

Enhancing Quality of Life in Cocoa Beach: A Collaborative Approach

Goals and Priorities

As a Cocoa Beach Commissioner, I am currently undertaking an investigation into the factors that contribute to the quality of life for our residents. This investigation builds upon the work of Jack Kirschenbaum from years past tied to Dan Buettner's Blue Zone project, which identifies five key factors that underpin both the quality and longevity of life in any community.

These Blue Zone factors include:

1. Move Naturally: Encourage physical activity and make it a part of daily life.
2. Purpose: Have a sense of purpose in life, whether it's through work, family, or community involvement.
3. Downshift: Take time to relax and de-stress.
4. Healthy Eating: Nurture healthy eating habits.
5. Belong: Be part of a supportive social community.

Cocoa Beach: A Unique Community

However, Cocoa Beach is not just any community. It is a unique place that continues to evolve, gaining new features to its personality while steadfastly maintaining its core identity. The Blue Zone factors form a starting point that is familiar and I believe make up a subset of a large answer. I think there are a few more factors that draw us to Cocoa Beach, and together they make up the factors of Cocoa Beach Quality of Life that keep us here. My aim is to encapsulate these factors into a practical framework that allows us to discuss them specifically and understand how they shape our city's priorities and goals.

Healthy Economic Environment for Business Owners

In addition to examining the quality of life for residents, I am also keen to explore what constitutes a healthy economic environment for our business owners. What factors attract business owners to start a venture here, and what keeps them here for life? These two discussions are intrinsically linked, as my initial investigation is revealing that resident quality of life factors includes subfactors such as access to healthcare, transportation, education, community events, environment, and culture. Many of these subfactors are dependent on our businesses being healthy and thriving.

The Concept of 'Common Wealth'

From a city perspective, the key concept here is 'common wealth'. The city is a collaboration between the people in our community, and this collaboration should enhance our lives for being a part of it. For instance, if we share a subfactor of being involved in exciting community events, we could each either

self-fund an event or pool our resources to create one. The latter approach, if executed correctly, should require less individual investment and yield a better outcome than each of our separate efforts.

Aligning Our Budget with Quality of Life Goals

When we pool our resources, we can achieve more for the city's quality of life than if we were to pursue these goals individually. I am currently going through our city budget and "resorting" it so we can see how it aligns with initial my initial guesses about Cocoa Beach resident quality of life factors. This will allow us to see how we are allocating our resources against our shared priorities and identify where we can make adjustments to improve our combined investments. This approach will enable us to intentionally pursue the continued growth and health of our residents' quality of life in Cocoa Beach.

Seeking Your Input

I need your help. My first attempt at this will be an educated guess. I will frame up this discussion. But, I need to have a lot of conversations with you to see if I got anywhere close to something true. Please, be thinking about how you made your decision to move to Cocoa Beach vs one of our surrounding Beach towns or a big city. If you were born here, think about why you stay here instead of moving to one of those other places. My guess is that those answers will inform or tie to the areas of Quality of Life that matter to us. I can't wait to have this conversation with you all!