



City of Sanibel

Planning Commission

Planning Department Agenda Memorandum

Steering Committee Meeting Date: December 17, 2025

To: Sanibel Plan Update Steering Committee

From: Paula McMichael, AICP, Planning Director

Date: December 11, 2025

Subject: Review of the Coastal Zone Protection Element, Conservation Element, Natural Groundwater Aquifer Recharge Element, and Scenic Preservation Element

These elements represent a substantial portion of the Plan; however, as they are all interrelated, they are being presented for discussion together. If needed, the topic can be continued until a future meeting to allow more time for review. Natural Resources staff will provide a brief overview of issues and topics they have identified as needing updates to facilitate committee discussion and review.

General Background

Each element of the Sanibel Plan begins with “background discussion.” This portion of the element is not regulatory language but a description of the subject, history, and existing (ca. 2012) conditions. Then there is a “plan” (or plans) with provisions followed by Goals, Objectives, and Policies (GOPs). These two portions—the plans and GOPs—constitute the regulatory language.

The tasks for the steering committee at each meeting will be to review the applicable sections of the Sanibel Plan and suggest additions or revisions to address council’s priorities and community concerns. A line-by-line, word-by-word rewrite is not needed, nor is an update of existing conditions, as this will be undertaken by the consultant. We are looking for community input on the topic at the “big picture” level as to what (if anything) should be added or what (if anything) is no longer relevant.

As you prepare for the steering committee meeting, please keep in mind the following framework:

- The Sanibel Plan is a long-range (10- and 20-year timeframes) policy document that serves as the city’s “constitution” or “blueprint” for development and the foundation for the land development code. It must be consistent with state law and internally consistent in order to be legally defensible.
- All proposed changes should be evaluated for consistency with the overarching Sanibel Vision Statement and its Hierarchy of Values of Sanctuary, Community, and Attraction. The Sanibel Vision Statement is incorporated into the Sanibel Plan as well as the city’s charter. It is included as an attachment to the agenda for your reference.

Related City Council Priorities

Community Resiliency: Build Sanibel's resilience to future threats from natural and man-made events by mitigating hazards, hardening infrastructure, encouraging the use of reliable, renewable energy sources, continually updating vulnerability, response, and recovery plans, and improving community education concerning building design, building codes, flood protection and the benefits of native vegetation.

Environmental Stewardship: Lead by example in environmental stewardship to restore, preserve, and enhance our island sanctuary, lead on issues to positively impact local water quality, and support land conservation, waste minimization, renewable energy, and provide recurring education on the Sanibel Plan.