



City of Sanibel

City Council Public Comment Card

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Sanibel Bicycle Club
Input to Sanibel City Council On Long Range Planning

The Sanibel Bicycle Club asks that in City Council's long-range planning for the City of Sanibel, they place a high priority on the Sanibel's Shared Use Path System. The Club believes the City's Shared Use Path is a valuable asset to the City and one of the major "character defining" ingredients of Sanibel. To preserve this asset going forward will require thoughtful care and management.

While we tend to think of the Path System in the category of "infrastructure", the Shared Use Path actually touches many aspects of the quality of life we enjoy here:

- First, the Path System is an important element of Sanibel's small town community atmosphere;
- Second, we believe it is supportive of and complimentary to our environment and to Sanibel's role as a sanctuary for wildlife;
- Third, the Path is conducive to a healthy lifestyle for our increasingly active population;
- And fourth, the Path plays a significant role in the transportation needs of the Island by providing an alternative to motor vehicles on our roads.

For these reasons, the Bicycle Club is committed to maintaining and improving the Path System, and we believe this should rank as a high priority for the City going forward. To be specific, this means maintaining the physical condition of the Path on a regular basis to insure people are safe when they use it. We also support making improvements and capacity expansions to the current path where and when needed to meet the changing needs and travel patterns of the population, consistent with the Sanibel Plan.

Accomplishing this will require placing a priority on Path needs when planning City projects and setting City budgets. We think the updated Shared Use Path Master Plan, currently being finalized for Council approval, provides a good roadmap to accomplishing this, and we support Council's approval of that plan'

Looking into the future, a major challenge we foresee is finding a way to control the types of users, equipment and speed levels that are present on the path to make sure all users remain safe. This issue is addressed in the updated Shared Use Path Master Plan, but is becoming more challenging each year.

For example, pedal-assisted e-bikes are a growing presence on the path and are an important way for our older citizens to stay active. We think more and more people will be using e-bikes as our population ages and lifestyles change. The challenge will be to continue to allow lower

speed “pedal assist” e-bikes, but restrict or prohibit faster, throttle-controlled e-bikes (and other fast-moving devices like scooters and hover--boards), which can threaten path safety.

Finally, in future years we expect to see an overall increase in the number of people using the Path, as people adopt more active lifestyles. This will create a need for education. Residents and visitors need to be educated about the rules, regulations and etiquette of safe Path usage. And motorists who don’t use the Path need to be educated on what is required of them as they interface with Path users at intersections, crosswalks and on the road. Given Sanibel’s popularity as a vacation spot, and the high turnover in visitors, we see the education task as an ongoing need the City will have to address.

For its part, the Bicycle Club plans to continue to be a dependable partner with the City in its stewardship of the Path System, and we thank you for this opportunity to provide our input on the City’s long-term priorities.

February 15, 2022