



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

City Manager

City Council Regular Meeting Date: March 18, 2025

To: City Council
From: Dana A. Souza, City Manager
Date: March 11, 2025

SUBJECT: Request from The Sanctuary at Wulfert Point Community Association to reduce the speed limit on Wulfert Rd. from 30 mph to 20 mph.

BACKGROUND: The Sanctuary at Wulfert Point Community Association (Association) has submitted a request for the City to consider reducing the speed limit on Wulfert Rd. from 30 mph to 20 mph. Included in the agenda packet for this item is an email from Marc Lautenbach (2/4/2025), on behalf of the Association, requesting that the speed limit on Wulfert Rd. be reduced from 30 mph to 22 mph, and a letter from the Association Board of Directors (4/27/2025), requesting that the Wulfert Rd. speed limit be reduced from 30 mph to 20 mph.

After communicating with Mr. Lautenbach about his email requesting that the Wulfert Rd. speed limit be reduced to 22 mph, he understands that speed limits should be established in increments of 5 mph and supports the Association's letter requesting that the speed limit be reduced to 20 mph.

Wulfert Rd. – Wulfert Rd. is located in the northwest section of Sanibel. The curvilinear road is approximately 2.2 miles in length and has a posted speed limit of 30 mph. Chapter 78.1, of the Sanibel Land Development Code (LDC), identifies Wulfert Rd. as a "(Rural) Collector Road". The LDC does not define rural collector road; however, Section 334.03(4) of the Florida Statutes and the FDOT Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction and Maintenance for Streets and Highways, which is also known as the Florida Greenbook (Greenbook), defines a collector road as:

a route providing service which is of relatively moderate average traffic volume, moderately average trip length, and moderately average operating speed. Such a route also collects and distributes traffic between local roads or arterial roads and serves as a linkage between land access and mobility needs.

Referring back to Chapter 78.1, of the LDC, the City defines streets or roads through one of three (3) classifications, (Rural) minor arterial roads, (Rural) collector roads, or (Rural) local roads. The image below is from the LDC and shows the streets assigned to each classification.

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Street or (road) means any public or private right-of-way commonly used, or intended for use, by the public for motor vehicle movement and which is approved for purposes of issuing building permits. For the purpose of this Land Development Code, streets shall be classified as follows:

(1) *(Rural) minor arterial roads:*

- a. Periwinkle Way.
- b. Sanibel-Captiva Road.
- c. Palm Ridge Road.
- d. Causeway Road.
- e. Tarpon Bay Road.

(2) *(Rural) collector roads:*

- a. Lindgren Boulevard.
- b. Bailey Road.
- c. Donax Street.
- d. Dixie Beach Boulevard.
- e. Casa Ybel Road.
- f. Gulf Drive (East, Middle and West).
- g. Rabbit Road.
- h. Wulfert Road.
- i. Bowmans Beach Road.

(3) *(Rural) local roads:* All other streets not listed in this definition.

The reference to “rural” in Sanibel’s street characteristics (arterial, collector, local) in the above insert is what the Greenbook refers to as the Contextual Classification based on population density data. Since Sanibel has low density development patterns, the road system is considered rural.

The correspondences the Association has provided to the City clearly identifies their concerns with the recorded travel speeds of vehicles on Wulfert Rd. and how those travel speeds create public safety concerns for residents. The Association, in their request to lower the speed limit on Wulfert Rd. make the following key points:

- The Sanibel Plan, Transportation Element background discussion (page 102, paragraph 4) states: *The City will attempt through design or redesign to create a sense of place on streets and roads, consistent with the Vision Statement’s expression of the Sanibel community’s sense of place. Recognizing the street as a place rather than as a channel designed for the benefit of the car and driver will change the psychological feel of the street for all users.*

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- Wulfert Rd. is the primary way for Sanctuary residents. There are no sidewalks. Residents walking on Wulfert Rd. do not always feel safe due to vehicular speed.
- The Association's February 2025 survey of Sanctuary residents shows that 74.17% of respondents (120) supported reducing the speed limit to 20 mph (22 mph).
- A traffic study completed by the Sanibel Police Department in February-March 2024 shows the majority of the vehicle speed during the study period traveled at a speed of 25 mph (76.9%) with the highest recorded vehicle speed of 56 mph.

Process to Set Speed Limits – [The Sanibel Code of Ordinances, Chapter 66, Traffic, Article III, Speed Limits, Division 1](#), states that Periwinkle Way (Ferry to Tarpon), Palm Ridge Rd. and Sanibel-Captiva Rd. have a speed limit of 35 mph and, that bridge at Buell Creek on Bay Dr. has a speed limit of 10 mph. The code does not provide speed limits for other streets or roads. Additionally, [Section 316.183\(2\), Florida Statutes](#) states “*On all streets or highways, the maximum speed limits for all vehicles must be 30 miles per hour in business or residence districts, and 55 miles per hour at any time at all other locations. However, with respect to a residence district, a county or municipality may set a maximum speed limit of 20 or 25 miles per hour on local streets and highways after an investigation determines that such a limit is reasonable. It is not necessary to conduct a separate investigation for each residence district.*”

Based on a review of the City Code and Florida Statutes, staff believes that the speed limit on all streets on Sanibel, except for those specified in Chapter 66, is 30 mph. Additionally, Sanibel has posted one sign on the inbound lane of Causeway Blvd. that states 30 mph unless posted. This means that the speed limit on all streets, unless otherwise posted, is 30 mph.



As cited above, Florida Statutes allow municipalities to set maximum speed limits of 20 or 25 mph on residence street after an investigation, or traffic study, is completed and recommends

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the speed limit be changed. In 2014, the City contracted Johnson Engineering to complete "The Dunes Pass Thru and Speed Analysis" which resulted in a reduction of the speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph within the Dunes community. The Dunes study was initiated due to concerns that excessive cut through traffic was impacting the streets within the Dunes neighborhood as motorists tried to avoid traffic congestion on Periwinkle Way. This same cut through traffic was also believed to be traveling at excessive speed.

Page 2 of the Executive Summary in the Dunes study states: *Based on the high volume of pedestrian traffic sharing the corridor with motorists, and the curvature of the roadway, it is recommended that the initial improvements include the speed limit within The Dunes community be reduced to 20 MPH. Per Florida Statute 316.189(1), a speed limit reduction from 30 MPH to 20 MPH is warranted in a residential area following an engineering study.* The reduction in speed limit was believed to be a deterrent for motorists to cut through the neighborhood and therefore reduce conflicts with residents who live in the neighborhood.

The Association's letter and various other comments from the Association's representatives request the Dunes study be used by the City to reduce the speed limits to 20 mph as the conditions on Wulfert Rd. are very similar to the conditions experienced in the dunes prior to the speed limit reduction. As noted above, Section 316.183(2) states "*It is not necessary to conduct a separate investigation for each residence district*".

Staff acknowledges that Section 316.183(2) provides a municipality with flexibility to use an existing traffic study/analysis to justify a reduction in speed limits on other streets that were not included in that study; however, the statute does not read with such breadth as to suggest that a single study in one part of a municipality is necessarily sufficient for speed reductions anywhere else within the municipal limits. Instead, staff has opined that the use of an existing traffic study for this purpose would be appropriate only in certain circumstances, such as when traffic conditions within the two areas are analogous, the traffic study being used to support the position is recent in time, or the newly proposed areas for speed reduction are in close physical proximity to the study area,

Conclusion –

Staff believes that a reduction in speed limits on Wulfert Rd. should be based on an independent traffic study conducted specifically for this street because:

- The Dunes study was conducted to address the specific concerns and issues specifically within the Dunes neighborhood
- The Dunes study focused on concerns related to it being a cut through for motorists, which is not the case for Wulfert Rd..
- The Dunes study is 11 years old and geographically relates to traffic 12 miles from the Sanctuary.

Despite this opinion, staff acknowledges City Council could still make a finding that the Dunes study is appropriate in application to the Sanctuary and take action to reduce the speed limits within the Sanctuary without commissioning a new study to address Wulfert Rd. specifically.

Staff has obtained a proposal from Johnson Engineering to complete a traffic study for Wulfert Rd. and the cost is \$14,984.

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FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Discussion and direction.

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