

[Narrator] You've tuned in to another  
edition of The Breakroom, a

weekly conversation about how  
the City of Saint Augustine

works from those who do the  
work every day. Hosted by the

City of Saint Augustine's  
communications director Melissa

Wissel. The Breakroom offers a  
closer look at the different

city departments and provides  
updates on current and upcoming

projects and events and now  
your host Melissa Wissel.

[Melissa] Thanks for tuning in to The  
Break Room. I'm Melissa

Wissel, communications  
director for the City of Saint

Augustine and this week, I've  
invited our Planning and

Building Director Amy Skinner

back so we can talk just a

little bit more about the

parking ordinance update coming

before the City Commission for

second reading. Amy, welcome

back. [Amy] Thank you. I appreciate

you having me back. [Melissa] I I think

some people maybe listening and

thinking they're talking about

parking again. Yes, we are.

[Amy] Yes, we are. [Melissa] It's important.

[Amy] It's been a long strained

issue. It's it's an important

issue. Um I did want to ask you

once again, I know and if if

folks are tuning in and it

feels redundant. I'm not

going to apologize because it

is a really important issue and

I feel like we try to take as  
many opportunities as we can to

remind the community what we're  
talking about, why we're

talking about it. We've been  
seeing a lot of folks come to

city commission for public  
comment which to me sometimes

either tells me people are  
engaging which is great. [Amy] Yes,

we really actually do  
appreciate the comments because

now we can hear we can hear  
what their thought process is.

We can hear what the concerns  
are and we do appreciate

everyone's effort and and  
thoughts because actually and

we've had some good good  
comments come out. [Melissa] Good

comments. So, let's rewind just  
a little bit back to 2018.

This all started with mobility  
in general. [Amy] Right. [Melissa] We we've got

mobility problems and that and  
that's not talking mobility

like handicap access. We're  
talking ability to get around

town, people, cars,  
transportation. [Amy] Right. And I

know, you know, as a planner, I  
can, it sounds like maybe I'm

on in a on a different planet  
but you we can even go you

know, 30 years ago we were  
talking about peripheral

parking right and and things  
like that and for a lot of

reasons decisions didn't get  
made or whatever but here but

now you know here we are [Melissa] and  
I've even heard I wasn't here

at the time but there was talks  
years ago about a parking

garage behind city hall. [Amy] Yes I  
mean I've been here for 35

years. [Melissa] Mm hmm. [Amy] And working in  
in different aspects but I've

been with the city for 18 years  
and so we did have

conversations a long time ago  
about kind of anticipating

this. I don't think anyone had  
the real foresight to see what

had was happened and how we've  
become kind of such a

destination and even with the

growth in the county such a

entertainment district for for  
the county. [Melissa] Yeah. And not yet

because it's not even just the  
tourism aspect. It's people

living here. [Amy] Right. And  
actually in 2013 to be honest

with you the state legislature  
changed the statutes and it

started to encourage local  
jurisdictions to look at

different forms of  
transportation because actually

when you like I4 it's pretty  
big example vehicles aren't

cars aren't working you know  
the most of Florida has

developed after World War two  
let's just say and so it's very

vehicle centering we don't have  
a lot of other options we are

[Melissa] we are very vehicle centric

[Amy] society it's a in general and

we're we're in a situation  
where we're having to kind of

retrofit. [Melissa] Sure. [Amy] Um other other  
things. [Melissa] It's a good way of

putting it. And and we're lucky  
we have a little urban area

that maybe we gives us more  
options than other sort of just

sprawling. [Melissa] Right. [Amy] You know  
Central Florida or whatever for

example. For example. Um but  
that conversation started in

twenty thirteen. Then as you  
said in 2018 we started

seriously talking about a  
mobility plan and we actually

are were required to update our  
comprehensive plan and so we

recognized actually a long time  
ago but we reiterated in 2018

and 2020 that because of our  
urban nature and our historic

nature, we don't have the  
option of just plowing

everything down and widening  
roads. [Melissa] Right. [Amy] You know, we

can't take King Street and make  
it into a four-layer road.

Right. We're just not going to  
because our priority and we and

we've set this policy for a  
long time even in the historic

districts which is why we don't  
require the historic districts

to provide parking because



we're trying to keep the

historic buildings, we didn't  
want somebody to have to tear

down a building in order to  
build a parking lot. [Melissa] That song.

Right. Take paradise and turn  
it to parking lot. Right. We're

not we're trying not to do  
that. [Amy] So we're balancing all

these issues. We've got  
transportation issues, traffic

issues, parking issues but we  
have priorities for historic

preservation trying to you know  
live well trying to have

historic neighborhoods and a  
quality of life. So we've heard

a lot of of concerns about  
that. And and in 2020

after a two year process we  
adopted the comprehensive plan

which included a mobility plan.

[Melissa] Right. And a new component

right? [Amy] That was a component and  
it was you know even kind of

radical back then but that's  
six years ago already right and

the there are basically four  
parts to the mobility plan

there actually is kind of a  
walking and bicycling plan a

transit circulator plan which  
we're start here we have a star

[Melissa] right star circulator [Amy] star  
circulator and and people say

well you know how's that  
working well and it's just

going in a circle well it's  
just the first of potentially

five different kind of  
circulator routes lines lines

that we're talking about. So,  
it's just the first one. [Melissa] You

know, Gotta start somewhere.  
[Amy] You have to start somewhere and

there are actually five  
different routes in the plant.

Okay. Then, we also talked  
about multimodal ways which mean

that is weird term to basically  
say the mobility plan looks at

four different areas for  
kind of peripheral parking

garages. We have the existing  
parking garage downtown. We

have the Broudy parking garage  
on kind of the west side which

it has been talked about and

you know. [Melissa] It's approved. [Amy] It's

approved. Within barring any  
unforeseen circumstances.

Right. There within the next  
couple years we're hoping to

have that that is built. Yep.  
And then we're talking about

one north of town out on  
Anastasia Boulevard out to the

east and to the south. So that  
theoretically people can stop

park in those parking garages  
eventually and right now we're

talking about the Browdy one  
mainly. You can park there. If

you want to come downtown, you  
don't have to hassle. Right.

And you actually can stay off  
the downtown roads. Well, and

that's one of those extra lines  
you're talking about with the

Star Circulator. You're not  
going to park when when the

Brody Lot comes online, you're  
not going to have to walk into

downtown. Right. I mean, you  
can. Right. But we're also

going to drop you at the  
Visitor Information Center

which is essentially where you  
want to start your journey.

Right. [Amy] Which is is correct and  
I and I think that's that's a

huge that's a huge thing  
because it would be it's

convenient for anyone to park  
at Browdy's hop on a circulator

come down to the visitor  
information center and from

there you can walk uptown right  
you can walk downtown you can

[Melissa] or take it to another bus [Amy] or  
take it to another bus so

[Melissa] hopefully it's going to have  
more than just the one yeah

[Amy] theoretically you you could go  
across the bridge potentially

and and enjoy Anastasia on  
Anastasia Island and so so

likewise as we're talking about  
Brodis if we eventually get

some kind of parking garage out  
on Anastasia Island if you're

coming in from the beach you  
can just park there hop on a

circulator come downtown or  
walk to a place on Anastasia

Boulevard and and enjoy that

and not have to be on the roads

also we there's part of the  
mobility plan there's a streets

plan to you know start to  
upgrade our streets in general

so that they're safer for  
pedestrians you know streets

and sidewalks they're safer for  
pedestrians safer for

bicyclists safer for other  
alternative modes of we're

trying to encourage pedestrian  
connections things like that

and by collecting a mobility  
fee which we have been

collecting a mobility fee for  
the last couple years we have a

pot of money that has to be  
specifically used on mobility

improvements so things are  
coming [Melissa] so part of this so in

all of that just to circle back  
yes what's important to know

about the mobility plan though  
as you just said these

discussions started 6, 10  
years ago been going on for a

long time. We find ourselves  
now with this parking

ordinance. People are paying  
attention. It's it is going to

impact people but and you and I  
have talked about it. What

really underlies all of this in  
my opinion, this is just me and

you and I have talked about it  
but I think it's the fear of

change. [Amy] Yes. [Melissa] And the impact and  
the ripple effect. So, if



you're just now tuning in,  
you're listening to the break

room and I've got Amy Skinner  
with us this week. She's our

planning and building director.  
We're kind of recapping Little

bit and little bit of a  
discussion about the upcoming

parking ordinance that's going  
again before the commission for

second reading to be passed and  
what we want our listeners to

hear is we recognize that these  
changes are going to impact

residents but what we also want  
folks to realize is there's

ways for us to help in the  
aftermath of all that. [Amy] Yes.

[Melissa] Residential parking is a big

concern in terms of that

peripheral overflow. What's  
going to happen in the

residential areas and then the  
business owners in parking

lots. [Amy] Yes. So. And updating  
this parking code is really the

last piece of this sort of  
mobility plan because if our in

general if our parking code  
contradicts what we're trying

to achieve with the mobility  
plan then you know we won't be

able to get there. [Melissa] Get there.

Literally. [Amy] And and it is a

change. It is a transition to  
somewhat of a a new way of

thinking. The parking code  
hadn't been updated since

1988. The engineer

manual related to parking has

been updated four times. Oh. In

that same time period. So. [Melissa] We

need to catch up with that. [Amy] We

need to catch up. So there are

basically five areas that we

updated in the parking code. We

kind of updated design

standards. One of them is

talking about alternative

surfaces because we also have

the resiliency issue. Mm hmm.

We get flooded and everything's

paved. The water has nowhere to

go. Right. And so we want to be

able to use surfaces to you

know not pave paradise and be

able to absorb water. [Melissa] Right. [Amy] Uh

we added flexibility so that if

you're having to provide  
parking if you need parking

then there are kind of flexible  
options and how you can do

that. Because a lot of our  
properties are very small

properties and their old  
properties you know they are

traditional commercial areas  
especially like in the uptown

area and and different areas  
where there isn't existing

parking. So, we've opened up  
flexible options. We've updated

the actual requirements based  
on the the latest engineering

manual and we've introduced  
other concepts like shared

parking so you can truly share

parking if you have daytime use

and a nighttime use or if you  
have a mixed project where it's

residential and commercial  
we're trying to encourage that

so obviously if if people live  
here upstairs and they work in

Jacksonville and they're gone  
all day then the commercial

downstairs can use the parking  
lot and you're not having to

double the right provide  
parking but one of the things

that I think is had the most  
conversation are the kind of

the neighborhood development.  
Right. Areas where we've

actually eliminated parking in  
some of these corridor areas

like San Marco like King Street  
and West King Street and on

Washington Street. [Melissa] Right. [Amy] So,  
these are kind of key corridor

areas that are commercially  
zoned. So, the properties that

actually front on these  
corridors in the in this

version of the code aren't  
required to provide parking.

It's intended as a economic  
development tool and to

actually make it easier for  
local smaller businesses to be

able to come in because.

[Melissa] Startup. [Amy] Parking is expensive.

[Melissa] And if you make if you're  
making a parking. So if it's I

have a 500 square foot business  
and I'm required to have a

certain number of parking  
spaces that could be

prohibitive. Right. For me.  
Right. The one thing before we

run out of time we have a few  
minutes left. I wanted to make

sure though that we address the  
flip side of that. [Amy] Yes. [Melissa] Um

which is the residents which I  
think you and I talked about

this and I think there's this  
sense of you know but then

these people are going to start  
parking in my parking lots or

even you know parking lots. We  
can't control if someone's

parking in your business  
parking lot and that's your

lot. That unfortunately that's

that's the responsibility of a

business owner to manage their  
parking. That being said, our

residents have probably a lot  
more options than they think

they do. [Amy] Yes. [Melissa] So, I want to  
make sure we cover that and you

can explain it but I'll just  
highlight it. It's things like

yellow curbing, looking at the  
traffic on your streets for one

ways, and implementing some  
residential parking

requirements. Give us a few  
highlights of that. Before

[Amy] because there is no doubt and  
I'm very sympathetic that these

neighborhoods are under a lot  
of pressure. Um Flip side is



that we do have a residential  
parking program and it actually

is very flexible. We get, you  
know, if a neighborhood gets

together and decides they want  
to implement it, there is a

process but you can set, you  
know, days, certain days,

certain hours of that you know  
critical where the city can

help enforce parking so that  
you know if if you know that

you were [Melissa] I don't mean to  
interrupt it no tell me about

Saint South Saint George Street  
you're telling me yeah that was

a great example South South  
Saint George Street was under a

lot of pressure too from people  
just coming and parking and

then walking downtown well they  
got together they developed a

residential parking program  
it's only from one in one in

the afternoon until later in  
the evening and so it's not like it's

twenty-four seven that  
everyone's limited but you

during those key hours that  
they identify were issues for

people coming downtown that  
it's enforced and also if if

you have like a birthday party  
or if you know that you're

going to have group of people  
coming people come over you can

call our parking division Tara  
we're you know Tara's very

responsive and and let us know.

Let the city know that hey, I'm

having a birthday party. I'm  
going to have a few, you know,

extra cars parked on the  
street, this and that. We have,

there's plenty of places where  
we can enforce parking if you

know. Yeah. If we know you're  
having a party, we don't

necessarily have to be there.

Right. [Melissa] We can we can let you

have your we can let you have  
your friends over for the

birthday party and and come  
back later. [Amy] Right. So, there

are flexible options that you  
just mentioned the yellow

curving. If if streets are  
tight and you people are are

thinking that it's gets just  
too tight then also we can

consider one one way pairs  
where you have one way one on

one street and then one way on  
the other street and you have

companion pairs and and it  
calms the traffic down so that

you have maybe parking on one  
side and then the open lane on

the other side so you're not  
having to zig and zag through

trying to weave your way  
through parking you know parked

cars. [Melissa] So the I think the  
biggest takeaway for us today

is We know the parking  
ordinance is coming. We really

want to work with the residents  
and the business owners so call

Amy. Call X Pelicer and he's  
our mobility manager, Tara

Benny for parking. Consider  
getting together with your

residents. We really want to  
work with you. We're not just

over at city hall. You know,  
and trying to come up with

ideas of of making life  
difficult but it's going to

take time. [Amy] Right. [Melissa] And change is  
hard. [Amy] And I do understand and

until I got married, I live  
like on Aviles Street and you know

we're constantly battling  
people and everything. So I'm

very sympathetic and I would I  
really do want to hear how we

can make this work for everyone

but but we're as a planner I'm

trained to look 30 years in  
advance and [Melissa] it's coming. [Amy] When I

see the county at 500, 000  
people. [Melissa] Right. [Amy] In the next 30

years we have to control our  
own destiny. [Melissa] Yeah. We've we've

gotta do something now. [Amy] Right.  
And we're trying. Well Thank

you again for coming back.  
Hopefully we've answered some

more questions or had a little  
bit of a conversation that put

some things in perspective and  
give a call out to the planning

and building office or mobility  
and let us hear from you. [Amy] Thank

you. Thanks Amy. [Melissa] You can now  
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and at City StAugRo.

com for a listing of all those

places you can find this

episode and more. We want you

to hear about what's happening

in and around the city. Thanks

for tuning in. Until next time.

[Narrator] You've been listening to The

Breakroom, a weekly program

addressing projects and

programs offered by the City of

St. Augustine. Join us each

week as the city's

communications director,

Melissa Whistle, has in-depth

conversations with the people

who make our town work to meet

the needs of our community. See

you at this time next week for

another edition of The

Breakroom.