

## Section 3.6.2. Future Land Use Element

*Pursuant to Section 163.3177, Florida Statutes.*

### Background Discussion

The data and analyses for this element of the *Sanibel Plan*, pursuant to *Section 163.3177(6)(a) and (7)(f), Florida Statutes* are summarized in this subsection.

Sanibel, located on a barrier Island, is approximately 18.1 square miles in area (11,600 acres). The principal use of over 60 percent of the area in the City of Sanibel is conservation use. More than eight square miles of the City are owned and managed by the federal government as the J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge. The Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation owns more than a square mile of additional land that is managed for conservation purposes.

The City of Sanibel is located entirely within the coastal floodplain. The City has participated in the Federal flood program since 1979. Flood and stormproofing regulations, which implement this program, are part of the Sanibel Land Development Code.

A Ports, Aviation, and Related Facilities Element is not required for the *Sanibel Plan*. There are no ports, harbors or aviation facilities in the City of Sanibel and there are no plans for any of these facilities. Air access for emergency vehicles is maintained.

There are no areas of designated critical State concern, pursuant to *Section 380.05, Florida Statutes*, within or adjacent

to the City of Sanibel. The Sanibel tidal wetlands are part of the Pine Island Sound Aquatic Preserve.

### Land Uses Adjacent to Sanibel

State submerged lands are the adjacent land use to the City of Sanibel. The quality of these surrounding waters has been deteriorating, in spite of the City’s extensive efforts and investments in eliminating virtually all septic tanks within the City. Rapid development in the Caloosahatchee River watershed, much of which is continuing to rely on septic systems for wastewater disposal, contributes to this degradation of water quality. This situation is only exacerbated by the water releases from Lake Okeechobee. The City is genuinely concerned about the condition of this “adjacent land use”.

The southern end of Captiva, adjacent to the Blind Pass Bridge, is public beach and low density single family residential use. Punta Rassa, adjacent to the Sanibel Causeway, is high density hotels and condominiums, a tennis stadium, a marina and dry dock boat storage and Conservation Lands - Wetlands. Lands along the McGregor Boulevard / Summerlin Road corridor, Sanibel’s hurricane evacuation route, are continuing to develop residential communities and commercial land use.

### Annexation/Expansion of Corporate Boundaries

In 1990, the City expanded its corporate limits to ½ mile offshore; into the coastal waters on State-owned submerged land. The City is considering further expansions of its corporate limits to include submerged land and the Sanibel Causeway.

### Population Estimates and Projections

The constraints imposed by the need for hurricane safety, adequate delivery of services and natural resource protection clearly demonstrate that unlimited future population growth would be hazardous to health, safety and welfare of the public. To minimize these hazards it is essential to limit the total number of dwelling units, including hotel and motel units, trailer spaces, condominiums, timeshare units, duplexes and single family houses to approximately 9,000 units.

It is important that the City of Sanibel manage future growth by maintaining current development controls, particularly intensity of use requirements, as build-out is approached, in order to prevent overcrowding of land and avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate the adequate and efficient provision of transportation, water, sewage treatment, schools, recreational facilities, housing and other requirements and services; to ensure adequate hurricane evacuation capabilities; and to conserve, develop, use and protect natural resources.

Sanibel, incorporated in 1974, has reached a mature stage in its development. In 2012, over 92 percent of the dwelling units permitted on Sanibel, in accordance with the Development Intensity Map and implementing provisions of the Land Development Code, have already been constructed.

The population estimates and projections for the Sanibel Plan are provided in the following table.

Population Estimates and Projections			
<b>For Resident Population</b>			
Year	2011	2017	2022
Low Range	6,470*	6,550	6,700
Medium Range	6,470*	6,650	6,800
High Range	6,470*	6,750	6,900
<b>For Seasonal Population</b>			
Year	2011	2017	2022
Low Range	10,074	10,900	10,500
Medium Range	11,730	11,850	12,120
High Range	14,210	14,250	14,600
<b>For Functional Population</b>			
Year	2011	2017	2022
Low Range	16,544	16,800	17,200
Medium Range	18,200	18,500	18,920
High Range	20,680	21,000	21,500
Sources: *University of Florida, Warrington College of Business Administration, Bureau of Economics and Business Research - April 2011 Sanibel Planning Department			

These population projections use the same methodology as used in the 1989, 1997 and 2007 Plan updates. In summary, the functional population is estimated by assuming occupancy of:

- 2.0 people per dwelling unit for the low range projection;
- 2.2 people per dwelling unit for the medium range projection; and
- 2.5 people per dwelling unit for the high range projection.

During peak season, the seasonal population of the City of Sanibel is approximately twice as large as the resident population. For this reason, the functional population (comprised of the resident population and the seasonal population) is the important population to consider for the analyses and evaluation of service delivery systems and impacts of development.

In addition to the functional population, the City of Sanibel is impacted by the daily influx of day visitors. This population, which does not use overnight accommodations within the jurisdiction of Sanibel, is mentioned here because of its potential impact on service delivery and maintenance of adequate level of service standards.

On an average day in peak season, the City of Sanibel estimates that approximately 13,000 day visitors enter the jurisdiction. It would be difficult to project the number of day visitors for future years, but it is reasonable to expect that the number will increase over time.

For the planning purpose of analyzing and evaluating service delivery systems, the medium range functional population estimates and projections are utilized in this Plan. However, to retain consistency with development of the *Sanibel Plan*, the number of dwelling units may be utilized for the preparation of level of service standards.

### Land Use Projections

At build-out, an additional 640 dwelling units are projected to be constructed in the City of Sanibel. Approximately 540 of these units are expected to be located on existing lots within existing developments. The remaining 100 units are projected

to be located on the vacant and undeveloped land shown on the Existing Land Use Map.

Approximately 35,000 square feet of additional commercial floor area can be developed in the City of Sanibel, in accordance with the Commercial District Map and regulations of the Land Development Code.

Land Use Category	Acreage %		Acreage %	
Conservation Uses	7350	63.4	7475	64.4
Residential Uses	2610	22.5	2700	23.3
Vacant/Undeveloped Land	245	2.1	0	0
Recreation Uses	590	5.1	600	5.2
Roadways	500	4.3	500	4.3
Commercial Uses	125	1.1	130	1.1
Public Facilities	65	0.6	65	0.6
Other Uses	115	1.0	130	1.9
Industrial Uses	-	0.0	-	0.0
Agricultural Uses	-	0.0	-	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Existing (2012) vacant lots subdivided for single family dwelling units are included in the Residential Land Use Category. There are approximately 475 acres of multifamily development included in the Residential Land Use Category. The Other Uses category includes churches, marinas, theaters and the like.

Source: Sanibel Planning Department

The estimations of acreage were obtained from the 2012 Existing Land Use map. The method of calculation was improved and the resultant differences from the 2006 Existing

Land Use Table can be attributed to that. There has been very little change in the 2006 Existing Land Use Map. Acquisitions by the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation of the Bailey Homestead site and the Bob Wigley Preserve (55 acres) have increased the amount of Conservation Uses. There was no increase in acreages in any other land use category. Although preliminary plats have been approved for three residential subdivisions (47 lots), this acreage is categorized as vacant since none of these subdivisions has obtained construction plan approval. The increases or decreases in estimated acreages of the land use categories is the result of improved (corrected) calculations of these areas.

In 2012, the City has practically reached “build-out”. Well over 90% of the development permitted in the City by the Future Land Use Map has occurred. The City of Sanibel has matured to a redevelopment phase.

Since the 2005 Evaluation and Appraisal of the *Sanibel Plan*, the City has embarked on an extensive Redevelopment Planning Work Program.

As part of the City’s Redevelopment Planning Work Program, the following activities have been accomplished.

In 2006, the City adopted comprehensive land development regulations that allow building-back of the existing number of dwelling units from the damage caused by a natural disaster.

In 2007 and 2008, regulations to address formula retail uses, the size of commercial buildings and units and outdoor dining at restaurants were added to the Land Development Code. A Commercial District Market Analysis and Redevelopment Planning Policies were

prepared for the Periwinkle Way West Commercial District. Architectural and Site Planning Design Guidelines were also prepared for the Periwinkle Way West Commercial District.

In 2010, the City analyzed residential land use and zoning regulations to ensure that neighborhood and community compatibility is retained when new, expanded and redeveloped single family dwellings are built.

In 2011, the City adopted comprehensive land development regulations that allow redevelopment of the existing number of units in the Resort Housing District, provided that the resort use of the property is retained.

The following items remain in the City’s Redevelopment Planning Work Program:

Redevelopment of nonconforming resort housing uses located outside the Resort Housing District.

Redevelopment of commercial uses in Commercial Districts.

Redevelopment of residential uses in Residential Districts. This analysis will include an evaluation of a small number of single family dwellings that are located on lots that are “unbuildable” if vacant.

The continued recovery and maintenance of the local economy, is needed to restore and maintain property values in both the residential and commercial sectors, including resort housing.

The community’s interest in the development of a Town Center/Town Square, considered in the Plan for Community Design, has evolved. The Master Parks and Recreation Plan recognizes the community benefit in providing a place to serve as a focal point for community activity, special events and informal assembly.

The natural Gulf Beach, including its waters, is recognized for its significant contribution to the character of the community. Offshore areas, such as Captiva, the Causeway islands and other near-Island lands, and the waters of San Carlos Bay, Pine Island Sound and the Caloosahatchee River also impact the character of the community. The maintenance of the character of the community is an important component of the *Sanibel Plan*.

A City Council goal is to undertake a study of the carrying capacity of Sanibel’s beaches to evaluate current policies, plans, regulations and management strategies and advance recommendations to maintain and improve the Island’s natural beach for its value to wildlife and contribution to the community’s character.

### Permitted Uses

The use of land and buildings in the City of Sanibel should be determined by the capacity of natural and human-made environments to accommodate such uses without hazard to health, safety and welfare of the citizens and visitors to the City. The determination of permitted uses also should take into account existing patterns of development, the need to maintain compatibility with existing uses and the desire to retain the character of the community.

The *Sanibel Plan* provides that the type and intensity of future land uses permitted will be determined by the capacity of the

City to accommodate further development in an orderly manner. In addition to these overall considerations, environmental factors intrinsic to each ecological zone, compatibility with existing land uses, availability of adequate human support systems and compatibility with all elements of the Plan influenced the choice of permitted uses and development intensity.

The following chart provides a guide for permitted uses established in the Land Development Code.

Permitted Use by Ecological Zone	
<b>Gulf Beach:</b> Conservation Passive Recreation Beach Accessways	<b>Lowland Wetlands:</b> Conservation Passive Recreation Public Facilities Agriculture
<b>Bay Beach:</b> Conservation Passive Recreation	<b>Low Intensity Residential:</b> Single family detached
<b>Mangroves:</b> Conservation Passive Recreation Very Low Intensity Residential: Single Family detached	<b>Upland Wetlands:</b> Conservation Passive Recreation Public Facilities Agriculture
<b>Upland Wetlands: (Cont'd.)</b> Low Intensity Residential: Single family detached, Duplex and limited Multi-Family in designated areas	<b>Blind Pass:</b> Conservation Passive Recreation Public Facilities Low Intensity Residential: Single Family detached, Duplex and limited Multi-family
<b>Mid-Island Ridge:</b> Conservation Active & Passive Recreation Agriculture Public Facilities Low and Moderate Intensity Residential: Single family detached Duplex, and Multi-family	<b>Commercial Uses*:</b> In designated areas of Altered Land, Mid-Island Ridge, Blind Pass, and Upland Wetland Zones
	<b>Environmentally Sensitive Lands*:</b> Residential Uses are Prohibited

Permitted Use by Ecological Zone (Cont'd.)	
<b>Resort Housing Uses*:</b> In designated areas of Gulf Beach Ridge and Altered Land Zones	<b>Wetlands Conservation Lands*:</b> In designated areas of the Fresh-water Management Area
<b>Gulf Beach Ridge:</b> Conservation Active & Passive Recreation Public Facilities Residential: Single family detached, Duplex and Multi-family	<b>Altered Land:</b> Conservation Active & Passive Recreation Agriculture Public Facilities Low and Moderate Intensity Residential: Single family detached Duplex and Multi-family
*Permitted Uses for these overlay Zoning Districts (see Article 4. Official Maps) are established in the Land Development Code.	
Source: 1976 Sanibel Comprehensive Land Plan, as amended.	

### Plan for Permitted Uses

This section of the Plan discusses the general principles from which future permitted uses are derived. It is the intent of the Plan to allow the continuation of existing uses in the manner set out in the Land Development Code. The regulations controlling permitted uses are set forth in the Land Development Code. The Land Development Code may permit certain conditional uses in various ecological zones, which uses are not specified herein, provided such uses are of a type and intensity consistent with the intent and purpose of the Plan, and provided such uses are limited and controlled by performance standards sufficient to accomplish the objectives of the Plan.

### Provisions of the Plan

1. Residential uses are prohibited in Preservation Districts (The Gulf Beach and Bay Beach Ecological

Zones) and in the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Conservation District. In addition to conservation use, passive recreation is permitted in these Districts. In clarification of activities that constitute or that are compatible with passive recreation uses, the City prohibits horseback riding on the beach.

Lawfully existing residential uses located in the Gulf Beach and Bay Beach Zones are permitted to continue that use and to build-back that structure and reestablish the residential use if the structure is substantially damaged by a natural disaster.

Lawfully existing accessory swimming pools and accessory structures are permitted to be redeveloped in the Gulf Beach and Bay Beach Zones, subject to the criteria in the Land Development Code.

2. Continue to restrict permitted uses in certain residential areas to single family residential structures.
3. Prohibit accessory uses that will significantly increase the intensity of the permitted use.
4. Restrict accessory uses that will have a deleterious effect on the carrying capacity of the beach.
5. Prohibit timeshare dwelling units, including fractional ownership, outside the Resort Housing District.

## Development Intensity

The constraints imposed by the need for natural resources protection, hurricane safety and adequate delivery of services, clearly demonstrate that unlimited future population growth and unregulated use of land would be hazardous to health, safety and welfare of the public. To minimize these hazards and to maintain the character of the community, it is essential to limit the total number of dwelling units, including hotel and motel units, trailer spaces, condominiums, time share units, duplexes and single family houses to a total of 9,000 units. The plan for residential development intensity adopted in 1976 contemplated approximately 7,800 dwelling units if the City built out in conformance with all the regulations in effect with adoption of the 1976 Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

If dwelling units are kept within a range of approximately 9,000 units, the water consumption and sewage generation can be handled in a manner consistent with the public health, safety and welfare, based on present knowledge.

Moreover by keeping the number of persons using the Island to these levels, it should be possible with careful planning to safeguard the lives of the people on Sanibel and Captiva in case of all but the most extreme hurricanes.

The formula used to allocate densities throughout the City in the 1976 Comprehensive Land Use Plan is described in the appendix to the March 1976 draft of the Plan. That formula took into account the municipal economy, physical land capability and the adequacy of human support systems including the proximity of land to them. Policies were developed that directed future growth to areas where services are available. Environmentally valuable or hazardous areas were proportionately allocated less growth in development intensity.

The formula also took into account capital investments already made to prepare land for development and the degree to which a project or subdivision was improved and built-out. The result of this process allocated 2,000 dwellings across the island in densities ranging from one dwelling unit per 33 acres to five dwelling units per acre, depending upon the location, ecological zone and the extent of improvement to the land. Once the units were allocated under the formula, the Planning Commission made adjustments taking into account consideration of existing development patterns and the extent to which existing subdivisions and projects are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. In some cases adjustments were made to ensure that the density allocation would not permit higher densities than would be consistent with the character of existing residential areas.

No development is permitted in the Gulf Beach and Bay Beach Preservation zones but these areas were allocated a residential density, all of which must be built landward of these Preservation Zones.

Because of increases granted in residential development intensity between 1976 and 1988, which increased the potential number of dwelling units from approximately 7,800 to approximately 9,000, further Island-wide increases in density are not readily supportable. However, some modest adjustments in density, either increases or decreases, may need to be considered on a case-by-case basis to achieve other objectives of the comprehensive land use plan. The following factors indicate why Island-wide increases in density are not generally supportable in the upcoming planning period:

- Changes have already been made by City Council, where warranted, to residential densities during 1976-1988. Examples include relief granted to

owners of pairs of contiguous lots meeting certain standards, increased residential densities along Periwinkle Way to provide alternatives to commercial development, and adjustments made as a result of re-mapping the City's ecological zones in 1979, and where unique circumstances relating to a parcel were found to exist that had not been fully considered at the time the land use plan was adopted

- During peak season, Periwinkle Way, the Island's main artery, is used by more vehicles than many residents and property owners find acceptable
- The capability of the City to achieve the objectives outlined in the Safety Element of the Plan, particularly to provide the opportunity for everyone to evacuate safely
- The goals of the Comprehensive Plan are aimed at the conservation of natural resources. An inventory of vacant land in 2005 indicated that almost two-thirds of the vacant land on the Island is located in either the Mangrove, Lowland-Wetland or Upland-Wetland Ecological Zones, which are not readily developable unless the environmental precepts of the Plan are set aside
- Hurricanes pose a significant threat to lives and property on the Island most vulnerable to storm damage from sustained high winds, scouring due to wave action, battering from floating debris and flooding due to storm surge
- The electors have amended the City Charter to require that a majority of the electors voting in the

election is necessary to approve increases in residential density

There are circumstances, however, under which residential density could be increased for a specific site if mitigating considerations are found to exist that would outweigh potential drawbacks and work toward achieving other objectives of the *Sanibel Plan*. These are:

- Where opportunities are provided for below market rate housing
- To implement the Plan for Commercial Development by providing alternatives to commercial development through increased residential densities
- To promote further conservation of environmentally sensitive lands by creating incentives to set aside sensitive land from development, such as the transfer of development rights
- Where unique circumstances are found to exist on a parcel, which had not been fully considered at the time of the initial adoption of the Development Intensity Map in 1976
- Where there is a resultant, overall Citywide decrease in the number of permitted dwelling units, provided that the density decrease does not originate on lands in the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Conservation District

Intensity of non-residential uses are measured in a number of ways, including number of vehicular trips generated, number and type of uses located on a parcel, floor area, size and number of structures, hours of operation, water consumption, wastewater generation, and the like. Regulating intensity of

use in commercial districts and for all non-residential land uses is important:

- To assure that adverse impacts on adjacent lands and developments are minimized
- To assure that sufficient land area is available to accommodate the parking, drainage, wastewater disposal and service needs of the commercial development
- To assure that enough native vegetation for the development is preserved or planted to have a pleasing appearance to both passersby and customers
- To assure that the level of activity is in keeping with the maintenance of the character of the community

### Plan for Development Intensity

The distribution of residential development intensity shall be in accordance with the density allocation on the Development Intensity Map of this Plan. The implementation of the Development Intensity Map is incorporated in the Land Development Code. Modern Platted Subdivisions were identified in the initial *Sanibel Plan* and that designation is applied in the method of calculating permitted density. A listing of Modern Platted Subdivisions established in the initial *Sanibel Plan* is provided in the following chart.

MODERN PLATTED SUBDIVISIONS			
(Residential Subdivisions Developed Prior to July 8, 1976)			
1.	Sanibel Estates	25.	Sanibel Bayous
2.	Anchors Aweigh	26.	Dinkins Bayou
3.	Shell Harbor	27.	Del Sega
4.	Shell Basket	28.	Castaways Estates
5.	Sanibel Shores	29.	Caloosa Shores
6.	Beachview Country Club	30.	Leisure Acres
7.	Sanibel Center	31.	Belle Meade
8.	Lagoon Estates	32.	Windrow
9.	Sanibel Lake Estates	33.	Sanibel River Estates
10.	Southwinds	34.	Sanibel Pines
11.	Periwinkle Properties	35.	Sanibel Isles
12.	Kearns	36.	Water Shadows
13.	Palm Lake	37.	Gumbo Limbo
14a.	Lake Murex	38.	Sanibel Harbours
14b.	Little Lake Murex	39.	O. L. Richardson
15.	Bright Water	40a.	Dunes - Phase 1
16.	Ranchos Way	40b.	Dunes - Phase 2
17.	Seaside	41.	Briant Michigan
18.	Sea Oats	42.	Sedgemoor
19a.	East Rocks	43.	Sanibel Woodlands
19b.	West Rocks	44.	Cardinal Ridge
20.	Terrill Ridge	45.	Poinciana Circle
21.	Gulf Pines	46.	Sawyers
22.	Gulf Shores (f/k/a Tahiti Shores)	47.	Los Conchas
23.	Chateau Sur Mer	48.	S. B. Woodring's
24.	Tradewinds	49.	Betts

Source: 1976 Plan, as amended.

### Provisions of the Plan

1. Residential density computations are based on the assumption that dwelling units will have an average occupancy of 2.2 persons per unit. To the extent that dwelling units are of a type or size that will increase the average occupancy rate, the permissible number of units may vary from the number shown on the Development Intensity Map in a manner to be determined by implementing development regulations in the Land Development Code.

2. By such implementing development regulations, the City Council may also permit residential densities in excess of those shown on the Development Intensity Map as incentives to the provision of below market rate housing.
3. Through implementing ordinances, to be incorporated into the Land Development Code, the City Council may also permit development of lands in excess of the residential densities shown on the Development Intensity Map in order to recognize vested rights and constitutional limitations with respect to lands individually owned prior to adoption of the initial Sanibel Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
4. To maintain the stock of short-term occupancy units in the City, existing hotels, motels and resort condominiums that are rehabilitated or redeveloped in accordance with the *Sanibel Plan* and Land Development Code are allowed to maintain up to their existing density, provided that redeveloped resort accommodations continue the short-term occupancy use of that prior development.
5. Existing dwelling units that are substantially damaged by a natural disaster are allowed to build-back.
6. During this planning period, the City will continue to pursue its Redevelopment Planning Work Program. The Redevelopment Work Program has addressed, on an Island-wide basis, build-back following substantial damage by a natural disaster. The Redevelopment Work Program has also addressed redevelopment in the Resort Housing District. The

Redevelopment Work Program includes review of nonconforming resort housing uses located outside the Resort Housing District, review of redevelopment in Commercial Districts and the review of redevelopment in Residential Districts. The Redevelopment Work Program will continue to evaluate how redevelopment or modernization of existing nonconforming properties can balance property rights with environmental, public safety and community welfare considerations within the framework of the *Sanibel Plan*.

7. The plan for controlling the intensity of commercial uses has several components. The first is to measure intensity of use as a floor area ratio, defined as the ratio of floor area to parcel size. In order to provide incentives in the development regulations for achieving planning objectives, the floor area ratios (FAR) reflect the need to:
  - Differentiate development intensity between Periwinkle Way and the Town Center District and Palm Ridge Road area so as to reduce the impact of commercial development on turning movements and traffic flow on Periwinkle Way and to preserve the ambience of Periwinkle Way
  - Limit creation of additional commercially zoned lands which can lead to commercial overbuilding
  - Limit the intensity of conditional uses to the extent that these uses generate traffic impact to a significantly greater extent than permitted uses

- Limit the intensity of non-residential uses, permitted to be located in residential areas, to the extent that these uses are not disruptive of the residential character of the surrounding community
- Use of the residential densities permitted on lands used for alternative, non-residential conditional uses, shall be reduced proportionately to the intensity of use of the non-residential use on that parcel

### Commercial Development

For more than 35 years, the *Sanibel Plan* and its Land Development Code have been directed to ensure that the commercial sector of the community serves and blends in with the residential sector and natural resources of the community. Neither the commercial sector nor any of its components should be out of character with the Vision Statement of this Plan.

### Commercial Districts

Unlike most communities, Sanibel is located on a relatively isolated barrier island and therefore attracts almost no casual travelers passing through on their way elsewhere. Thus, Sanibel needs fewer of the typical roadside types of commercial use than most communities its size.

Sanibel attracts a variety of tourists with special interests, such as shell collectors, beachgoers, birdwatchers, fishermen, tennis players, etc. Because few other communities attract a similar mix of tourists, it is difficult to provide a pattern on which commercial land uses can be based.

Because of the potential for retail overbuilding and its related adverse impacts, the potential supply of retail space has been reduced, consistent with reasonable demand considerations. Because of limited retail demand relative to the existing retail supply and the intent to preserve the character of the community, conditional use standards have been established for formula retail uses.

Incentives and disincentives have been incorporated into the Future Land Use Map and land use regulations to guide commercial development into clusters, rather than in a continuous commercial strip. Several commercial areas (nodes) along Periwinkle Way that are consistent with the City's existing land use pattern were placed in one of the City's three Commercial Zoning Districts, including outlying locations at the east and west ends of the Island.

The City's commercially-zoned lands, depicted on the Commercial Zoning Map of the Future Land Use Map series, consists of three Commercial Zoning Districts -

The GC - General Commercial District

The TCG - Town Center General Commercial District

The TCL - Town Center Limited Commercial District

The purpose of the General Commercial District is to provide for clusters of commercial development along Periwinkle Way, rather than a continuous strip. This district provides opportunities for a wide range of commercial activities that primarily serve islander needs. The General Commercial District is designed to permit low intensity commercial development with a wide variety and mixture of retail, office and service

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uses, with integrated residential uses offered as an alternative to commercial use.

The purpose of the Town Center General Commercial District is to provide for commercial and mixed use development in the geographical center of the City. Because of this areas relatively good access from Periwinkle Way, Palm Ridge Road and Tarpon Bay Road and proximity to civic, cultural and governmental uses, the Town Center General Commercial District is a preferred location for retail and mixed use development and therefore higher floor area ratios are permitted. The Town Center General Commercial District is designed to provide a wide variety and mixture of retail, office and service uses, along with integrated residential uses of low and moderate intensity.

The purpose of the Town Center Limited Commercial District, like the Town Center General Commercial District, is also to provide for commercial and mixed-use development in the geographical center of the City. Because of this areas relatively good access from Periwinkle Way, Palm Ridge Road and Tarpon Bay Road and proximity to civic, cultural and governmental uses, the Town Center General Commercial District is a preferred location for retail and mixed use development and therefore higher floor area ratios are permitted. The Town Center Limited Commercial District is designed to provide an opportunity for a variety and mixture of retail, office and service uses which support the establishment and retention of island and resident serving commercial uses and discourage commercial uses that cater principally to the day visitor to the City.

Specific permitted and conditional uses as well as required conditions (such as, maximum floor area ratio, building height, setbacks and limitations on coverage with impermeable

surfaces) for each of the three Commercial Zoning Districts are contained in the Land Development Code.

Alternative land uses to commercial development on Periwinkle Way, between the commercial nodes, have been encouraged. These land use alternatives are needed in order to discourage the expansion of commercial development outside designated commercial districts.

Additional retail development is discouraged on Periwinkle Way and encouraged in the Town Center District (the Palm Ridge Road area) because of the latter area's relatively good access from Periwinkle Way, Palm Ridge Road and Tarpon Bay Road and because it is the geographical center of the Island. Redevelopment planning policies have been prepared for the Periwinkle Way West Commercial District.

On land located outside designated Commercial Districts, opportunities have been provided for development of special uses that are generally not either retail or office in nature, in instances where their development will not negatively impact adjoining land uses. The purpose of this district is to enable such special uses opportunities to locate on Sanibel in order to provide convenience services to Island residents and businesses.

The Special Use Districts that have been established as part of the Ecological Zones Map are:

The Island Water Association plant and administrative facilities

The Sanibel Marina

The San-Cap Medical Clinic

The Beachview Golf Course

Opportunities have been provided for the provision of limited amounts of residential development in commercial zones, under controlled conditions, to provide opportunities for affordable housing and offer additional alternatives to commercial development.

The City desires to maintain a balance between the residential and resort (tourist) segments of the community so that Sanibel remains an attractive and desirable residential community. It is apparent that the commercial developer views Sanibel as primarily a non-resident commercial market. And, left unregulated, this trend can be expected to continue to the point that Sanibel could become a destination shopping area, contrary to public desires.

The suitability of the Periwinkle Way corridor for residential development has been recognized, but the pressure for additional commercial zoning and development can be expected to continue. Undertaken as part of the City's Redevelopment Planning Work Program, an updated analysis of Sanibel's environmentally based market and economy supports the implementation of the Plan for Commercial Development.

The benefits that accrue to the community's public health, safety and welfare, through implementation of the Plan for Commercial Development, are:

- The development of an attractive residential environment that maintains the ambience and aesthetic charm of Sanibel
- The reduction of the likelihood of retail overbuilding
- The improvement of traffic flow by reducing the potential for curb cuts and turning movements on

Periwinkle Way likely to result from unchecked commercial development

The City has addressed the compatibility of commercial and non-residential structures with the character of the community.

### Resort Housing

Another type of income producing use in the City of Sanibel is resort housing. Prior to the construction of the Causeway, such housing took the form of small motels and cottages and beach resorts. The construction of the Causeway brought more and bigger beach resorts.

The late 1960s saw a State-wide boom in the construction of condominiums extending into the early 1970s. Lee County permitted the construction of numerous condominium complexes some of which were constructed at locations dangerously close to the water and built at densities that detracted from the character of the Island as a desirable residential environment. Meanwhile, other condominium projects moved more and more into the resort hotel business with widely advertised short-term rentals.

These dramatic and rapid changes in the nature of the tourism business on Sanibel have had numerous impacts on the environment. The entire character of the community as a low-density settlement compatible with the natural environment was threatened. The unique environmental character of the Island that provided the primary attraction for both tourists and permanent residents was then in danger.

The protection of the character and long-range base of the tourism industry demanded a significant reduction in the potential density of resort housing accommodations. The City

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had no desire and little capacity to cater to tourists who preferred to vacation in a high-density, urbanized type of environment. Many other areas in this State willingly provide for and eagerly solicit the trade of such visitors. Sanibel offers unique charms, for which some people will pay a premium while they exist. However, if these unique charms are destroyed by overuse, the City will have little to offer.

Many of the finer beach resorts in Florida and throughout the world have been developed at low densities of five or six units per acre. Such densities permit the provision of amenities and services that will attract more selective tourists willing to pay a premium for Sanibel's special character. Higher densities typically contribute to reductions in the carrying capacity of the beach for use by wildlife.

With few exceptions, resort housing uses are permitted only in the Resort Housing District.

In order to maintain the residential character of the resort housing area and to preserve to the maximum extent possible the natural features of this area, commercial development should be permitted only to the extent that it complements and primarily serves the needs of the residents of resort housing on-site without disrupting the preservation of the scenic beauty of the natural beach.

Resort housing developments, particularly the larger ones, depend in large part on non-guests to help support their accessory commercial uses, especially restaurants. Had resort housing developments been permitted to continue supporting their commercial developments by providing service to non-guests, a further expansion of Sanibel's commercial districts could have resulted. The City has modified its regulations for future commercial development in the Resort Housing District to

assure that the type and size of commercial uses permitted are supportable by the resort's guests.

Existing and new commercial developments located in the Resort Housing District need to be compatible with the *Sanibel Plan's* objectives for scenic preservation and maintenance of the character of the community.

Only 12 resort units have been built since the mid-1980s. The City has had success in limiting resort housing to the Resort Housing District and thereby protecting non-resort residential areas. With the attainment of an appropriate balance between resort housing uses and non-resort housing uses, the City has provided means to retain and redevelop existing resort housing uses.

Although additional resort development is not anticipated, the City analyzed existing conditions and trends associated with the maintenance, improvement and redevelopment of resort properties and took steps to retain existing dwelling units in motels, hotels and inns so that when build-back or redevelopment occurs on these properties, the properties are redeveloped as motels, hotels and inns. It is in the interest of both residents and the business community to maintain a block of accommodations available for short-term occupancy. Visitors using these accommodations provide customers or businesses and potential buyers for realtors and home sellers. A motel, hotel or resort complex can build-back the existing number of units if the buildings are substantially damaged by a natural disaster. A motel, hotel or resort complex is allowed, with appropriate restrictions, to redevelop up to the existing number of units, if the number of units exceeds the number allowed by the Development Intensity Map.

### Provisions of the Plan for Commercial Development

1. Encourage, through the Plan for Commercial development, implementation of the Economic Assumptions of the Plan.
2. Require commercial uses to locate in the areas designated as Commercial Districts on the Commercial Zoning Map and to develop in conformance with development regulations set forth in the Land Development Code and the guidelines established in the Plan for Commercial Development.
3. Discourage existing commercial uses that do not conform to the Commercial Zoning Map and the Land Development Code from further expansion. These non-conforming uses should revert to a use permitted in the district in which they are located.
4. Left unregulated, the proliferation of retail businesses that do not serve residents can frustrate the City's desire to retain a unique and diverse service and retail base in the local economy and to provide opportunities for small, local businesses. The Plan for Commercial Development shall ensure that the City's regulations encourage the continuation of existing businesses and the establishment of new businesses that serve the residential segment of the community. City Council has established and reaffirmed a goal of preserving local businesses and retaining a proper balance between the resident-serving and resort (tourist) segments of the commercial sector of the community.
5. In an effort to maintain a proper balance between the resident-serving and resort (tourist) segments of the commercial sector of the community, the City has amended its commercial land use regulations. These regulations establish and implement the following:
  - A maximum percentage of commercial floor area (balance and mix of businesses) occupied by formula retail stores
  - A limit on the size of specific commercial retail units
  - A limit on the size of commercial buildings
  - A requirement that developments of new commercial centers and redevelopments of existing commercial centers, that contain more than 12,000 square feet of retail floor area, must demonstrate that no adverse economic or other consequence would result to this unique Island community from the development or redevelopment of the center
6. All commercial uses, including formula retail uses, shall retain the historical and visual character of the commercial sector and the unique and diverse service and retail base in the local economy.
7. Continue to seek alternatives to commercial development on Periwinkle Way by monitoring the feasibility of the incentives contained within the development regulations.

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8. Reduce the potential for future commercial development by providing developers with an incentive to develop commercial parcels as residential, providing that the residential development is consistent with the purpose and objectives of the *Sanibel Plan* and is consistent and compatible with surrounding land uses and furthers the objectives of the *Sanibel Plan*.
9. The limited outlying locations in the Commercial District, at the east and west ends of the Island, should be reserved for commercial uses that serve the surrounding residential areas. Residential uses should be permitted and encouraged in the form of mixed-use development. Residential uses that replace existing commercial uses should be permitted only when the neighborhood will not be significantly negatively impacted by the loss of the commercial uses.
10. Attempt to maintain a balance between various types of commercial activities by discouraging commercial development that exceeds the amount that can be supported on Sanibel based on retail market analysis, the capabilities of human support systems, hazard mitigation objectives, and other planning considerations. As part of the City's Redevelopment Planning Work Program, an update of the City's environmentally based market and economic analysis was completed in order to guide commercial development.
11. Designate land for commercial development sufficient to serve the needs of residents and guests of the resort housing segment of the community, and adopt development standards to assure opportunities are available for a wide range of commercial activities to serve the needs of the resident and seasonal population.
12. Retain development standards that take into account the full range of factors which contribute to intensity of use.
13. Restrict future commercial uses in the Resort Housing District, including the size of these uses, to only those that are designed to be entirely supportable by the resort's guests and that do not disturb the scenic beauty of the natural beach or cause degradation of the natural environment. Commercial uses in the Resort Housing District shall not diminish the carrying capacity of the beach for use by wildlife.
14. Retain development standards that assure commercial developments contribute to maintenance of the character of the community by maintaining substantial vegetation buffers and by presenting architectural features that are compatible with the community as a whole.
15. The City desires to retain and improve the historical and visual character of the Commercial Sector, to wit:
  - Implement development standards which assure commercial structures do not employ what is often referred to as "cookie-cutter" architecture and do employ architecture that contributes to the maintenance of historic, visual, scenic and architectural

character of the commercial sector of the community

- Large commercial buildings shall be designed to appear as a group of buildings that vary in scale and size
- Commercial buildings shall not appear monolithic
- Commercial buildings shall have architectural features and patterns that provide: visual interest from the perspective of the pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist appear to reduce building mass and recognize and respect local character and site conditions
- Large facades, both horizontal and vertical, shall be broken up to present a more human scale, particularly to the public right-of-way view and the view of nearby residential uses

16. Apply development standards to existing conforming and non-conforming, as well as new, commercial development, to assure that the standards will have a desirable long-term effect on commercial development in terms of the community's goals.
17. As part of the City's Redevelopment Planning Work Program for Commercial Districts, include the enhancement of the scenic appearance of these areas.

## Preservation and Community Design

The Community Design subsection establishes the physical design policies of the City that will complement the other elements of the Plan, pursuant to *Section 163.3177 (7)(f), Florida Statutes*.

The Vision Statement of the *Sanibel Plan* states:

*"Sanibel is and shall remain a small town community whose members choose to live in harmony with one another and with nature; creating a human settlement distinguished by its diversity, beauty, uniqueness, character and stewardship.*

...

*Character: The City of Sanibel chooses to preserve its rural character in its setting within an urbanizing county. 'Auto-urban' development influences will be avoided. The commercialization of natural resources will be limited and strictly controlled."*

The Vision Statement further states that:

*". . . the dominant principle is Sanibel's sanctuary quality. Sanibel shall be developed as a community only to the extent to which it retains and embraces this quality of sanctuary. Sanibel will serve as attraction only to the extent to which it retains its desired qualities as sanctuary and community."*

Prohibitions on formula restaurants and on drive-ins and drive-throughs at eating places are examples of land development regulations intended to maintain the character of the City of

Sanibel. Other land development regulations, intended to achieve other objectives, also contribute to maintenance of the character of the community. Yet every development/redevelopment in the City impacts the character of the community. It is also important to continue to monitor the incremental, as well as the cumulative, impacts of developments on the character of the community.

The character of the community is also impacted by near-Island development and activities and by more distant development and activities that affect the quality and quantity of surrounding waters.

A substantial effort was devoted to the study of neighborhood and community compatibility for single family dwellings. As part of the City's Redevelopment Planning Work Program, City Council evaluated and amended regulations intended to maintain the character of the community by better ensuring neighborhood and community compatibility for new, expanded and replacement single family dwellings. New, expanded and replacement single family dwellings shall not be constructed or altered, so that their size, bulk, mass, height, location or orientation unreasonably infringe upon adjoining properties or interrupt the rhythm, harmony and character of the established neighborhood.

As part of the City's Redevelopment Planning Work Program, City Council updated the City's land development regulations to help retain and accommodate existing and new businesses that serve the City's residents. To maintain and enhance the attractiveness of the streetscape and the existing character of the community, buildings should have architectural features and patterns that provide visual interest from the perspective of the pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist, appear to reduce building

mass and recognize and respect local character and site conditions.

The Master Parks and Recreation Plan recognizes the community benefit in providing a place to serve as a focal point for community activity, special events and informal assembly. The Sanibel Community Park is intended to fulfill a portion of this function.

The Redevelopment Planning Work Program for the City of Sanibel is a major part of the City's ongoing planning process. This study has been and continues to be a comprehensive effort to ascertain community needs in addressing redevelopment activities. The 2005 Evaluation and Appraisal Report was a starting point for the Redevelopment Study. It is anticipated that the Redevelopment Study will address: redevelopment in residential neighborhoods, redevelopment of nonconforming resort housing uses located outside the Resort Housing District and redevelopment in the Commercial District. The maintenance of the character of the community has been and will continue to be a primary objective of the Redevelopment Study.

#### Provisions of the Plan for Preservation and Community Design

1. Continue to analyze, and appropriately revise, the regulations of the Land Development Code to better address local concerns for the adequate protection of the character of the community.
2. Consider development of a specific plan that will include strategies to improve and integrate City Hall and the surrounding civic, cultural and recreational

uses to serve as a focal point for community activity, special events and informal assembly.

### Historic Preservation

#### Structures

- Historic structures should be preserved and maintained in a condition that represents their historic and architectural features

#### Roadways

- The Sanibel road system has historically served an area that is rural in character. Improvements to this road network should be consistent with the maintenance of the historic rural nature of this roadway system and the surrounding land uses
- People experience Sanibel by driving its streets and roads. The appearance of these streets and roads does as much to set the tone for the community as does any element of community design. Traffic calming and other techniques should be incorporated into the design and maintenance of Sanibel's streets and roads to reinforce the community's desired sanctuary quality and to alert motorists that the roadway is shared with non-motorists

#### Beaches

- Uses of the natural beaches of the City, and uses of surrounding lands, should be consistent with the maintenance of the historic character of this natural resource

### Shared Use Path System

- Shared use paths should be constructed for bicycles, pedestrians, wheelchairs, and other non-motorized users, setback from the edge of the traveled-way for motor vehicles where possible, meandering in the right-of-way without sharp curves or obstructions to vision
- Major arterial and collector roads should all have bike paths connecting residential areas to other residential and commercial and non-residential sections of the Island. Wherever possible, the City should acquire sufficient right-of-way to permit a buffer between the edge of the road and the shared use path. Neighborhood roads can be used for bicycle and pedestrian travel and auto-mobile speeds on roads should be regulated in all neighborhood areas to maintain safety for the health and welfare of all citizens. Traffic calming techniques should be employed to let the motor vehicle operator know that non-motorists share the streets and roads

### Beach Access Walkovers

- Beach walkovers should be constructed to protect the beach dune system and beach vegetation essential for continued preservation of shorelines

### Signs

- The visual appearance and physical construction of sign systems are not only determined by the graphic elements of type and style, but also by the environment in which the signs appear and the

function the signs are expected to play. The most important factors are legibility and the overall uniformity and consistency in application. Information should be communicated in a straight forward and aesthetically pleasing manner. Three basic systems for public signs for the Island are:

- Circulation Components - directional in nature, to aid in control and guidance of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic
  - Identification Components - to reveal the functions of buildings, open space, etc
  - Information Components - to make the traveler aware of services, amenities and the environment around him
- All public signs should conform to designs and information characters of the international traffic signs whenever practicable
  - Private signs should be restricted in size and designed to be in character with the Island. In order to avoid obstruction of evacuation routes, freestanding private signs should be set back from the road right-of-way. Such signs should be limited in size to withstand local wind forces and be constructed in such a manner as to preclude dislodgment during a storm and encroachment on the right-of-way evacuation routes if toppled over by wind

### Utilities

- The design of utility systems should consider ecological implications and minimize detrimental effects. All utility lines should be installed consistent with the provisions of the Plan for Electric Utility in Section 3.3.9

### Vegetation Buffers

- Vegetation buffers should be installed and maintained on both sides of all arterial and collector roads, in conformance with traffic safety considerations
- Vegetation buffers should be installed and maintained on all sides of commercial development
- Vegetation along streets and roads should be an integral component of traffic calming techniques

### Adaptive Design

- In a landscape as dynamic and varied as Sanibel's, building form should be adapted to the opportunities and constraints of the Island's climate, soils, vegetation and hydrology. Islandwide and ecological zone performance standards should ensure that the human-made environment will preserve the valuable functions of the Island's ecosystem and that the safety and welfare of residences will be protected, to a certain degree, from storms, by adequate setbacks from the coast and the elevation of the habitable areas of buildings above the base flood elevation. However, the buildings can be oriented to maximize natural

ventilation through the design of porches and breezeways. Shade can be increased by the size of overhangs and natural drainage enhanced by avoiding gutters. These design strategies can increase human comfort and decrease maintenance cost

- The City is receptive to new technologies that conserve resources and promote efficiencies; however, even “green buildings” have to be designed in a manner that is compatible with the character of the community

### Community Character

- All residential and non-residential structures should be designed and constructed in a manner that is compatible with the character of the community. For both residential and non-residential buildings, “cookie-cutter” architecture should be avoided

### Regulatory Elements

- The elements of this Plan are designed to direct and control use of the Island’s natural resources as a human habitat in a fashion commensurate with the goals and objectives of the Charter of the City of Sanibel. In addition to the requirements of this Plan, therefore, the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the City of Sanibel require that the City have a land development code and implement the State building code, plumbing code, electrical code and life safety code. These codes are necessary to ensure that the best engineering and construction practices are employed on the Island

## Goals, Objectives and Policies

### Goal Statement A

The three-part statement of the community’s vision of its future is a hierarchy; one in which the dominant principle is Sanibel’s sanctuary quality. Sanibel shall be developed as a community only to the extent to which it retains and embraces this quality of sanctuary. Sanibel will serve as attraction only to the extent to which it retains its desired qualities as sanctuary and community.

### Objective A1

Sanibel is and shall remain a small town.

Policy A1.1. The City of Sanibel will foster quality, harmony and beauty in all forms of human alteration of the environment. The community aesthetic is defined as a casual style; one which is adapted to a relaxed island quality of life and respectful of local history, weather, culture and natural systems.

Policy A1.2. The City of Sanibel chooses to remain unique through a development pattern that reflects the predominance of natural conditions and characteristics over human intrusions. All forms of development and redevelopment will preserve the community’s unique small town identity.

Policy A1.3. The City of Sanibel chooses to preserve its rural character. “Auto-urban” development influences will be avoided. The commercialization of natural resources will be limited and strictly controlled.

## Goal Statement B

The character and location of Future Land Uses in the City of Sanibel will:

- Promote safety and maintain evacuation capabilities
- Promote the protection of natural, environmental, economic and scenic resources
- Promote maintenance or enhancement of water quality, both in the Island's Freshwater Management Area and in the Island's off-shore coastal waters
- Promote adequate provision of human support systems
- Promote intergovernmental coordination
- Reflect the City's Capital Improvements Program

to ensure implementation of the objectives and policies of the *Sanibel Plan*.

### Objective B1

Ensure that development intensities are maintained in a manner consistent with the City's Hurricane Evacuation Plan to permit evacuation to take place within times specified in the Southwest Florida Regional Hurricane Evacuation Study.

Policy B1.1. Maintain the residential densities on the Development Intensity Map that are consistent with adequate evacuation capabilities.

### Objective B2

As development and redevelopment anticipated in the Future Land Use Element occurs, protect natural resources, including soils, by limiting development as a percentage of total land area.

Policy B2.1. Protect natural resources by application of best management practices and continued implementation of the development regulations and performance standards of the Land Development Code.

### Objective B3

Ensure that public facilities and services (human support systems) that are necessary to meet adopted level of service standards are available concurrent with the impacts of future development.

Policy B3.1. No permits (development orders) will be issued for future development that would result in an increase in demand for facilities that do not comply with the minimum level of service standards for public facilities of the Plan.

### Objective B4

Ensure the availability of suitable land for public facilities (human support systems) necessary to support development consistent with the Future Land Use Map, which is consistent with the densities and permitted uses regulated by the Development Intensity Map, Ecological Zones Map, Commercial District Map, Wetlands Conservation Lands Map and Resort Housing District Map.

Policy B4.1. Through implementation of the Land Development Code, support the provision and expansion of needed public facilities.

Policy B4.2. Public schools are permitted in the Altered Lands and Mid-Island Ridge zones designated on the Ecological Zones Maps of the Future Land Use Maps series of the *Sanibel Plan*.

Policy B4.3. Implement the interlocal agreement with the Lee County School District to coordinate on appropriate population projections, on infrastructure and planning and on the siting of new schools.

#### Objective B5

Ensure the protection of historic resources.

Policy B5.1. Incentives for the preservation of identified historic resources will continue to be incorporated in the adopted Land Development Code.

#### Objective B6

Development, consistent with the Future Land Use Map, that is consistent with densities and permitted uses regulated by the Development Intensity Map, the Ecological Zones Map, the Commercial District Map, Wetlands Conservation Lands Map and the Resort Housing District Map, will be managed by implementation and enforcement of the Land Development Code.

Policy B6.1. To implement the *Sanibel Plan*, including Future Land Use objectives, continue to maintain

regulations and standards in the Land Development Code which:

- Regulate the use of land and water
- Regulate the subdivision of land
- Ensure compatibility of adjacent land uses
- Provide for open space
- Ensure safe on-site traffic flow
- Provide for on-site parking

#### Objective B7

To discourage sprawl, ensure that future development is consistent with the Future Land Use Map, that is consistent with the densities and permitted uses regulated by the Development Intensity Map, the Ecological Zones Map, Commercial District Map, Wetlands Conservation Lands Map, and Resort Housing District Map.

Policy B7.1. The Plan for Permitted Uses, the Plan for Residential Development Intensity, the Plan for Commercial Development and the Plan for Community Design will continue to be implemented by the development regulations and performance standards of the Land Development Code.

#### Objective B8

Existing land uses that are nonconforming with the Future Land Use Map, that is, nonconforming with permitted uses regulated by the Ecological Zones Map, Commercial District Map, Wetlands

*Section 3.6.2.*

Conservation Lands Map and the Resort Housing District Map will not be expanded.

Policy B8.1. Permits will not be issued for the expansion of nonconforming land uses.

**Objective B9**

Continue the implementation of innovative land development regulations to achieve the objectives of the Plan.

Policy B9.1. Annually review the Land Development Code to consider innovative techniques that can improve achievement of Plan objectives.

**Objective B10**

Coordinate with any appropriate resource planning and management plan prepared pursuant to Chapter 380, Florida Statutes and approved by the Governor and Cabinet.