



City of Sanibel

Planning Commission

Planning Department Agenda Memorandum

Land Development Code Review Sub-Committee Meeting Date: April 22, 2025

To: Land Development Code Review Sub-Committee

From: Savannah White, Senior Planner

Date: April 11, 2025

TITLE: Coastal Florida Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Project (R2P2) – Regulatory Recommendations for Sanibel Town Center

BACKGROUND

The *Coastal Florida Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Project (R2P2)* is a community-focused initiative funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Disaster Recovery program. It provides technical assistance to support long-term resiliency through public engagement, conceptual design, and implementation strategies. The program's overarching goal is to develop community-driven conceptual designs that reflect local visions for recovery and can help leverage federal, state, nonprofit, or private funding for implementation.

On January 14, 2025, Bill Spikowski, FAICP (Spikowski Planning Associates), presented the final report to City Council. Among the five focus areas studied was the Town Center Commercial District, located between Palm Ridge Road, Tarpon Bay Road, and the western end of Periwinkle Way. As described in the Sanibel Plan, this district is intended "to serve as a focal point for community activity, special events, and informal assembly."

While much of the report emphasizes physical improvements to streetscapes and adjacent public spaces, it also addresses regulatory changes that align with the district's goals. Two recommendations are offered to foster a more pedestrian-oriented environment and to promote storefront improvements and reinvestment in the Town Center:

1. Allow New Buildings Closer to the Street
 - Modify front setback requirements.
2. Allow Porches Closer to the Street
 - Permit porches to encroach into front setbacks, incentivizing their inclusion in new development or redevelopment.

A copy of pages 38, 39, and 42 from the R2P2 Final Report, including Figures 46 and 47, is attached for reference.

In the wake of Hurricane Ian, and in anticipation of future redevelopment, City Council adopted Ordinance 23-018, which reduced front setback requirements in all commercial districts to 20 feet from the front property line.

Of the two recommendations presented in the R2P2 report, staff finds Option #2—to create a special setback regulation for front porches (Chapter 126, Article XIV, Division 3, Subdivision II) and revise Sec. 126-961 – Outdoor seating setbacks—to be more consistent with the goals of the Town Center and the broader policies of the Sanibel

Plan's *Plan for Commercial Development* and *Vision Statement*, which prioritize maintaining Sanibel's rural character and small-town community aesthetic.

Additionally, porches are a defining element of Sanibel's "Island Style" architecture and its four subcategories—Old Florida, Island Eclectic, Island Contemporary, and Island Leisure—as outlined in the Architectural Design Standards of the Land Development Code and the *Plan for Preservation and Community Design* (Sanibel Plan).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Land Development Code Review Subcommittee consideration and support of a reduced setback standard for front porches in the TCG – Town Center General and TCL – Town Center Limited Commercial District, as a form-based incentive and best design practice for redevelopment and improvements within those districts.

Staff is seeking comments from the committee as it relates to consistency with the Sanibel Plan and achievement of short-term and long-term recovery and resiliency goals for the community, as described in the R2P2 study; and to move this item for further consideration of a draft resolution at the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

A- R2P2 Report- pages 38, 39, and 42

B- R2P2 report figures 46 and 47

C- Draft language for Special Setbacks for Town Center Commercial Districts