime.

These amazing programs and one-of-a-kind events are not exclusive. They are available to every resident. From Water Aerobics and Pickleball to painting and teddy bear picnics, there is quite literally something for everyone. I challenge you to visit the Parks and Rec webpage at # and get involved today!

I know that I say it every week in our Win of the Week segment, but I say it because it is true. Great things are happening all around us.

With so many innovative ideas working to restore and expand on our City's legacy and the plethora of fun and engaging leisure activities- there has never been a better time to live in Palm Coast.

But these innovative ideas, plans for restoration and expansion, and one-of-a-kind recreational activities are just a piece of the pie. Part of the reason we love where we live so much is thanks to the amazing people we share it all with.

Which is why at this time, I would like to take a moment to recognize some individuals who stood out in 2021 and thank them for their outstanding contributions to our community.

We may be at the end of my State of the City address, but we are at the beginning of another ongoing journey together in Palm Coast.

Meaningful tasks continue to challenge us every day. And Council has much more to address on our upcoming agendas because we believe that what we accomplish together in the future will increase and maintain the quality of life that our generations cherish in our community.

Focusing on the specialized details of innovation, restoration and recreation will demonstrate to our residents that we understand exactly why they chose Palm Coast as their home.

So plan to spend time outdoors here to sense and experience what's going on around you.

Stay informed on local happenings by going online or attending meetings.

Get involved by volunteering or coming out to enjoy our program's events.

Focusing on all that makes Palm Coast so wonderful inspires us to love where we live

Thank you for spending your time with us today. Be well. Stay well. Take care of each other.