

Summary of open-ended survey questions

DRAFT

This summary includes issues that were not captured in the multiple-choice questions as well as suggestions for improvement.

Issues that were referenced most often are highlighted in bold.

Question 10. Describe how to improve the City service you needed most to be better prepared BEFORE the storms.

1. Most were satisfied or had no comment
2. **Preparedness & Communication**
 - Better use of Hurricane Expo
 1. post videos from Hurricane Expo;
 2. offer a \$xx tax break for those completing Hurricane Preparedness training
 - **Messaging is good, but better reach of messages to residents is necessary**
 1. Send out mailer to post on frig with info for evacuation levels, contact phone numbers and resource information
 2. Give police hurricane resource information to share (e.g., card from above)
 3. Improve communications during outages with battery radios (e.g., consolidate stations, specify locations of information)
 4. Messages via the county alert and radio stations do not reference conditions in Venice very often
 - **Distribute sandbags earlier, at more locations, with sand bags at the same location as sand (use county process)**
 - clarify evacuation instructions
 1. difference between evacuation levels and flood zones
 2. printed evacuation maps were hard to use
 3. make Hurricane Guides/printed materials more widely available
 - Improve evacuation procedure

1. alternate evacuation routes are needed;
 2. information about bridge openings
 3. designate public parking lots for car storage during the storm
 4. 24 hour evacuation notice for Level C was too late (no gas, traffic jams, etc.)
- **more evacuation shelters for the city are needed**
 - More attention is needed for residents with special needs
 1. **assistance for elderly to prepare (e.g., put up shutters)**
 2. Coordinate with nursing homes and other institutions for elderly and special needs about evacuation plans
 3. Targeted information is needed for tourists with no evacuation information
3. **Infrastructure & Flood Management**
- **Calls for improved drainage systems before the storm at Flamingo Ditch and elsewhere.**
 - Requests for underground utility installation to prevent storm damage and minimize power outages.
4. Permit and repair process
- information for procedure to rebuild could be provided before the storm

Question 12. Describe how to improve the City service you needed most to be better prepared DURING the storms.

1. Limited services during the storm were expected by many
2. Communications and Updates
 - **Ability to receive timely communication and updates**
 - i. City phone app for contacts and updates
 - ii. Use text/phone/radio with updates specific to Venice
 - iii. Focus on one information site as the social media is not trusted
 - Need information on specific storm impacts and locations, storm abatement
 - Power, phone, internet connectivity needs to be improved
 - Venice Community Center services need to be better advertised; could be better utilized
3. Infrastructure
 - **Keep water on where possible**

- Police at traffic lights that do not work
 - Install gas lines for permanent generators
4. Assistance
- Medical triage areas are needed for minor injuries
 - open Venice Hospital on the island
 - Better planning for essential workers and better pay (8)

Question 15. How could the City help with your most important recovery challenge in Question 14?

1. Communication challenges

- a. Many respondents wanted to receive more timely and accurate updates
- b. Keep up texting/sms messages even after the storm
- c. Need info on recovery process such as when water is potable, where ice is available, resources at community center, safety at beaches/parks; schedule priorities for debris removal
- d. special needs residents need to have means to stay in contact with medical providers

2. Permit and repair process

- a. Many called for a streamlined permit process for minor jobs, waive fees
- b. Use a generic set of engineer drawings for minor projects like carports
- c. Provide a clearing house of vetted contractors; identify scammers
- d. The FEMA 50/50 requirement caused prolonged delays; many are still working on permits months after the storm
- e. With significant issues that delayed permitting, more compassion and understanding is needed from the city permitting staff as well as applicants

3. Miscellaneous

- a. Keep onlookers off the island
- b. Clear waterways and manage pollution,
- c. clean storm drains and canals to prevent future flooding
- d. Provide dumpsters to manage debris until it can be removed
- e. Coordinate volunteers, connect volunteers with needs,
- f. Older mobile homes are a large source of debris
- g. Clear tree limbs off powerlines
- h. Provide places to recharge phones, etc.
- i. Need access to trauma therapy
- j. Thank the National Guard for water, ice, food, tarps

4. Questions/misconceptions?

- a. Prevent sewage from being dumped in the Gulf?
 - b. Pick up debris from condos while waiting for FEMA approval for other areas?
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Question 17. Describe how to improve the City service you needed most to be better served AFTER the storms.

- 1. Remove barriers to repairs and rebuilding**
 - a. Need a well-defined, step-by-step process for rebuilding**
 - i. Follow county process
 - ii. Remove barriers for minor repairs (e.g., information requirements, fees, engineer drawings, denying change from pre-storm materials)
 - iii. Letters sent to residents were confusing; edit now for use in future storms
 - iv. Inspectors should have permit packets to hand out to residents instead of referring them to a website that is down
 - b. Delays in permitting cause great frustration and harm**
 - i. Have more employees in the office and field
 - ii. Help the public understand the delays months after the storms
 2. Centralized recovery information
 - a. Need a comprehensive storm recovery site that consolidates all necessary updates and resources
 - b. Coordinate with county on a plan for returning evacuees; a phone bank would be helpful; include communications on when it is safe to return
 - c. Brief staff on resource availability and contact information (see previous suggestion about information cards/mailings)
 3. Road conditions and debris clearance
 - a. Need traffic control at intersections with traffic lights that do not work
 - b. Fix street signs
 - c. Beachfront communities unsure of what to do with beach sand from surge
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Question 20. Do you have any additional comments regarding how you viewed the City's role in dealing with Hurricanes Helene and Milton?

- 1. Preparedness and Resources**
 - a. Long wait times for sandbags were a major concern; more distribution sites and sandbags with the sand are needed
 - b. Help for seniors preparing for the storm as well as checking on them after the storm and storm recovery
- 2. Shelter availability**
 - a. Venice needs its own shelter
3. Public safety and emergency response
- 4. Drainage and Flood prevention**
 - a. Better management of drainage is critical especially in Golden Beach area
 - b. Utilize engineering expertise of Golden Beach residents to formulate solution to flooding
5. Infrastructure and road maintenance

- a. Concerns were expressed about post-storm condition of roads; debris, drainage, signs, traffic light outages
 - b. Faster debris removal was a primary concern**
 - c. Underground utilities would help prevent so many outages; trimming trees away from lines is critical
 - d. Repairing and opening beaches, jetty, and pier are high priorities
6. Development
- a. Too much development has overwhelmed city services and infrastructure; evacuations are hindered by too many people using the same route
- 7. Communication**
- a. Alerts cover Sarasota not Venice
 - b. Focus on media outlets that do not require power or internet; battery radios and texts are good outlets
8. Permitting
- a. Slow process has caused unnecessary harm, especially for minor repairs
 - b. Use of assessed valuation rather than market value a problem
- 9. Use volunteers more effectively**
- a. Respondent 196 has many useful suggestions for more effective and efficient use of volunteers based on experiences in 2024 storms
 - i. Pre-hurricane season planning for needs and coordination
 - ii. Provide “compassion care”
 - iii. Tool bank
 - b. Respondent 732 is a retired county EOC, FDOT evacuation expert who volunteered to help improve evacuations.