

PALM ISLAND NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Appendix B.4 Summary of Input from Town Hall Meetings

The Town Hall Neighborhood Planning Meetings May 13th and May 15th, 2026

Across all sessions, residents expressed a consistent desire to preserve island character, limit overdevelopment, improve storm resilience, and strengthen education and communication without adding unnecessary regulation or signage. The overarching theme was clear: protect what makes the island unique while maintaining practical flexibility for property owners.

Chapter 1 – Land Use & Development

Residents strongly emphasized protecting the island's low-density, single-family residential character. There was deep concern about future zoning changes, commercial creep near ferry landings, and gradual redevelopment pressures similar to other Florida coastal communities. Many supported exploring state-level protections to supplement County rules. While some acknowledged logistical limits on large-scale development, most feared long-term incremental change.

Conclusion: The community wants multiple layers of protection to preserve the island's character and prevent future density increases, while retaining limited flexibility for small-scale, community-serving uses.

Chapter 2 – Environment

Residents overwhelmingly supported environmental protection but stressed that education — not enforcement alone — is the key. They want better outreach to renters, contractors, and new homeowners, but minimal new signage. There was strong support for native landscaping, reducing impervious surfaces, protecting mangroves and dunes, and independent water-quality testing with transparent reporting. Dark Sky principles were supported, though many requested clearer guidance.

Conclusion: The community supports environmental stewardship through education-first strategies, voluntary best practices, and targeted enforcement where necessary.

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Chapter 3 – Navigation & Coastal

Consensus supported targeted dredging where needed, though opinions varied on funding and responsibility. Speeding in canals was generally not viewed as a problem, but residents supported strategic No-Wake and Caution: Manatee signage at canal entrances. Dune restoration was considered urgent and essential, with mixed views on walkover design but agreement that dunes must be protected and stabilized.

Conclusion: Residents support practical, minimal-impact coastal management focused on safety, dune protection, and selective dredging.

Chapter 4 – Infrastructure & Community Services

Residents supported underground utilities, maintaining septic systems, preserving dark skies, and improving fire hydrant maintenance. Concerns included water supply reliability and emergency readiness. Many felt county staffing shortages and permitting delays hinder post-storm recovery. There was strong support for extending the one-year rebuilding timeline to three years after major storms.

Conclusion: The community favors resilient, low-impact infrastructure improvements and more realistic post-disaster rebuilding timelines.

Chapter 5 – Emergency Services & Preparedness

Residents supported clearer address visibility, better hydrant maintenance, and improved emergency communication, especially regarding ferry operations during storms. Opinions differed on whether emergency personnel should remain on-Island during severe weather. Dumping on vacant lots and inconsistent mosquito communication were noted concerns. Mail service opinions were mixed, with many opposing on-island delivery to avoid traffic and clutter.

Conclusion: Residents want stronger communication systems, clearer emergency protocols, and improved basic services without compromising island character.

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Chapter 6 – Enforcement & Community Operations

Residents agreed that speeding and underage golf cart driving are the most pressing enforcement issues. Many felt residents themselves — not visitors — are often the primary violators. There was support for seasonal enforcement increases, especially on holidays. Education was again emphasized, with suggestions for renter flyers, barge-landing information, and online resources. Visual clutter from signs was a recurring concern.

Conclusion: The community prefers targeted, seasonal enforcement paired with education, not broad new regulations or widespread signage.

Overall Conclusions

Across all chapters, the two-day town hall meetings revealed strong, consistent themes:

- **Preserve island character and prevent overdevelopment.**
- **Use education as the primary tool**, especially for renters, contractors, and newcomers.
- **Improve communication**, particularly around emergencies, ferries, and environmental rules.
- **Support environmental protection and storm resilience** through practical, minimally intrusive measures.
- **Maintain flexibility for property owners** while discouraging actions that erode community character or environmental health.
- **Avoid excessive signage and urban-style regulation.**

Residents want a Neighborhood Plan that documents community values, strengthens long-term protections, and guides future decisions without over-regulating daily life.