



City of Sanibel

Planning Commission

Planning Department Agenda Memorandum

Below Market Rate Housing Subcommittee Meeting Date: October 28, 2025

To: BMRH Subcommittee

From: Paula McMichael, AICP, Planning Director

Date: October 22, 2025

SUBJECT: Review of the Housing Element

As you are aware, the city has begun the process to update its comprehensive plan (the Sanibel Plan). The main point of contact for public involvement and engagement in the process of updating the city's comprehensive plan is the Sanibel Plan Update Steering Committee, consisting of seven members of the community representing nonprofit, environmental, institutional, and business interests. The committee has set a tentative schedule for review of the elements of the plan, which is attached for your reference. The next meeting will be held on November 19, 2025, and the topics will include a review of the housing element including city council's stated priority to:

Increase the number of on-island and near-island affordable housing units available to Sanibel's workforce and general populations by collaborating with Lee County, the non-profit sector, the private sector, and the City's housing foundation, in accordance with the Sanibel Plan.

Florida state statutes requires comprehensive plans to include a housing element, consisting of "principles, guidelines, standards, and strategies" to be followed in:

- a. The provision of housing for all current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction.*
- b. The elimination of substandard dwelling conditions.*
- c. The structural and aesthetic improvement of existing housing.*
- d. The provision of adequate sites for future housing, including affordable workforce housing ...*
- e. Provision for relocation housing and identification of historically significant and other housing for purposes of conservation, rehabilitation, or replacement.*
- f. The formulation of housing implementation programs.*
- g. The creation or preservation of affordable housing to minimize the need for additional local services and avoid the concentration of affordable housing units only in specific areas of the jurisdiction. ...*

As the BMRH subcommittee is tasked with evaluating the city's housing program, staff is seeking its input as part of the review of the housing element.

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 – in the Housing Element, titled the "Plan for Housing" – followed by Goals, Objectives, and Policies (GOPs). These two portions—the plans and GOPs—constitute the regulatory language.

Please review the housing element 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.

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 and is included as an attachment for your reference.

A summary of the committee's input will be provided to the Steering Committee to consider as part of their discussion of the housing element at their November 19th meeting.

Attachments: Sanibel Plan Update Steering Committee tentative schedule of topics

Housing Element of the Sanibel Plan

Sanibel Vision Statement