



# My Pledge To Bonita Springs

## Introduction

I believe in leading Bonita Springs with a clear vision, prioritizing both economic growth and environmental stewardship. I recognize the delicate balance between progress and preservation, ensuring a prosperous future while safeguarding our natural heritage.

Central to my approach is community involvement in decision-making. I value input from residents and local workers, emphasizing transparency and collaboration. I am committed to nurturing economic success while maintaining the unique charm of Bonita Springs for all its residents.

With roots deeply embedded in Bonita's history since the late 1950s, I cherish stories of the town's past, from my mother's recollection of citrus bloom scent, to my grandfather's leadership in establishing the first teen center near the iconic Bonita Banyan tree. My profound love for Bonita Springs fuels my dedication to preserving our community's unique history and character, steering away from excessive, unsustainable development.

My leadership style is defined by my ability to bring people together and strive for excellence in every endeavor. I stand as a candidate for the people, advocating for your quality of life, economic prosperity, and the protection of natural wonders. There's no place like Bonita Springs, and together, we must safeguard, nurture, and guide our community into a promising future.

## Overview

In charting the course for Bonita Springs' future, my plan of action encompasses six key pillars aimed at driving economic prosperity, enhancing community well-being, beautifying our city, managing water quality, improving city infrastructure, and bolstering resiliency against natural disasters.

Together, these initiatives form a comprehensive plan to unlock Bonita Springs' full potential, creating a brighter, safer, and more sustainable future for all residents. Let us move forward with unity and determination, ensuring a prosperous tomorrow for generations to come.

## Plan of Action

### 1. Economic Prosperity

In driving economic prosperity for Bonita Springs, I am committed to implementing strategic initiatives that stimulate growth, create jobs, and support entrepreneurship and innovation.

- **Establishment of an Economic Action Committee:**

I will spearhead the establishment of an economic action committee comprising local business leaders. With a primary focus on creating higher-paying careers, and better diversifying our economy this committee will play a pivotal role in positioning Bonita Springs as a prominent business hub in Southwest Florida. By harnessing the expertise and resources of industry professionals, we will cultivate an environment conducive to economic growth and prosperity.

- **Live Local - Work Local Initiative:**

As part of our economic strategy, I will launch the Live Local - Work Local Initiative, which aims to promote affordable housing and integrate it into our comprehensive plan. By ensuring that residents have access to affordable housing options, we will attract and retain a talented workforce, driving sustainable economic development and community vitality.

- **Support for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programs:**

Entrepreneurship and innovation are key drivers of economic growth and job creation. I am committed to supporting programs and initiatives that foster entrepreneurship and innovation within our community. By providing resources, mentorship, and access to funding opportunities, we will empower aspiring entrepreneurs to bring their ideas to fruition, spurring innovation and economic diversification.

- **Support for Small Businesses:**

Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, contributing to job creation and economic resilience. I will prioritize supporting small businesses by providing resources, incentives, and advocacy to help them thrive. By strengthening our small business ecosystem, we will bolster economic stability and foster a vibrant community.

Through these strategic initiatives, we will lay the foundation for sustained economic growth, job creation, and prosperity in Bonita Springs. Together, let us unlock the full potential of our community and build a brighter future for all.

## 2. Community Well-being

In prioritizing the quality of life for our residents, I am committed to implementing initiatives that promote safety, accessibility, and overall well-being throughout our community, preserving property values.

**Resident Beach Parking:** Ensuring convenient and accessible parking options for residents at our beaches is essential to enhancing the overall beach experience. I will prioritize the development of resident beach parking sites, ensuring that residents have ample opportunities to enjoy our pristine shores without the hassle of searching for parking.

**Safety and Security:** Safety and security are cornerstones of a thriving community. I am committed to continuing our unwavering support for our exemplary, world-class fire department and the Lee County Sheriff's Department. By providing these essential services with the resources and support they need, we can maintain a safe and secure environment for all residents.

**Ensuring Pedestrian Safety:** Safety is integral to our community's well-being. As Mayor, I am committed to prioritizing pedestrian safety through the implementation of regulations and infrastructure improvements. These efforts aim to promote pedestrian-friendliness and bike-friendliness within our city limits, ensuring a safer environment for all residents and visitors.

**Improving & Maintaining Community Green Spaces:** Enhancing our community's green spaces is vital for fostering environmental sustainability and promoting well-being. As part of our commitment to creating a healthier and more vibrant community, I will focus on revitalizing parks, gardens, and other green areas. By investing in the maintenance, accessibility, and beautification of these spaces, we aim to provide residents with enjoyable outdoor environments for recreation, relaxation, and community engagement.

By prioritizing these initiatives, we will enhance the overall quality of life for our residents, fostering a community that is safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all. Together, let us create a brighter, safer future for Bonita Springs.

### **3. City Wide Beautification & Development Guidelines**

Streamline beautification standards for Bonita Springs as a whole, while retaining individual district's characters such as Old Bonita Springs Historic District, US 41, and East Bonita Springs. Our town has a unique identity, under my leadership, I will ensure this identity is highlighted in the best way possible.

**Roads:** Under my leadership, I will ensure that all of our city's roads are properly maintained. This includes major and minor, residential roads. I will develop a community-focused initiative dedicated to ensuring that all of our roads are properly cleaned and landscaped year-round.

**Code Enforcement:** Under my leadership, I am committed to maintaining the integrity of our city's standards through robust code enforcement. I will continue to support our dedicated code enforcement department, ensuring they have all the resources necessary to carry out their duties effectively.

It is imperative that our city's regulations are upheld to preserve the quality of life for all residents. Therefore, I will prioritize providing adequate support and training for our code enforcement officers, empowering them to address violations promptly and fairly.

Additionally, I will work to streamline communication channels between residents and the code enforcement department, fostering transparency and accountability. Together, we will uphold the standards that make our city a desirable place to live and thrive.

**City Development:** In advancing our city's development, I am dedicated to streamlining our permitting, inspection, and building processes to foster efficient growth. I recognize the importance of a seamless and transparent system for developers, builders, and residents alike. Therefore, I will prioritize initiatives aimed at simplifying and expediting the permitting and inspection procedures. By reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and implementing user-friendly digital platforms, we can facilitate smoother interactions and ensure timely approvals.

Moreover, I am committed to enhancing communication and collaboration between city departments and those involved in construction, reconstruction and maintenance projects. This proactive approach will not only accelerate the pace of construction but also uphold safety standards and quality control measures.

By optimizing our city's development processes, we can attract investment, stimulate economic growth, and create a vibrant community for generations to come. paving the way for progress while preserving the character and charm of our beloved city.

#### 4. Water Quality Management:

**Flooding Mitigation:** The eastern side of our community, stretching alongside Bonita Beach Road from Highway 75 to Livingston/Imperial Parkway, and extending over to Terry Street, faces recurring challenges from freshwater sheet flow flooding during major rain events. These natural occurrences have persisted since before significant development took place. However, with the ongoing conversion of farmland to new housing developments in the DR/GR area, the risk of exacerbated flooding looms large. This not only jeopardizes the water quality of the Imperial River but also impacts the Estero Bay, affecting our beaches and water clarity.

One recognized solution, supported by the informed community, involves slowing down the sheet flow through the implementation of small dikes. Additionally, redirecting some of the water into the Spring Creek basin, which has been cut off, and channeling the bulk southward into the Big Cypress Basin, offers a viable course of action.

Under my leadership, I am fully committed to addressing this pressing issue decisively. By implementing comprehensive measures, we will effectively mitigate the impacts of flooding, safeguard our community, and protect our environment. Together, we will ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

**Water Quality:** As mayor, I am deeply committed to safeguarding the pristine quality of our waterways, recognizing their pivotal role in sustaining our local tourism economy.

Our Bodies of water, from rivers, beaches and estuaries, serve as both environmental treasures and economic assets. To uphold their health, I pledge to collaborate closely with water research organizations. By leveraging their expertise and resources, we can implement effective strategies to monitor and maintain the integrity of our water systems.

Furthermore, I understand the direct correlation between the health of our waterways and the vitality of our tourism industry. Clean, vibrant water bodies not only attract visitors but also support a diverse array of recreational activities, from boating to fishing.

Through proactive partnerships and targeted initiatives, we will ensure that our waterways remain pristine, enhancing the appeal of our community as a premier tourist destination. Together, let's preserve the natural beauty that defines our city and sustains our economy for generations to come.

**Retention Ponds:** In addressing the management of retention ponds, I am committed to implementing sustainable practices that prioritize environmental health and community well-being.

First and foremost, we will reduce and ultimately cease the use of harmful pesticides in retention pond maintenance. Instead, we will explore alternative, eco-friendly methods to manage vegetation, ensuring that our practices align with our commitment to environmental stewardship.

Furthermore, I propose the introduction of natural wetland filtration systems within our retention pond networks. These systems not only serve as effective means of water purification but also enhance biodiversity and habitat conservation. By harnessing the power of nature, we can achieve cleaner, healthier retention ponds that benefit both wildlife and residents.

Moreover, it is imperative that we address the issue of runoff contamination in our retention ponds. Runoff carrying pollutants such as fertilizers and other harmful substances poses a

threat to our waterways and ecosystem health. To mitigate this risk, we will implement measures to ensure that retention ponds are designed and maintained to intercept and treat runoff effectively. By prioritizing water quality management, we can safeguard our environment and community health for generations to come.

In summary, by ceasing pesticide use, implementing natural filtration systems, and addressing runoff contamination, we will transform our retention ponds into vibrant ecosystems that enhance our community's beauty, resilience and sustainability. Together, let us embrace these forward-thinking solutions to create a cleaner, healthier future for all.

## 5. City Infrastructure

### **Roads:**

The maintenance and enhancement of our road network are paramount to ensuring seamless connectivity and facilitating economic growth. I will prioritize the upkeep of our roads, investing in necessary repairs and improvements to enhance safety and accessibility for all residents.

### **Correcting Sheet Flow Issues:**

The persistent challenges posed by sheet flow flooding demand urgent attention. I pledge to implement targeted measures to address these issues, including the installation of small dikes and the redirection of water flow to mitigate the impact of flooding on our community.

### **Traffic System Processes & Technologies:**

Modernizing our traffic system processes and embracing cutting-edge technologies are essential steps in managing traffic flow and enhancing road safety. I will work tirelessly to implement innovative solutions that optimize traffic management, reduce congestion, and improve overall transportation efficiency.

By prioritizing these key infrastructure initiatives, we will lay the foundation for a sustainable future, characterized by resilient transportation networks, improved flood resilience, and enhanced quality of life for all residents.

## 6. Resiliency Plan

In preparing for the unforeseen challenges posed by natural disasters, I am dedicated to implementing a robust resiliency plan that prioritizes the safety, well-being, and swift recovery of our community.

**Post Natural Disaster Funding Initiatives:** In the aftermath of natural disaster events, I will spearhead the development or continuation of an emergency resiliency/recovery fund. This fund will provide swift assistance to residents and business owners, reducing dependency on insurance claims to help expedite the recovery process. By serving as a lifeline for those affected, it will ensure a quicker return to normalcy. Additionally, I will swiftly allocate funding from our general fund to restore essential city infrastructure during the recovery phase. Furthermore, I will prioritize the reimbursement of these funds back into our general fund, ensuring fiscal responsibility and long-term financial stability.

**Comprehensive Storm Surge Resiliency Plan:** I plan to collaborate closely with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida to develop a comprehensive storm surge resiliency plan for our coastal communities. By leveraging their expertise and

resources, we can enhance our preparedness and mitigate the impact of storm surges on our coastal areas.

**Natural Disaster Communication:** Ensuring effective lines of communication during and after a natural disaster is paramount to facilitating timely responses and delivering crucial information to residents. I will work to establish and maintain reliable communication channels, keeping residents informed and connected throughout emergency situations.

**Proactive Evacuation Measures:** In the face of impending natural disasters, I will take assertive actions to evacuate residents residing in the effected areas. By ensuring clear and accessible evacuation zones, we will prioritize the safety and well-being of our community members. We will not rely solely on external agencies to dictate evacuation protocols; instead, we will proactively assess risks and take decisive measures to protect our residents.

**Alleviating Sheet Flow Flooding:** For the Eastern border of Bonita Springs, I will collaborate with County, State, and Federal agencies to implement measures aimed at redirecting water south to the Big Cypress Basin. By alleviating sheet flow flooding into the Imperial River and neighboring communities, we can mitigate the impact of flooding and safeguard our residents and infrastructure.

Through these proactive measures and strategic partnerships, we will build resilience, strengthen preparedness, and ensure the safety and prosperity of Bonita Springs in the face of natural disasters. Together, let us navigate challenges with resilience and unity, forging a brighter future for our community.

## In conclusion

My vision for Bonita Springs is one of progress, prosperity, and sustainability. By prioritizing economic growth, enhancing community well-being, beautifying our city, managing water quality, and bolstering resiliency against natural disasters, we lay the foundation for a brighter tomorrow.

Together, through collaboration, innovation, and dedication, we will unlock Bonita Springs' full potential and create a thriving community that preserves its unique charm while embracing the opportunities of the future. Let us move forward with unity and determination, ensuring a prosperous tomorrow for generations to come. Vote for Derrick Botana for Bonita Springs Mayor!