



# Tell Us Your Passion

## 2023 Community Assessment Survey

**Friends of A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway, Inc**  
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## **Executive Summary**

Through collaboration with residents and businesses along A1A, Friends of A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway, Inc has been able to provide insight into the growing communities that A1A passes through. The opportunities and recommendations are provided.

### **Opportunities**

The communities of Ponte Vedra, Vilano, St. Augustine, Crescent Beach, Marineland, Palm Coast, and Flagler Beach are growing exponentially. The draw of the beach increases the population in Florida by over half a million residents every year. Keeping up with the growing population has become a challenge, especially among the historic byway. Learning how businesses and residents feel about this growth and their community is crucial to understand and highlight the issues that can be worked on. The results of this survey will become issues highlighted by Friends of A1A in the coming months and years.

### **Recommendations**

Since Friends of A1A is a non-profit organization without the ability to enact the laws and requirements necessary for community-wide change, partnerships with community resources will be required to improve the quality of life for residents. Friends of A1A also relies on volunteer work of those who are motivated enough by the existing issues to volunteer their time to a large range of required work. Collaboration with municipalities, government agencies and other civic groups is required to preserve, protect, promote, and enhance the outstanding resources of the 72-mile A1A corridor. We will focus these resources on the top 5 recommendations raised by the community.

## **Goals and Objectives**

This report will discuss and address six goals from the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway's FDOT Florida Scenic Highway Program 2023 Work Plan. The goals will be described.

### **Goal 1: Protect and Enhance the Unique Resources along the Byway Corridor**

- maintain an up-to-date inventory of the Byway's unique resources
- encourage the creation of special protection measures
- coordinating with local, state, and federal agencies
- promoting community partnerships
- supporting proper maintenance of landscape
- working on eliminating overhead utility lines, communication towers, and billboards
- promoting a wildflower program.

### **Goal 2.0: Encourage Comprehensive Transportation Planning of the Byway Corridor**

- support small and comprehensive planning initiatives for land use
- encourage aesthetic enhancements
- encourage multi-modal transportation
- improve highway safety
- working on a multi-use train along the entire byway

### **Goal 3.0: Initiate and leverage the continued support and participation of government agencies, community residents, and local businesses in Byway program activities and corridor planning decisions.**

- Generate support and establish partnerships with government agencies, community residents, and the private sector

### **Goal 4.0: Increase awareness of the beauty, ambiance, and uniqueness of the Byway's resources and promote the Byway as a traveling experience**

- Enhance an education program to inform about uniqueness of byway
- Maintain and enhance the Friends of A1A website
- Strengthen relationships and encourage builders, developers, and contract workers to appreciate A1A
- Provide multi-lingual options

**Goal 5.0: Encourage sustainable economic development and tourism activities that preserve and enhance the Byway**

- Encourage compatible development
- Support marketing plans that align with goals
- Encourage development of destination-based businesses
- Encourage tracking tools that document A1A’s financial impact
- Support improvements that enhance the experience

**Goal 6.0: Ensure the long-term sustainability and success of the Friends of A1A organization.**

- Continue to assist the board and byway administrator
- Continue to enhance Friends of A1A through its membership
- Fulfill administrative duties
- Finalize a byway management plan update consistent with state and federal requirements

# Survey Report

Q1 Use three words to describe what you think A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway is about.

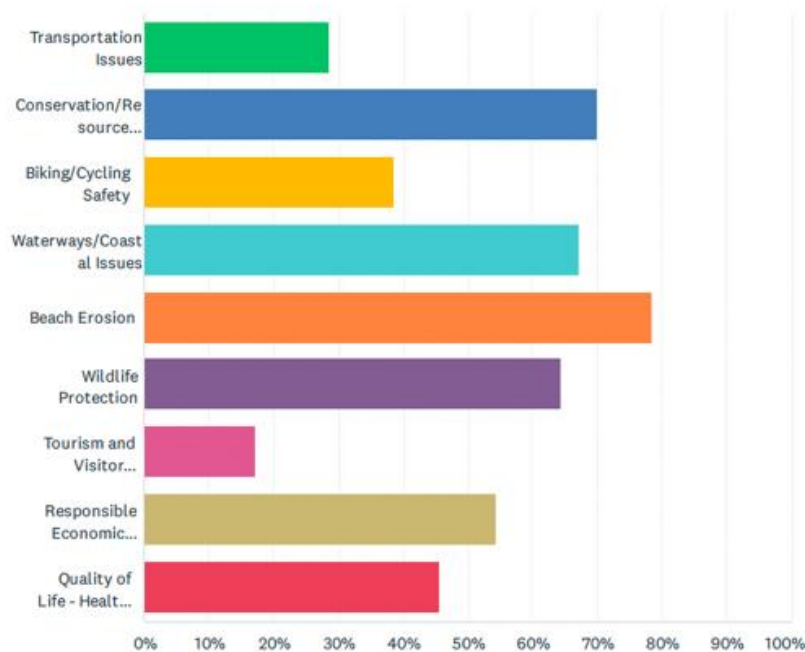
Natural Beautiful Ocean Historic Nature Preserving  
Preservation History Beauty Scenery  
History beaches Beauty  
Access views Byway Conservation Safety

The first question of the survey addresses Goal 4.0. This question serves to discover how members of the community feel about A1A and determines how much awareness should be

raised. Overall, the community seems to be aware of the beauty, ambience, and the uniqueness of the Byway based on the answers that highlight the history and access.

Q2 The Friends of A1A work on a number of objectives in the local community. Please check the issues that are most important to you and your community.

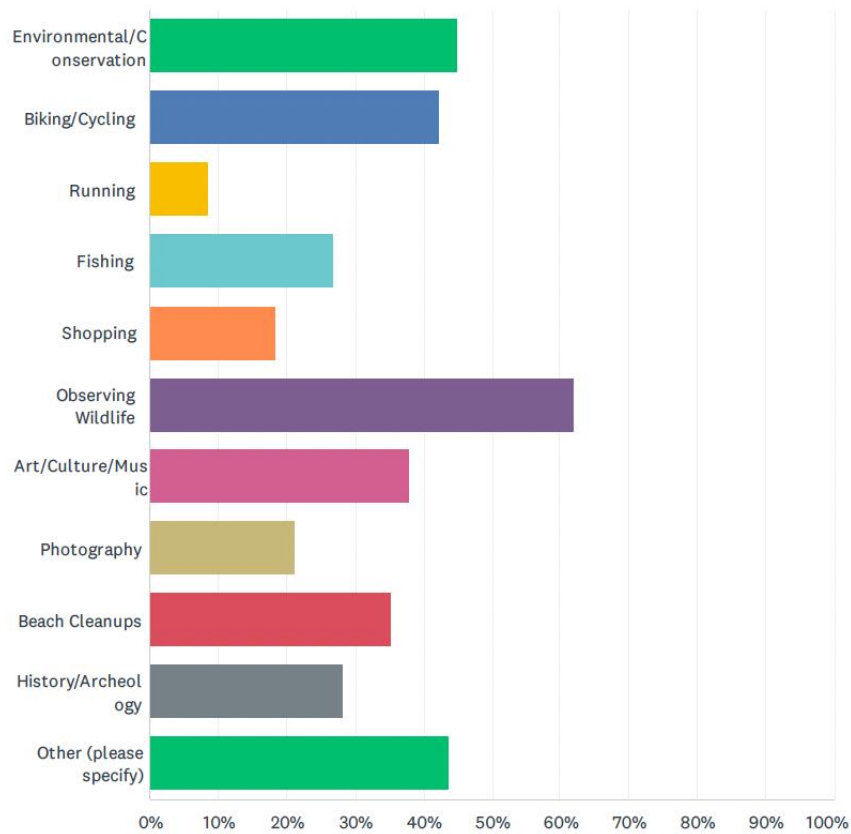
Answered: 70 Skipped: 2



Question 2 of this survey addresses Goal 3, specifically objective 3.2. This question leverages support by residents by asking what the community wants to prioritize. The top 5 responses are: 1. Beach erosion, 2. Conservation/ resource protection, 3. Waterways/coastal issues, 4. Wildlife protection, 5. Responsible economic development. Overall, the issues most selected are concerning conservation.

### Q3 What activities do you engage in most frequently?

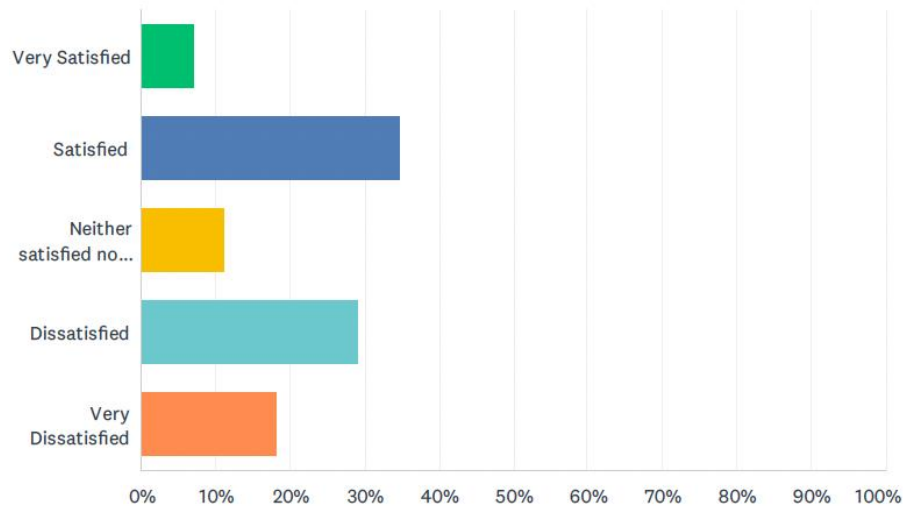
Answered: 71 Skipped: 1



The third question of this survey looks at goal 3 and 4. This question highlights the support of community residents and encourages the understanding of the beauty and uniqueness of communities along A1A. The responses that were picked most often were observing wildlife, biking, environmental conservation, art/culture. The responses most written in were boating/kayaking and beach walking.

#### Q4 How satisfied are you with the safety along A1A in your community? (sidewalks, bicycle lanes, multi-use paths, speed limit, street lights, crosswalks)

Answered: 72 Skipped: 0



Question 4 and the answers fall under goal 2 and 3. By asking this question, we understand how residents feel and the next question provides the opportunity to elaborate on specific issues. Most people responding to this question were varying levels of dissatisfied with safety.

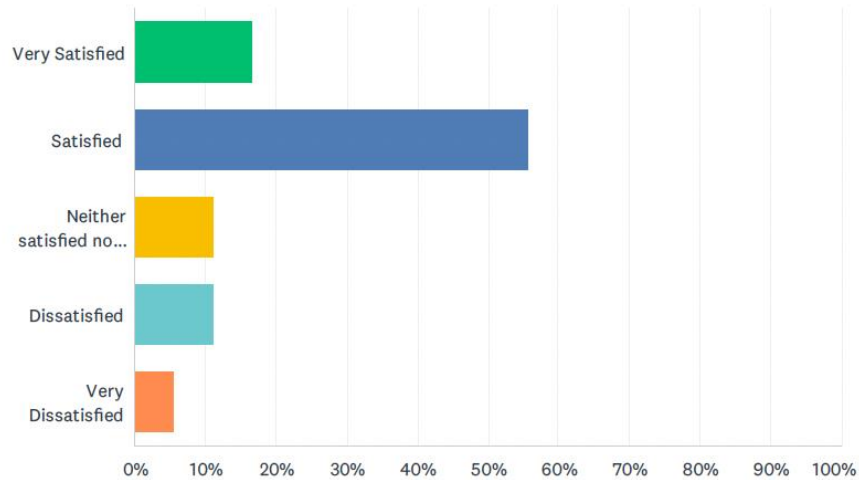
#### Q5 How do you feel safety can be improved along your section of A1A?

Question 5 also falls under goals 2 and 3. The main issues raised by the community were enforcing/ lowering speed limits, stricter fines for violators, safer crosswalks, widening bike lanes, and traffic calming. There was very little mention of crime, so the main priorities should be road safety.



## Q6 How satisfied are you with access to recreational opportunities along A1A in your community?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 0



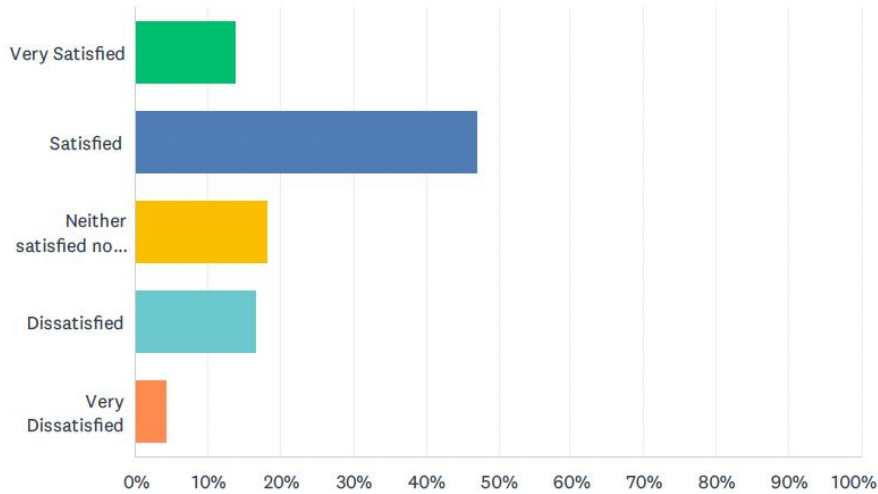
Question 6 and 7 fall under goals 1,4, and 5. Overall, most people in the community are satisfied with the recreational opportunities in the community along A1A.

## Q7 How can recreational amenities along your section of A1A be improved?

This question had several insightful responses. People want more parking at the beach, more access to beaches with better amenities, outdoor workout equipment at parks, better boat launching/ ramps, getting rid of commercial beach ownership, and ADA accessible beaches with ramps.

Q8 How satisfied are you with the availability of affordable and healthy food options? (Grocery stores, farmer's markets, or healthy options at restaurants)

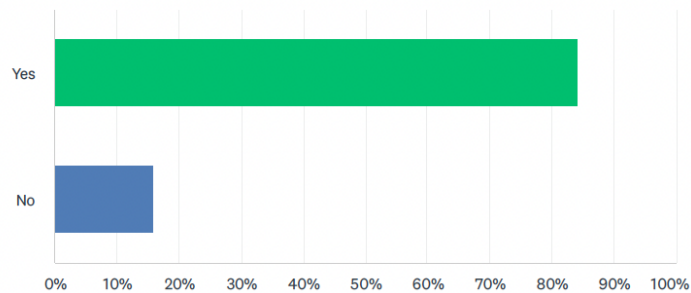
Answered: 72 Skipped: 0



This question doesn't address a specific goal, but it is one of the biggest public health issues that we learn about. Affordable access to healthy food will raise the quality of life and improve health.

Q9 Do you feel that residents have a high quality of life in our community?

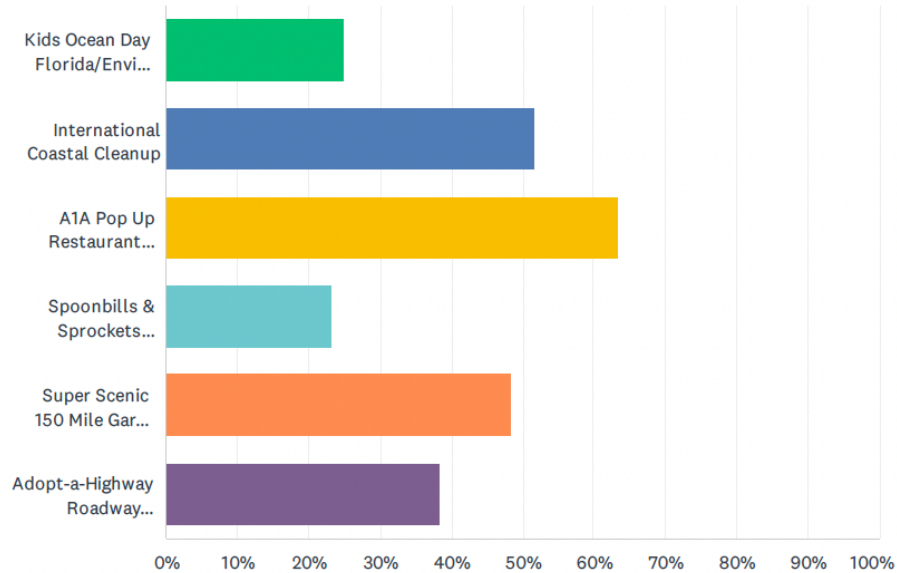
Answered: 70 Skipped: 2



Question 6 addresses goal 6. Most people in the community feel as though they have a good quality of life.

Q10 Friends of A1A has several signature events that are held throughout the year. Check the events you would like to know more about.

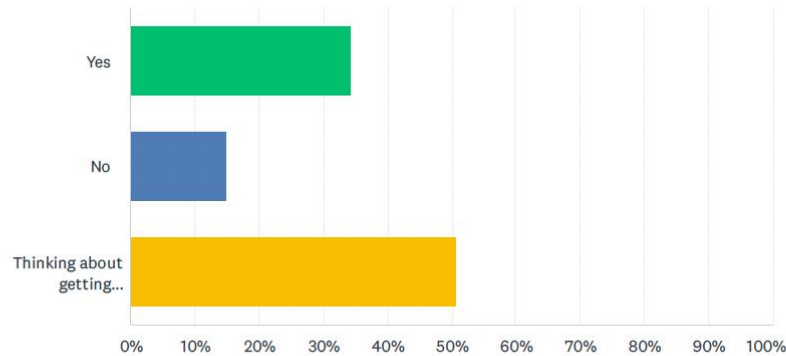
Answered: 60 Skipped: 12



Question 10 falls under goals 3, 5, and 6. This question shows that people in the community do want to be involved in events that are hosted and dedicating resources to advertising these events is important for peak involvement.

Q11 Friends of A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway is a non-profit, all volunteer organization. Would you be willing to volunteer 10 hours a year to Scenic A1A?

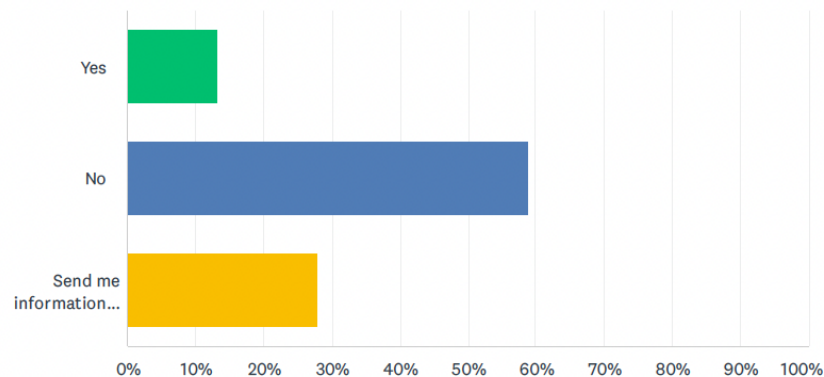
Answered: 67 Skipped: 5



This question falls under goals 3 and 5 and shows that over half the community is interested in getting involved or wanting to learn more.

Q12 Are you interested in being a member of the Friends of A1A Board of Directors or part of the Advisory Committee? Board members have a direct impact on the issues important to the community.

Answered: 68 Skipped: 4



This question falls under goals 3 and 5 and shows that about half the community could be interested in getting involved with the Friends of A1A.

## **Recommendations**

The top five issues raised by the community were bike/road safety, overpopulation or overdevelopment, wildlife safety/conservation, erosion and revetment, and safety in natural disasters.

### **Bike and Road Safety:**

Since this survey contained several open response answers, there were a wide variety of concerns raised that fall under the main issue of bike and road safety. Some of the concerns were raised about the speed limit being too high, not enough crosswalks, limited visibility along turns and in driveways, narrow bike lanes, and better law enforcement for illegal parking and speeding. To fix these issues, Friends of A1A will need to collaborate with state and local governments. Most of the concerns would be fixed with traffic calming measures. To create a calmer and more safe traffic environment, we can narrow roads, widen sidewalks and bike lanes, increase crosswalk lighting and visibility, add more diverters and raised medians, and add traffic circles and roundabouts. These measures require small interventions and will slow traffic and increase safe conditions in one cohesive action. By focusing on traffic calming, we can address goals 1, 2, and 3. If we add landscape-based diverters and roundabouts, this can be used to encourage the Wildflower program.

### **Overpopulation and Overdevelopment:**

The main issues raised about overpopulation and overdevelopment go hand in hand with the last issue. Overall, the community is concerned about parking overflow, little access to the beach, and influx of traffic. Most of the concerns are rooted in the commercialization of beach

accesses, like restaurants or the condominium complexes that eliminate beach access to other residents. This then creates the issue of cars parking on the shoulders to get to the beach, and then creates safety hazards due to limited visibility. To fix this, Friends of A1A must partner with the local government and the community. The government is responsible for giving permits and allowing businesses to grow, and the community is the determining party for what level of development is appropriate. Using this survey every year is a way to discover what the community thinks about the level of development and allows us to prioritize and edit the goals going forward. This issue falls under goal 5, which makes sure that future development is sustainable. By doing this, we enhance the overall visitor experience.

### **Wildlife Safety, Conservation, Erosion, and Natural Disasters:**

Question two of our survey asks which objectives the community thinks are most important. Of nine issues listed, the top voted responses were beach erosion, conservation, waterways/coastal issues, and wildlife protection. Within the free response question, there were several concerns raised about beach erosion, protected plant species, and animal safety on A1A. Since safety and conservation are both ongoing issues, we must partner with other nonprofit organizations, state, federal, and local governments, and community volunteers. Wildlife safety and conservation is an issue that we can partner with specific organizations, like zoos or sanctuaries. This is also one of the issues that would be alleviated with traffic calming, less animals crossing busy A1A would be hit by cars. We can also partner with the FWC to keep stricter limits on fishing and hunting. Erosion and natural disasters can be treated with the same efforts. These efforts include beach renourishment, increasing vegetation, decreasing use of pesticides, and looking into creating breakwaters or jetties to decrease the effects of hurricanes.

While beach renourishment is something a lot of beach communities focus on, it unfortunately is very costly for a temporary fix. There is a program called Engineering With Nature which focuses on prevention instead of fixing. As far as conservation, we can work on issues like littering, protecting endangered and protected species, and recovery after natural disasters. Right now, these issues raised by the community are addressed by goals 1, 2, 3, and 5.

### **Closing Statement:**

Developing this survey during this semester has taught me so much about public engagement and the community quality of life. I learned that people who want to be involved in the community will likely seek out the means to be involved. I enjoyed seeing what people in the community want to prioritize and trying to figure out what possible solutions could be. The amount of people who felt the same way about the same issues was interesting, especially because the concerns like traffic seem like they can be fixed easily. It makes me wonder what it would be like if people banded together and put all their effort towards the thing that they agree on. It also made sense that the Friends of A1A website is so geared towards biking and road safety, it seems like easily the biggest issue raised by the community. Overall, developing this survey helped me gain significant insight about community quality of life and taught me how to interact with the community.



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