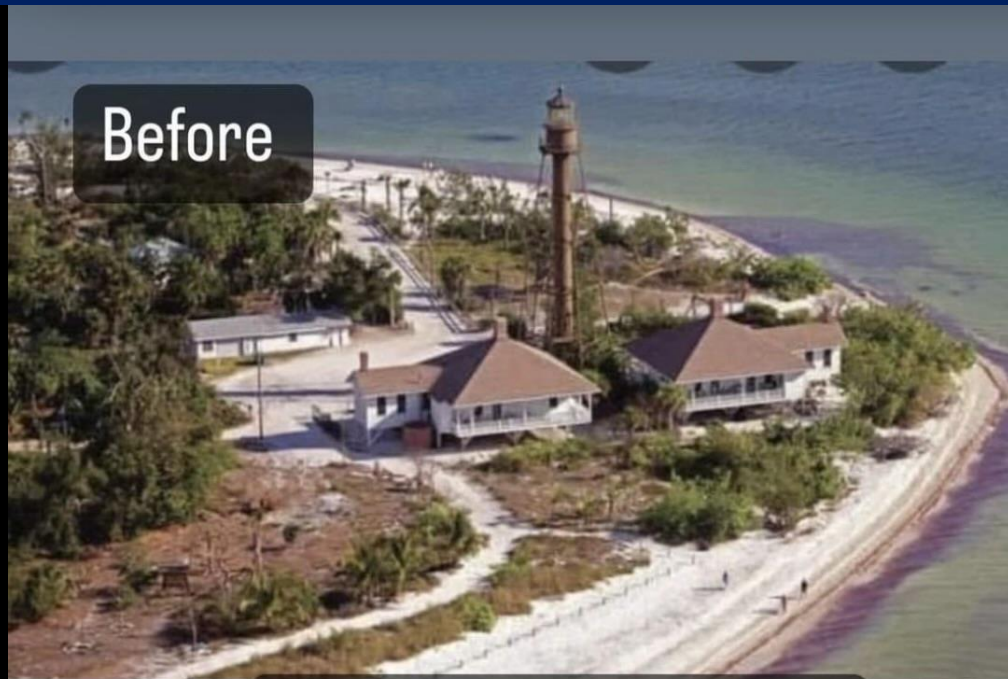


# CITY OF SANIBEL

## 2023 Legislative Priorities Hurricane Ian Recovery

Before



Sanibel Lighthouse Beach



Mayor Holly D. Smith

Vice Mayor Richard Johnson  
Councilmember Dr. Scott Crater  
Councilmember John Henshaw  
Councilmember Mike Miller

*“Sanibel is  
and shall  
remain a  
barrier island  
sanctuary”*

# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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## About Sanibel:

The City of Sanibel is situated on a barrier island off Southwest Florida's Gulf Coast just west of Fort Myers in Lee County.

Sanibel has embraced an ecological vision that places the natural environment at the top of its hierarchy of values. Our citizens recognize the connection between the natural environment and our quality of life and have supported policies and programs that protect and improve water quality throughout our region.

The people of Sanibel are sustained by the beauty and health of the Island's natural and restored habitats, and they rely on the coordinated vigilance of residents, government, and private enterprise to ensure Sanibel will remain a barrier island sanctuary where a diverse population lives in harmony with the Island's wildlife and natural habitats.

Sadly, on September 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian made landfall at Sanibel causing catastrophic damage from winds exceeding 150 mph and a storm surge of 8' to 12'. The hurricane inflicted significant damage to the natural and built environments. Nearly every structure in the City of Sanibel received damage. The infrastructure systems including roadways, sanitary sewer, electrical, water, beach access, stormwater and shared use path suffered various degrees of damage. The island's cherished cultural and historic structures were destroyed or damaged. Sanibel is also a beach and resort destination for worldwide travelers. Hurricane Ian has also left a significant impacts on the City's and region's revenue sources, tourist economy, and quality of life for residents. The City's 2023 Legislative priorities focus on the community's continued recovery.

## Foundational Principles:

- The City of Sanibel supports measures to strengthen and protect local decision making in order to preserve and enhance the quality of life in our unique community.
- The City of Sanibel supports collaborative work with local and regional partners on matters of mutual interest and benefit.





# SANIBEL CITY COUNCIL



John Henshaw

Mike Miller

Scott Crater

Vice Mayor, Richard Johnson

Mayor, Holly Smith

## Vision Statement Summary

**Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary; one where a diverse, multi-generational community lives in harmony with the island's wildlife, preserving natural habitats for the inspiration of future generations.**

*(The City's full Vision Statement may be read in the [Sanibel Plan](#) – Page 3)*

## Mission Statement

**Sanibel stakeholders are stewards of the island and will collaborate to protect environmental assets, promote economic stability, strengthen community engagement, and provide exceptional services and governance.**

In 2022, the Sanibel City Council completed a Strategic Planning process after receiving significant input from Sanibel residents, businesses, and property owners. The Vision Statement Summary, Mission Statement (previous page), and the following Strategic Goals resulted from this process. The City's Legislative Priorities for 2023 are aligned with the Strategic Plan.

## **Sanibel Strategic Goals**

### **Environmental Stewardship**

Lead by example in environmental stewardship to restore, preserve, and enhance our island sanctuary, lead on issues to positively impact local water quality, and support land conservation, waste minimization, renewable energy, and provide recurring education on the Sanibel Plan.

### **Infrastructure**

Focus on infrastructure needs that sustain and protect the island's quality of life, including expanding affordable housing units, maintaining roads, pathways, historical structures, bridges, sewer, and stormwater systems, and implementing coastal resiliency initiatives.

### **Fiscal Health**

Maintain and promote fiscal health of the city by providing efficient and transparent service delivery and maintaining appropriate financial policies that ensure appropriate fund balances and diverse revenue streams and maximize grant opportunities to support the City's Strategic Goals.

### **Customer Service**

Manage human capital to deliver high quality customer-oriented services by investing in technology, maintaining competitive pay and benefits for city employees, and adjusting organizational structures as needed.

### **Quality of Life**

Sustain the safety and well-being of residents, businesses, and visitors by providing below market rate housing, ensuring that resources are provided for law enforcement and disaster preparedness, and design on-island educational, historic, cultural, social, and recreation activities for a diverse multi-generational citizenry

# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## **Legislative Priorities:**

For 2023, the City is requesting legislative funding for multiple local projects that will further the City's recovery from Hurricane Ian, improve resiliency from future storms, and continue with the City's water quality improvement priorities.

### **1. Revenue Replacement – Revenue Stabilization**

While Sanibel has prepared for hurricanes by developing response plans, prepositioning contractual services for debris management, and maintaining strong financial positions to carry the costs of recovery, the damage inflicted by Hurricane Ian will strain resources for several years. The potential loss of revenue generated through the use of public facilities, population reduction, and the potential reduction in taxable property values is compounded exponentially when considering the loss of local commerce and the anticipated loss of seasonal residents and visitors.

Legislation was approved during the Special Session in December 2022 to forgive or delay any ad valorem tax payments to those residents and businesses whose properties were uninhabitable. Sanibel requests the State to fund property tax revenue replacement to ensure the City of Sanibel can continue operating without incurring significant debt that could jeopardize the island's recovery. This would include cash flow gap funding.

The City estimates significant revenue losses from other revenue sources including causeway toll revenue, beach parking revenue, recreation fund revenue and sewer fund revenue.

- **Legislative funding request:** \$8.5 million

### **2. Replace and Elevate Lift Station Panels to Meet Resiliency Requirements for Sanitary Sewer**

The City's sanitary sewer system includes 165 lift stations that are controlled by 135 electric panels that receive power from the grid and control the lift station pumps. All of the panels were damaged by the storm surge and need to be rebuilt with extendable/retractable panels that will meet FEMA's 100-year flood elevation requirement. Replacing all control panels will allow the system to recover quickly from future events. This project also includes the installation of 4,100 linear feet of a 12-inch force main on the West Wastewater System and upsizing three (3) pumps to improve flow on the west system. The City anticipates receiving \$17 million from FEMA through Hurricane Ian Public Assistance funding. Total project is \$34 million.

- **Legislative funding request:** \$17 million

### **3. Renourish Sanibel Beaches and Dunes**

Sanibel's entire (12-mile) coastline has been significantly eroded, altered and washed-out from the storm surge associated with Hurricane Ian. Having well nourished and stabilized beaches, and protective dunes on Sanibel are vital components of southwest Florida's economy and important resiliency features that protect upland structures. The beaches and dunes require complete renourishment and restoration. The State of Florida has provided \$12 million in funding for Sanibel's beach/dune renourishment with funding through SB 4A. The total cost is estimated at \$30 million including reestablishing dune vegetation.

- **Legislative funding request:** \$18 million

# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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## 4. Replace Dune Walkovers

Public access to Sanibel's beaches is provided through a series (20) of dune walkovers. All the dune walkovers were destroyed by Hurricane Ian. Dune walkovers must be reconstructed so residents and the visiting public can access and enjoy Sanibel's beaches through safe and ADA accessible beach access locations.

- **Legislative funding request:** \$4 million

## 5. Reconstruct the East Periwinkle Bridge with a Permanent Resilient Bridge.

The East Periwinkle Bridge approaches were washed out by Hurricane Ian, rendering the road inaccessible for months. The Florida Department of Transportation completed temporary repairs with an anticipated reopening date of December 7, 2022. The FDOT and the City's engineer have advised that the bridge approaches, and utility lines need to be replaced with a bridge that will be resilient to future storms and potential surges. The City is requesting \$750,000 to design the new bridge and will seek State and Federal funds for construction in a future year.

- **Legislative funding request:** \$750,000

## 6. Police Department Building Construction

The City experienced damage to City Hall's 1<sup>st</sup> floor structures which includes offices for the Police Department, the Natural Resources Department and the IT Department. The City plans to build a new Police Department building that is stand alone from City Hall. This will provide a resilient structure for first responders who are critical to Sanibel's response and recovery following any natural disaster. The new construction will also allow the City to reallocate 2<sup>nd</sup> floor space in City Hall and eliminate offices on the lower level.

- **Legislative funding request:** \$9 million

## 7. Repair the Shared Use Path System.

Sanibel's shared use path system (26 miles) experienced some damage from the storm surge wash over and subsequent damage from debris placement on the ROW. Sanibel is requesting state assistance to repair the shared use path system which is critical in supporting visitor and resident transportation during the busy tourist season.

- **Legislative funding request:** \$2 million

## 8. Sanibel Slough Water Quality and Resiliency Project

This request will fund the design and de-mucking of approximately 1,100 linear feet of the Sanibel Slough to improve water quality, increase stormwater conveyance and capacity, and reduce surface water flooding associated with storm events.

- **Legislative funding request:** \$1 million

# WATER QUALITY PRIORITIES

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## Regional Priorities for Improving Water Quality and Quantity

**SUPPORT** continued, dedicated state funding for:

- The **Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)** and the **Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir**, to ensure that these critical projects move forward in accordance with the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS).
- Construction of the **C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir Project** and **Water Quality Treatment Component** to store up to 170,000 acre-feet of water within the Caloosahatchee watershed.
- Construction of the **C-43 Water Quality Testing Facility (“Boma”)** on property purchased jointly by Lee County and the South Florida Water Management District.
- **Phase II construction of Lake Hicpochee Restoration Project.** The SFWMD is projected to have completed design of the project in early 2023.
- The ongoing work of the **Blue-Green Algae Task Force** and the **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Red Tide Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force**, including research, water and air quality monitoring, prediction, notification, and mitigation efforts pertaining to red tide and blue-green algae.
- The **Water Quality Improvements Grant Program** to assist local governments in constructing critical stormwater and nutrient removal projects to meet the State's Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) Program

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