

# **The Sanibel Plan Update**

## **Public Engagement Plan Summary**

**Draft December 3, 2025**

### **1. Goals**

The main purpose of Sanibel's public engagement efforts pertaining to the Sanibel Plan update is to make residents aware of the planning process and offer ample opportunities for input and comments throughout the process. This plan seeks to ensure that the planning process is transparent, documents and information are readily available, notification of meetings is timely, and public meetings are convenient, inclusive, and barrier-free to encourage a diverse range of stakeholder involvement. The goals of the Public Engagement Plan include:

- Timely and adequate notification of meetings;
- Ensuring information is readily accessible to the public;
- Providing reasonable and sufficient time for review and comment;
- Transparency in decision making and ensuring information is shared in a variety of formats and locations; and
- Continued coordination and communication between the Consultant, City Administration, and managers.

### **2. Methods of Community Engagement**

The most effective community outreach efforts include a combination of public engagement methods to reach a wide cross-section of the community. The proposed formats for this Comprehensive Plan update project include forums, small group/round-table discussions, online surveys, workshops, and public hearings.

The City of Sanibel and CGA are committed to ensuring that the public has reasonable access and accommodations for public meetings, consistent with the non-discrimination provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and related Federal and State nondiscrimination statutes and regulations. Meetings and hearings may be recorded, as necessary or as required by law, and summaries will be made available as soon as possible following the meeting or public hearing.

#### Interviews with Key City Personnel and Officials

Early understanding of issues and opportunities is essential for setting in motion a successful comprehensive plan update. Like the kick-off meeting with City department representatives, well-

structured interviews are paramount to understanding the unique perspectives that City staff and officials possess on issues, concerns, and the overall vision for the community. CGA will coordinate with City Planning Staff to set up a schedule of 30-minute to one-hour group or individual interviews, as may be appropriate, with key staff, the Mayor and City Council, and other appropriate board members.

As part of the discovery process, these interviews will focus on distilling common priorities among various City staff and officials. City Planning Staff are encouraged to participate in the interview process along with CGA team members to gain insight and understanding of the information being shared and discussed. Takeaways from the interviews will be the foundation of the focus areas established for the public outreach and community engagement meetings. A description of the format and outcome of the outreach meetings will be incorporated into the Data and Analysis documents to be transmitted with the Comprehensive Plan Element amendments.

#### Steering Committee Meetings

The City has established a committee of community stakeholders and experts to provide input and direction for the Sanibel Plan update. The background and expertise of this committee will provide valuable insight for CGA in the data collection and analysis, public engagement, and recommendations stages of the project. CGA has and will continue to attend these meetings to take input and answer questions regarding the progress of the update.

#### City Website

CGA will coordinate with the City on the project webpage, which will include a general overview of the process, anticipated schedule, and staff contact information. The webpage will allow community members to access project status, view upcoming events and meeting notices, review frequently asked questions and draft documents, obtain contact information, submit comments, and respond to opinion surveys as applicable. This provides one centralized location for the public to find the latest information on the project. No information will be posted to the project website without authorization of the City's project manager or designee.

#### Community-Wide Stakeholder Meetings

Community participation is a critical component of the planning process and needs to be conducted early and throughout the process. The community will have the opportunity to participate in three workshops. The goals of these workshops are to:

- Identify preliminary issues and opportunities, as well as shared community values and aspirations;
- Have members of the City's dynamic and diverse population actively invested in the planning process to develop a collective community vision of the future;
- Facilitate constructive feedback from community members that can be used by the City and the consultant to form city-wide, goals, and objectives;
- Gain early and substantial support from community members for the Comprehensive Plan; and

- Identify and integrate stakeholders who could become Plan champions and potential partners in implementation.

CGA will work with the City to ensure that all community members and stakeholder groups are offered appropriate and diverse opportunities to be engaged throughout the project. CGA will work with the City on developing engagement efforts targeting a diverse population.

To ensure the community-wide stakeholder meetings are interesting and engaging as well as productive, we are proposing interactive events that minimize presentations and maximize individual participation. These events will include live interactive surveys, group breakout activities, and opportunities for one-on-one questions and answers. These activities are designed to identify common themes and values addressing current community strengths and weaknesses and future threats and opportunities. This input will be used to assess the current goals, objectives, and policies in the Sanibel Plan and develop recommended revisions that more accurately reflect the current themes and values of the community.

### **3. Efforts to Engage a Broader Audience.**

The City recognizes the need to engage all sectors of the community. Often, younger residents, including families with young children, cannot or are not interested in participating in community planning activities. To engage younger residents in this planning effort, CGA and the City are proposing the following efforts beyond the other public engagement activities mentioned in this plan:

- **Distribution of surveys and meeting flyers at community events.** For this effort, we recommend focusing on events that attract families and younger residents. In addition to distributing flyers and written meeting information, personnel can be available to answer questions about the Sanibel Plan and the proposed update. Some upcoming events include the Time Capsule Installation and Community Celebration (January 10, 2026, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.), 2026 Health Fair (February 7, 2026 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.), City of Sanibel Egg Hunt (April 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.). The time capsule event on January 8, 2026 is a particularly good opportunity to discuss and encourage input on the future of the community. We will work closely with the City on identifying other similar community events at which we can distribute surveys and meeting information.
- **Online community engagement access.** To encourage community participation, we recommend that the community-wide stakeholder meetings allow virtual participation and input.
- **Consider conducting community engagement meetings on days and times that are most convenient to younger residents.** We recommend that the community-wide

stakeholder meetings be conducted on days and times that are most convenient to younger families, which may include Saturdays and other days and times that coincide with other community events. We will coordinate with the City on possible days and times that meet this criterion.

- **Social media targeted notifications.** We recommend use of targeted notifications available from social media sites such as Nextdoor, Instagram, and Facebook.

#### Public Hearings

One public hearing before the Planning Board and one before the City Council will be required to transmit the Comprehensive Plan amendments to the Florida Department of Commerce for State of Florida review. The Planning Board's role will be to recommend that the City Council either approve, deny, or approve the amendments with changes. The City Council will make the final decision to transmit the amendments to the Department of Commerce. Following State review, the Department of Commerce may or may not provide objections, comments, and recommendations (ORC) report. The final public hearing before the City Council will be for final adoption of the Comprehensive Plan amendments.

A summary of public comments and how such comments were addressed will be included in the backup material for public hearings. CGA will additionally respond to questions and concerns from the Planning Board and Council and any public comments that arise at the hearings.

#### **4. Approach to Public Notification and Information Dissemination**

Notice of community-wide stakeholder meetings and public hearings will be posted on the City's website, posted at City Hall, published in at least one local newspaper, and emailed to interested parties who have signed up for e-notification to be notified, in accordance with State law, as applicable.

The primary source of information dissemination for the Comprehensive Plan update project will be the City's webpage and email notification. Other methods of communication may be utilized to increase public awareness. The City may utilize a combination of one or more of the following approaches to update the community on upcoming events and draft documents and related materials for review:

- City webpage with basic project information.
- City-wide E-notification mailing list.
- Media press releases.
- Newspaper legal ads.
- Public bulletin board posters.
- Handouts/flyers.
- Social media networks such as Nextdoor, Instagram, X, and Facebook.

- City Event Calendar updates.

## **5. Strategies for the Comprehensive Plan Update Process**

All comments received during the review process will be documented, reviewed, and considered in the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan update as appropriate. Any feedback received that is unrelated to the project will be forwarded to City Administration for response.

The following deliverables will be made available for public comment as drafts are completed:

- Final Public Engagement Plan – Available online for public comment.
- Summary of Public Input Process and Outcomes – Available online for public comment.
- Background Data and Analysis Report – Available online for public comment.
- Draft Comprehensive Plan - Available online for public comment.
- Final Comprehensive Plan – Available two weeks prior to the scheduled public hearings.

## **6. Preliminary Schedule and Format of the Community-Wide Stakeholder Meetings**

We are recommending three primary community-wide stakeholder events. CGA will work closely with the City throughout the process to ensure that we are receiving the desired level and quality of public engagement. Planned activities can be revised depending on the feedback we receive. Additional events and activities can be added and appropriate funding for these activities can be considered at the discretion of the City.

Our general schedule and approach to these activities are as follows:

- The first major community-wide stakeholder event is scheduled for February 18, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. This event will primarily be for the purpose of introducing the project to the public and for gathering input on the overall community vision for the future of Sanibel. As discussed in greater detail in Section 2 above, this will be an interactive event designed to begin identifying values and themes that can be addressed in the Sanibel Plan.
- The second major event will be conducted in late March or early April of 2026 and will be a combination of a mid-morning or early afternoon active solicitation of public input and a late afternoon or early evening community-wide meeting at which we will follow up on input received from surveys and the first community-wide stakeholder meeting. The primary purposes of this event will be to obtain additional public input and to start refining the values and themes for the Plan update.

Ideally, this event would be held on the weekend while there is another major event taking place in Sanibel to encourage participation of families and younger residents. We recommend considering the City Easter Egg Hunt scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup> as a possible day for this event. During the earlier part of the day, CGA will circulate through the community and will actively seek input from residents and visitors using questionnaires. Participants will be encouraged to attend the later event that will include additional interactive exercises about the future of Sanibel.

- The third major stakeholder event will take place around early May of 2026 and will be a presentation of the draft updated Sanibel Plan. The purpose of this event will be to solicit public input on the draft prior to presentation to the draft to City Council.

As noted above, this proposed approach and schedule are preliminary at this time and can be adjusted to meet the City's requirements.