

The Palm Island Neighborhood Plan

A community-driven effort to preserve and protect the unique character of our bridgeless barrier islands.

palmislandstates.org/programs/neighborhood-plan

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Introduction to the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan

Preface

Don Pedro Island, Knight Island (including the Palm Island Resort) and Thornton Key is collectively known as “Palm Island”, also referred to as “the Island”. It is a community defined by its distinctive character, natural environment, and longstanding commitment to a unique way of life. As Charlotte County continues to grow and evolve, it has become increasingly important for the Island to articulate a clear, community-driven vision for its future. The Palm Island Neighborhood Plan serves as that foundation.

What is a Neighborhood Plan?

The County’s Future Land Use Element recognizes the value of neighborhood-level planning as a means to preserve and strengthen the identity of individual communities. Under FLU Policy 6.1.1, *“Neighborhood Plans”* are described as *“a community-based planning process that is designed to address the community character issues of a specific neighborhood and is focused on the establishment of community goals, the identification of neighborhood issues of concern, and development of specific strategies to resolve the issues and achieve the goals.”* This Plan follows that framework.

While the Neighborhood Plan does not create self-governance, it provides a formal mechanism through which Charlotte County can *recognize, support, and reinforce* the uniqueness of Palm Island. By documenting shared values, priorities, and concerns, this Plan helps ensure that future decisions affecting the Island reflect the community’s vision. It also serves as a proactive tool to

address potential challenges—such as unwanted development or incompatible infrastructure proposals—before they arise.

Background

The planning effort began on April 6, 2023, at a town hall meeting with Commissioner Bill Truex hosted by the Palm Island Estates Association, Inc. (PIE) The Don Pedro/Knight Islands Street and Drainage MSTU was identified as the funding source for hiring an engineer to support the process. Over the next two years, the MSTU Advisory Board provided input on the RFP, reviewed budgets, set parameters for public engagement, and monitored bidding. Although the County Commission approved the proposal ranking in July 2025, it later voted on October 14, 2025, to cancel the project, citing concerns that the MSTU was not authorized to fund it.

Despite this setback, the community continued the planning effort independently. PIE Action, an autonomous subcommittee of PIE, led the initiative by updating the 2002 community plan. Beginning in October 2025, each draft chapter was posted online with a summary and survey to gather public input, with notices shared via email and Facebook. The final chapter was posted on April 28, 2026, followed by publication of the Vision Statement survey results on May 5. Two town hall workshops on May 13 and 16 provided additional feedback, which was incorporated into the final draft.

Overall Conclusions

This Plan reflects the input, aspirations, and collective commitment of the Island's residents and property owners. All members of the community were welcome to participate in the planning process, ensuring that the resulting vision was inclusive, representative, and grounded in shared values. Through this collaborative effort, the Neighborhood Plan establishes a path forward that honors the Island's past, protects its present, and guides its future.



The Vision Statement:

Preserving “Pure Florida”

Introduction

Palm Island is among the last places in Florida where a “Pure Florida” lifestyle still exists – quiet, natural, low-density, and accessible only by ferry and/or privately-owned boats. As the Island continues to grow and evolve, property owners overwhelmingly agree that the qualities that make this place special must be protected. The Vision Statement expresses the community's shared values and long-term aspirations: preserving the natural environment, maintaining single family residential character, protecting the boat-only lifestyle, and sustaining the Island's peaceful, easygoing way of life for future generations.

The Vision Statement Narrative

We are the Islanders — residents, property owners, and stewards of a chain of bridgeless barrier islands that represent one of the last remaining examples of “Pure Florida.” We recognize that the Island’s pristine environment, quiet charm, and unique lifestyle are fragile and can be lost without thoughtful planning and shared responsibility. As the population grows and development continues, we are committed to protecting the qualities that drew us here and define our community.

1. Protecting the Natural Environment

Preserving native vegetation, wildlife habitat, clean waterways, and open green spaces is essential to maintaining our quality of life. We value the presence of sea turtles, shorebirds, gopher tortoises, and other wildlife, and we support community-led stewardship efforts such as beach cleanups, Sea Turtle Patrol, and responsible landscaping practices. Environmental protection is not only a priority — it is a defining part of Island identity.

2. Maintaining Single-Family Residential Zoning

The Island's low-density, single-family residential character is central to its charm. Residents strongly support maintaining existing zoning, height limits, and density restrictions, and oppose new commercial development. While we appreciate the limited commercial activity in areas presently zoned for tourism, we believe that additional commercial uses would alter the Island's character and increase impacts on infrastructure, traffic, and the environment.

3. Preserving the Boat-Only Lifestyle

Islanders overwhelmingly oppose the construction of a bridge to the mainland. Limited access is a defining feature of Island life, contributing to privacy, safety, and a sense of seclusion. We value transportation by ferry and private boat, and we accept the tradeoffs that come with living in a place where access is intentionally limited. This choice is fundamental to the Island's identity.

4. Protecting the “Pure Florida” Atmosphere

We embrace the simplicity and charm of unpaved roads, dark skies, quiet nights, and a relaxed pace of life. We value the absence of streetlights, which protects sea turtles and allows us to see the stars. We appreciate the architectural and economic diversity of the Island and the sense of place created by natural landscapes and informal surroundings. These qualities are increasingly rare in coastal Florida and must be preserved.

5. Caring for Our Beaches and Waterways

Our beaches and canals are central to Island life. We support ongoing beach renourishment, dune protection, and community-led stewardship efforts. We oppose activities that harm the shoreline—such as vehicles, campfires, or fireworks on the beach—and we value the clean, natural condition of our waterways. Maintaining these resources is essential for recreation, habitat, and storm protection.

6. Balancing Privacy and Community

Islanders value both independence and a strong sense of community. We respect individual privacy while supporting neighbors in times of need. Community events, volunteer organizations, and shared stewardship efforts strengthen our connection to one another and to the natural

environment. We also value essential services—Fire & EMS, CCSO, and ferry emergency response—that make Island life safe and sustainable.

Together, we commit to protecting the natural beauty, character, and quality of life that defines our Island, ensuring that future generations can enjoy the same “Pure Florida” experience that we cherish today.

Community Input

Survey results, comments and input from public meetings showed exceptionally strong alignment with the Vision Statement. Residents overwhelmingly supported protecting the natural environment, maintaining single-family residential zoning, opposing a bridge, and preserving unpaved roads, dark skies, and quiet nights. Comments emphasized the importance of privacy, the uniqueness of the boat-only lifestyle, and the need to protect beaches, canals, and wildlife. Many expressed gratitude for the Island’s character and urged that newcomers adapt to the Island — not the other way around. While a few supported exploring a bridge or limited commercial activity, these views were rare and did not reflect the dominant community consensus.

Overall Conclusions

The Vision Statement reflects a deeply unified community. Islanders share a clear commitment to preserving the natural environment, maintaining single-family residential character and sustaining the Island’s peaceful, “Pure Florida” atmosphere. Residents value both privacy and community, and they recognize that thoughtful stewardship is essential to protecting the qualities that make the Island unique. This Vision provides the foundation for the Neighborhood Plan and guides all future decisions to ensure that the Island remains a rare and exceptional place for generations to come.



Executive Summaries

Land Use

Community input on Land Use was extensive and closely aligned across surveys, written comments, and two-day public workshops. Residents expressed a strong, consistent desire to preserve the Island's low-density, single-family residential character, protect natural vegetation and wildlife habitat, and ensure that future development does not erode the qualities that make the bridgeless barrier island unique. At the same time, residents emphasized the importance of property rights, flexibility, and avoiding HOA-style overregulation.

Survey results show overwhelming support for limiting new construction to single-family homes, concern that future zoning changes could put the Island at risk, and strong support for adopting state legislation such as the Bocilla Islands Chain Conservation District Act to provide additional long-term protection. Residents also expressed confusion about the County's non-conformities ordinance and the 50% Rule, and strongly supported extending post-disaster permitting timelines from one year to two or three years.

Environmental stewardship emerged as a major theme. Residents value natural vegetation, oppose clear-cutting, and support land preservation efforts by local conservancy organizations and the County. While many support incentives for native landscaping, they also want to avoid mandates that restrict homeowner flexibility.

Commercial development is one of the most unified topics: residents overwhelmingly oppose rezoning any additional land for commercial use. Some support limited, Island-serving commercial activity on parcels already zoned for it, such as a small market or restaurant, but only if it does not alter the Island's character.

Vacation rentals are widely accepted when responsibly managed. Residents support occupancy limits based on septic system capacity, renter education about Island regulations and best practices, and having an on-Island contact for rental issues. They want to protect the island's quiet lifestyle, infrastructure, and environmental resources.

Across all topics, residents emphasized the need for transparency and timely notice from regulatory agencies on items related to land use, and also Island-specific planning that recognizes the unique constraints of a bridgeless barrier island.

Preserving our Environment

Environmental stewardship emerged as one of the most unified themes across surveys, written comments, and the two-day public workshops. Residents expressed strong support for protecting the Island's wildlife, preserving natural habitat, and maintaining high water quality, while emphasizing that solutions must be practical, science-driven, implemented through community education about the issues and their remedies, and respectful of private property rights. The community consistently favored approaches that strengthen awareness and encourage voluntary best practices rather than adding new regulations or creating an HOA-like environment.

Wildlife protection received overwhelming support. Residents want clearer communication about sea turtle, shorebird, manatee, and gopher tortoise protections, and they emphasized that renters, contractors, and new homeowners often lack basic environmental knowledge. Strategic "No Wake" and "Caution: Manatee" signage at canal entrances and on private docks was widely supported, along with participation in iguana-control programs and efforts to reduce light pollution through Dark Sky practices. At the same time, residents expressed concern about excessive signage and strongly preferred targeted education over visual clutter.

Habitat preservation was another major priority. Residents value native vegetation, oppose clear-cutting, and support removal of invasive species. They favor native and Florida-friendly landscaping, dune protection, and mangrove stewardship, but want these practices encouraged not mandated. Many stressed that environmental guidance should not restrict the ability to build a single-family home or impose uniform landscaping requirements. The community supports wildlife-friendly property design when framed as voluntary best practice and balanced with pet safety and pool protection.

Water quality generated some of the strongest consensus in the chapter. Residents want independent, Island-specific water testing, detailed publicly available reporting, and long-term monitoring to guide decision-making. They also support education on simple practices that reduce nutrient runoff and protect seagrasses and shoreline habitat. Interest in community-based initiatives, such as vertical oyster gardens and shoreline vegetation restoration, was high.

Across all environmental topics, residents emphasized the importance of education, transparency, and practical implementation tailored to the realities of a bridgeless barrier island. They want to protect the Island's natural resources while preserving its quiet, low-density character and maintaining flexibility for individual property owners.

Navigation and Coastal

Navigation and coastal management are central to daily life on Palm Island where waterways, beaches, and dunes serve as both essential infrastructure and fragile natural systems. Community input across surveys, written comments, and two days of public workshops showed strong alignment on the need to maintain safe navigation, protect shoreline systems, and ensure that dredging, enforcement, and beach management reflect the realities of a bridgeless barrier island. Residents consistently emphasized practical, targeted solutions that support safety and environmental stewardship without adding unnecessary regulation or visual clutter.

Waterways discussions revealed some support for maintaining navigable channels as needed. Property owners agreed that dredging should occur only when necessary and should be funded by the property owners who benefit. Opposition to seawalls on the canals is strong and support for docks on vacant lots is predicated on mangrove protection. While canals were not viewed as having significant speeding issues, residents expressed strong concern about unsafe boating behavior on the Intracoastal Waterway, especially near ferry crossings. There was clear support for increased enforcement resources on the ICW and for strategic “No Wake” signage at canal entrances, along with optional caution signs on private docks.

Coastal protection emerged as a major priority. Residents overwhelmingly supported timely dune restoration after storms and emphasized the importance of vegetation — particularly sea oats — in stabilizing dunes. While opinions varied on the best type of dune walkover, most supported simple, low-profile, or removable designs at public easements to protect dune systems while maintaining access. The community reaffirmed its long-standing preference for natural shoreline management and avoidance of hard structures. Red tide remains a significant concern, and residents supported continued monitoring and research efforts by state and local agencies.

Across all topics, residents favored solutions that are practical, environmentally responsible, and customized to the Island’s unique conditions. They emphasized education, transparency, and collaboration over mandates, and supported targeted enforcement where safety and environmental protection are at risk. The community’s priorities reflect a shared commitment to preserving the Island’s waterways and coastal systems while maintaining the quiet, low-density character that defines Island life.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure on a bridgeless barrier island must balance safety, environmental protection, and community character while operating within the limits of restricted access and sensitive coastal conditions. Residents consistently emphasized that infrastructure decisions must preserve the Island's quiet, low-density lifestyle and avoid urbanization, while still ensuring reliable transportation, utilities, and long-term resilience.

Access to the Island is limited to the privately operated Palm Island Transit ferry or personally owned boats. Residents value this "deliberate inconvenience" as a defining feature of Island life, but they also expressed concern about ferry reliability, rising costs, congestion, and the lack of long-term guarantees. Mainland parking near Panama Blvd. is already strained and may reach capacity before full build-out. Waterway access and dock permitting must remain consistent, and residents strongly oppose any future bridge connection to the mainland.

Unpaved roads, golf carts, and a slower pace of travel are central to the Island's character. Speeding remains a major safety concern. Encroachments into public rights-of-way reduce parking, limit emergency access, and threaten beach renourishment funding. Residents support maintaining unpaved roads, improving enforcement of golf cart and vehicle regulations, discouraging e-bikes on the beach, and preserving the traditional timber character of the Island's bridges.

Two privately owned utilities provide potable water sourced from Englewood Water District, but residents are concerned about high costs and long-term water availability. The community overwhelmingly opposes central sewer due to cost, environmental vulnerability, and the potential for increased density. Instead, residents support the State-recommended Enhanced Nitrogen-Reducing Onsite Treatment and Disposal Systems (ENR-OSTDS) as the preferred long-term wastewater solution, along with improved monitoring and maintenance of existing septic systems.

Residents strongly support preserving dark skies and oppose any expansion of street lighting. Internet reliability remains inconsistent, and the community supports burying utilities to improve storm resilience. Concerns were raised about poorly maintained underground and above-ground infrastructure, lines crossing waterways, and aging fire hydrants.

Residents want infrastructure decisions that protect the Island's quiet, low-density character while ensuring reliable access and long-term resilience. They prioritize maintaining the bridgeless barrier island lifestyle, preserving unpaved roads, and improving enforcement of existing transportation and safety rules. Water quality and supply remain major concerns, and the community strongly favors advanced onsite wastewater systems over central sewer. Islanders also value dark skies, natural landscapes, and the protection of rights-of-way essential for beach renourishment. Above all, they want transparent County decision-making and infrastructure solutions tailored to the Island's unique limitations.

Residents envision an infrastructure approach that protects the Island's natural environment, respects its limitations, and supports a resilient, low-density community. Infrastructure solutions must be customized to the realities of a bridgeless barrier island and grounded in long-term environmental stewardship.

Services to the Community

Services on Palm Island must function within the constraints of a bridgeless barrier island, where limited access, fragile infrastructure, and environmental sensitivity shape every aspect of emergency response, hurricane preparedness, and daily operations. Community input across surveys, written comments, and two days of public workshops revealed strong alignment on the need for reliable Fire/EMS services, clearer emergency communication, and practical improvements that enhance safety without compromising the Island's low-impact character.

Residents expressed strong support for improving address visibility, ensuring functional fire hydrants, and clarifying fire flow capacity — issues that directly affect emergency response times. Many raised concerns about narrow roads, vegetation overgrowth, and limited turnarounds that restrict access for fire trucks and ambulances. The fairness of the Fire/EMS MSBU funding model was also a recurring theme, particularly when Station 10 resources are deployed off-Island. Community participants emphasized the need for more visible law enforcement presence during peak periods and better coordination between Dispatch, Palm Island Transit, and Charlotte County during emergencies.

Hurricane evacuation and disaster planning generated significant discussion. Residents supported early evacuation but expressed frustration with inconsistent or unclear ferry operations during storms. Although communication has improved, many emphasized the need for a unified, reliable information channel. Generator safety, boil-water advisories, and post-storm re-entry procedures were also identified as areas needing better guidance.

Opinions regarding other essential services such as waste management, mosquito control, signage, and potential mail delivery reflected the community's desire to maintain the Island's aesthetic while improving day-to-day operations. Residents supported continued mosquito control and better education about waste disposal and dumping rules. There was strong concern about excessive signage in public rights-of-way, with broad support for reducing visual clutter while preserving the Island's distinctive hand-painted signs. Opinions on mail services were mixed, with many preferring to avoid additional traffic and mailbox infrastructure.

Across all service categories, residents favored practical, education-first solutions that improve safety, communication, and operational resilience while preserving the Island's quiet, low-density character. This chapter provides a framework for strengthening essential services in a way that reflects the community's values and the unique conditions of Island life.

Enforcement of Regulations

Enforcement on Palm Island must balance safety, environmental protection, and the preservation of the Island's informal, low-impact character. Residents recognize that existing laws and regulations already provide the framework needed to address most issues, but limited on-Island enforcement capacity means these rules are not always consistently applied. Concerns most frequently raised include speeding on roads and waterways, under-age golf cart driving, unleashed dogs, fireworks, open fires and golf carts on the beach — issues that directly affect safety, wildlife, and quality of life. At the same time, many Islanders value the absence of heavy policing and want to avoid creating an HOA-like environment.

Community input emphasized that lack of awareness is often the root cause of violations. Renters, short-term guests, contractors, and new homeowners frequently do not understand local rules, and even long-time residents sometimes lack clarity on distinctions such as golf carts versus LSVs. Workshop participants strongly supported education-first strategies—pre-arrival renter communication, contractor guidance, new-homeowner packets, and a centralized online resource—while expressing broad resistance to adding more signs. Residents also supported targeted enforcement during peak periods, holidays, and high-traffic weekends, along with improved Marine Patrol presence on the ICW.

Overall, Islanders generally support an approach to regulations and enforcement that is specific to the community, as opposed to the uniform approach necessary for County-wide governance. Residents want practical, respectful enforcement that protects safety and the environment without compromising the Island's laid-back feel. They favor a combination of strategic enforcement, thoughtful communication, and neighbor-to-neighbor problem solving. This chapter provides a framework for strengthening awareness, improving compliance, and ensuring that enforcement supports the Island's unique character and sense of community.

The Future of the Island

Chapter 7 outlines the community's long-term vision for Palm Island and the steps needed to preserve its unique character while preparing for future challenges. Islanders consistently express a desire to maintain the bridgeless barrier-island lifestyle, protect the natural environment, and ensure that infrastructure and services remain resilient and appropriately scaled to the Island's limitations. A central theme is the community's interest in having greater influence over decisions, spending, and planning that directly affect the Island.

The chapter emphasizes the need to shift from reactive responses to a proactive, forward-looking approach to infrastructure, services, and community needs. It also highlights the importance of equity and inclusivity as costs rise, ensuring that residents of all ages and incomes can continue to live on the Island.

The Neighborhood Plan is presented as a living document that will require ongoing monitoring, periodic updates, and continued County support consistent with FLU Policy 6.1.2. Islanders envision a future defined by collaboration, transparency, environmental stewardship, and strong community involvement. With thoughtful planning and sustained engagement, Palm Island can continue to embody the qualities that make it one of the last remaining examples of "Pure Florida."

Community Input Summary

From January through April 2026, residents and property owners participated in a comprehensive community input process to shape the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan. This effort included an online survey, additional written comments, and two public workshop sessions held on May 13 and May 16, 2026, each from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

206 Islanders representing 189 discrete Island properties filled out surveys covering 88 questions across all chapters. A total of nearly 90 participants attended the Town Hall meetings, where attendees were divided into small workshop groups to discuss each chapter in depth. Across all sources, the community provided hundreds of comments and thousands of data points, representing one of the most extensive public input efforts ever conducted for the Island.

The survey, which ran for four months, received responses across all 88 questions, with participation varying by chapter but consistently strong. Community input revealed clear, recurring themes that reflect a deeply unified vision for the Island's future.

Overwhelming Support for Preserving Island Character

Across all chapters, residents expressed strong agreement that the Island's defining qualities — its natural environment, low density single family residential character, and bridgeless barrier island lifestyle — must be protected. For example, 93 of 111 respondents strongly agreed that the Island should remain single family residential with no new commercial development (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 3). Comments emphasized the importance of unpaved roads, dark skies, quiet nights, and the Island's "Pure Florida" atmosphere.

Residents consistently voiced concern that future zoning changes or development pressures could erode these qualities. 80 of 105 respondents said they were concerned that current land use rules could change and put the Island at risk (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 11). Many supported additional long term protections, including state level measures such as the Bocilla Islands Chain Conservation District Act (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 12).

Strong Commitment to Environmental Stewardship

Environmental protection emerged as one of the most unified themes. 100 of 111 respondents strongly agreed that protecting the natural environment is important (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 2). Residents emphasized preserving native vegetation, wildlife habitat, dunes, and waterways, while also supporting practical, education first approaches rather than new regulations.

Town hall participants highlighted concerns about clear cutting, invasive species, hardened surfaces, and stormwater impacts. Many supported voluntary incentives for native landscaping and continued land preservation efforts by groups such as the Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc. (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 27). Water quality was another major priority, with strong support for independent testing and transparent reporting.

Desire for Responsible, Island Focused Land Use

Residents strongly supported maintaining existing zoning and building regulations while ensuring they are applied consistently and clearly explained. Many expressed confusion about non-conformities and the 50% Rule, with 58 of 75 respondents agreeing that understanding these rules is important (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 14). There was broad support for extending post disaster permitting timelines, with 61 of 75 respondents supporting a three year window (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 16).

Green space preservation was widely supported, though residents emphasized that protections should not restrict the ability to build a single family home. Most favored education, incentives, and enforcement of existing rules rather than new mandates.

Clear Opposition to Expanded Commercial Development

Commercial development was one of the most unified topics across all input sources. 72 of 91 respondents strongly opposed rezoning any additional land for commercial use (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 30). Residents stressed that commercial activity should remain extremely limited, low impact, and focused solely on serving Island needs. While a minority supported the idea of a small market or restaurant on parcels already zoned for such uses, the dominant view was that additional commercial development would threaten the Island's character, increase traffic, and strain infrastructure.

Balanced Approach to Short Term Rentals

Residents generally accepted short term rentals as part of Island life but emphasized the need for responsible management. 62 of 73 respondents agreed that rentals should not disrupt the Island's quiet lifestyle (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 32), and 66 of 73 respondents supported providing renters with clear information about Island rules and environmental protections (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 33). Many supported requiring an on Island contact for rental issues (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 34). Education — rather than new regulation — was the strongest recurring theme.

Infrastructure and Services Must Reflect the Realities of a Bridgeless Barrier Island

Residents emphasized that infrastructure decisions must preserve the Island's low density character while ensuring safety and resilience. Concerns included ferry reliability, mainland parking, road safety, golf cart enforcement, water supply, and the condition of fire hydrants. There was strong opposition to central sewer and strong support for advanced onsite wastewater systems.

Emergency services were widely valued, with 106 of 111 respondents strongly agreeing that Fire/EMS, CCSO, and ferry emergency response are essential (see Appendix B.2 Survey Results, Question 9). Residents supported improved communication during storms, clearer evacuation procedures, and better address visibility.

Enforcement Should Be Practical, Respectful, and Education First

Residents agreed that existing laws — particularly those related to speeding, golf carts, dogs, fireworks, and beach behavior — should be enforced consistently, but without creating an HOA like environment. Town hall participants emphasized that many violations stem from lack of awareness, especially among renters, contractors, and new homeowners. Education, targeted enforcement during peak periods, and clear communication were preferred over additional signage or new regulations.

Strong Desire for Transparency and Island Specific Planning

Residents expressed concern about having to monitor county agendas closely to prevent incompatible projects. They emphasized that Palm Island's unique conditions — limited access, sensitive ecosystems, and low density development — require planning approaches different from those used on the mainland. The Neighborhood Plan was widely viewed as a tool to document community priorities and guide future decision making.

Overall Conclusions

Across surveys, written comments, and two days of public workshops, community input revealed a remarkably consistent vision for Palm Island: protect the natural environment, preserve the Island's low density residential character, maintain the bridgeless barrier island lifestyle, and ensure that infrastructure and services remain practical, resilient, and appropriately scaled. Residents overwhelmingly favored education, transparency, and stewardship over new regulations, and they emphasized the need for long term protections that reflect the Island's unique identity.



Chapter 1: Land Use

1.0 Introduction

How land may be used – now and in the future – literally creates and sustains the community in which we live, and the direction in which it will move in the future. A number of legal mechanisms already existing including, but not limited to Federal, State and County plans, regulatory elements, zoning and building codes, local ordinances and other regulations, which control and/or establish parameters for both commercial and private development.

It is both our privilege and responsibility to preserve that which originally attracted us to call our Island home, while at the same time providing for build-out consistent with the character of our community.

Many of the concerns that initially prompted residents to create a Neighborhood Plan relate to future growth on the Island and how to ensure that the Island maintains its “Old Florida” character in the future.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the regulatory elements associated with Island property as well as to identify unique circumstances and issues related to them, and to provide recommendations to successfully achieve the desires of Island owners.

1.1 Principal Land Use Regulatory Elements

Charlotte County's land use regulations protect the Island from overdevelopment and ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. These include zoning codes, future land use designations, and special overlays that control density and development.

Zoning Code

The Island is primarily zoned BBI (Bridgeless Barrier Island), a designation that limits density and ensures land uses remain consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Environmentally Sensitive areas and Planned Development districts, such as Palm Island Resort, have additional protections.

Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

The FLUM designates most of the Island as Coastal Residential, a low-density category allowing 1–5 units per acre.

Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay

Adopted in 1991, this overlay restricts density to one unit per platted lot or one unit per acre. It reflects evacuation constraints and prevents urban service expansion.

Community Input

Residents overwhelmingly support maintaining single-family residential development at build-out and fear that future changes to zoning or policy could weaken these protections.

Issues

- Existing regulations protect the Island today but can be changed by future County leadership.
- Residents want long-term, durable protections.

Recommendations

- Support creation of the Bocilla Islands Chain Conservation District Act via state legislation (previously 2025 House Bill 4077).
 - Ensure alignment between the Neighborhood Plan, the proposed state legislation, and the County's Comprehensive Plan.
-

1.2 Non-Conformities and the 50% Rule

Many residents assume that existing structures are “grandfathered,” but this is not always the case. A structure is legally non-conforming only if it complied with regulations at the time it was built.

The 50% Rule

- If repair costs are **less than 50%** of pre-damage market value, only the repaired portion must meet current building code.
- If repair costs are **more than 50%**, the entire structure must be brought into compliance with current building, zoning, and flood regulations.
- The 50% calculation is cumulative across all permits related to a single event.

Community Input

Survey results show widespread confusion about the 50% Rule and non-conformities. Residents strongly support extending post-disaster permitting timelines.

Issues

- Many residents do not understand the non-conformities ordinance or the 50% Rule.
- One-year permitting timelines are unrealistic after major storms.

Recommendations

- Launch a community awareness campaign explaining non-conformities and the 50% Rule.
 - Extend post-disaster permitting timelines from one year to two or three years.
-

1.3 Other Existing Regulations

Additional regulations shape development on the Island:

Coastal High Hazard Area

The entire island is designated as a Coastal High Hazard Area, limiting density and prioritizing single-family dwellings.

Waterfront Ordinance

This ordinance caps building height at 35 feet above base flood elevation and enforces setbacks within 1,200 feet of the shoreline.

Transfer of Density Units (TDU)

Allows density units to be transferred off-Island, preserving green space. Units cannot be transferred to the Island.

Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL)

Regulates construction near the Gulf coastline.

Erosion Control Line (ECL)

Defines the boundary between public and private property on renourished beaches.

Community Input

Residents generally supported keeping existing zoning and building regulations in place, emphasizing clearer communication rather than additional regulations.

Issues

None identified.

Recommendations

- Maintain existing regulations as they are.
-

1.4 Build-Out and Zoning Codes

Residents value the Island's architectural diversity and lack of rigid aesthetic restrictions. They want to preserve the Island's character while respecting property rights.

Community Input

Community feedback reflected strong support for preserving the Island's single-family character while maintaining flexibility for homeowners. Residents expressed concern about overdevelopment, loss of natural areas, and the cumulative effects of hardened surfaces, but they also cautioned against new restrictions that could limit home design or construction. Overall, residents favored protecting the Island's character without altering current zoning entitlements.

Issues

- Desire to preserve Island character and natural habitat.
- Concern about losing the Island's unique lifestyle.
- Strong support for environmental protection balanced with property rights.

Recommendations

- Maintain current building regulations and zoning codes.
 - Create a notification mechanism so residents can participate in decisions affecting build-out and zoning.
 - Explore increased setbacks and buffer zones in the future but make no changes now.
-

1.5 Preservation of Green Space

The Island was platted without designated green spaces, leaving natural vegetation dependent on individual lot owners. As development continues, natural yards are disappearing, threatening water resources and wildlife habitat.

Community Input

Residents strongly value the Island's natural vegetation and remaining open space, expressing concern about clear-cutting, invasive species, and the spread of hardened surfaces. Many support native landscaping, voluntary education and continued local and County land preservation efforts,

while emphasizing a preference for incentives rather than mandates or additional regulations. Overall, the community favors stewardship and enforcement of existing regulations.

Issues

- Loss of natural vegetation threatens water supply and wildlife.
- Increased use of pavers, shell, and rock reduces permeability and natural habitat.

Recommendations

- Support land acquisitions by local conservation groups and the County.
 - Discourage clear-cutting of lots.
 - Advocate for transferring density units off-Island.
 - Enforce tree and invasive species ordinances.
 - Develop incentive programs, including potential tax relief, for native landscaping, habitat preservation and water conservation.
-

1.6 Commercial Development

Commercial development is limited to parcels already zoned for such uses, including Planned Development (PD) and Residential Multi-Family Tourist (RMF-T). Home businesses are allowed under state law with restrictions.

Community Input

Community feedback showed overwhelming opposition to expanding commercial zoning. While a few supported small, community-serving businesses on parcels already zoned for such uses, most stressed that no additional land should be rezoned for commercial activity and that any future uses must remain low-impact and Island-focused.

Issues

- Residents do not want further commercial development but acknowledge existing zoning.

Recommendations

- Maintain existing commercial allowances.
 - Prohibit rezoning additional land for commercial use.
 - Enforce existing restrictions on commercial and home businesses.
-

1.7 Short-Term Rentals and Guest Accommodations

Residents respect property owners' rights to rent their homes and welcome visitors who respect Island rules. However, unmanaged rentals can strain septic systems, disturb wildlife, create noise, and disrupt the quiet Island lifestyle.

Community Input

Property owners generally accept short-term rentals but emphasized the need for responsible management. Concerns included over-occupancy, garbage, golf cart misuse and trespassing. The strongest theme was education: renters should receive clear guidance on Island rules, environmental protections, golf cart safety, and emergency contacts. Many supported requiring an on-Island contact for rental issues without additional requirements for rental oversight. The community favors balancing property rights with quality of life through education and consistent expectations rather than new regulations.

Issues

- Overcrowding strains septic systems and infrastructure.
- Noise, parking, and ordinance violations disrupt the community.
- Renters often lack information about environmental protections.

Recommendations

- Create a uniform Island-wide guidebook or online resource for renters.
 - Hold a forum with rental management firms to develop consistent educational materials.
 - Include environmental regulations, emergency contacts, maps, and Island etiquette.
 - Encourage rental owners to have an on-Island contact.
 - Enforce occupancy limits tied to septic capacity.
-

1.8 List of Land Use Priorities

Across all input sources, property owners consistently prioritized:

- Preserving single-family residential character.
 - Preventing new commercial rezoning.
 - Supporting state legislation in tandem with the Neighborhood Plan for long-term protection.
 - Extending post-disaster permitting timelines.
 - Protecting natural vegetation and green space.
 - Improving renter education and accountability.
 - Ensuring transparency in County decision-making.
-

1.9 Overall Conclusions

Residents overwhelmingly support preserving the Island's low-density, single-family residential character, protecting natural resources, and ensuring that future development remains

compatible with the Island's unique constraints. They value property rights, environmental stewardship, and responsible rental management. They also seek long-term protections, transparency, and planning approaches tailored to a bridgeless barrier island.

This chapter reflects the community's clear vision: a resilient, natural, quiet, and low-density neighborhood protected well into the future.



Chapter 2: Preserving Our Environment

2.0 Introduction

Palm Island contains some of the most ecologically sensitive habitats in Charlotte County, supporting endangered wildlife, fragile dune systems, wetlands and vital mangrove shorelines. Protecting these natural resources is essential to preserving the Island's character, environmental health, and quality of life. This chapter outlines the community's shared priorities for wildlife protection, habitat stewardship, and water quality, emphasizing practical, education-first strategies that balance environmental responsibility with respect for individual property rights.

2.1 Wildlife Protection

The Island supports a rich diversity of wildlife, including several endangered and threatened species whose survival depends on the Island's remaining natural habitats. The protection of our wildlife is dependent upon preservation of green space and the management of water quality and light pollution. Coastal wetlands and mangrove shorelines filter pollutants, buffer storm surge, and provide essential habitat for wading birds, fish, and marine life.

Sea turtles nest on the Island's beaches, but artificial lighting, beach furniture, vehicles, and human disturbance threaten their survival. Lights on Island properties and the 'urban glow' from the mainland have lured hatchlings to their deaths. Shorebirds face similar pressures from habitat loss, dogs off leash, and unintentional disturbance. Manatees and dolphins rely on slow-speed

waterways, yet enforcement of No Wake zones remains inconsistent. Gopher tortoises — an isolated Island population — face habitat loss, road mortality, and pressure from development. Other native species such as bats, bobcats, snakes, opossums, and pollinators depend on intact habitat and reduced human impacts.

Protecting wildlife is essential to preserving the Island's ecological integrity and the natural character valued by residents and visitors.

Community Input

Residents overwhelmingly support wildlife protection and want clearer education for renters, contractors, and new homeowners. Survey results show strong agreement on improving awareness, enforcing existing laws, protecting gopher tortoises, and adding targeted No Wake/Manatee signage at canal entrances. Public meeting participants emphasized desire for minimal signage, consistent enforcement of current regulations, and practical guidance on Dark Sky practices. The community favors solutions that protect wildlife without altering the Island's natural, low-key character.

Issues

- Limited public awareness of wildlife rules among renters, contractors, new homeowners, and some residents.
- Inconsistent enforcement of existing wildlife protection laws.
- Sea turtle nesting threatened by artificial lighting, beach furniture, and nighttime beach activity.
- Shorebird nesting areas disturbed by dogs off leash and uninformed beachgoers.
- Manatees and dolphins endangered by speeding boats and insufficient No Wake signage at key waterway entrances.
- Gopher tortoise habitat declining due to lot clearing, road mortality, and limited on-Island relocation options.
- Invasive iguanas damaging vegetation and displacing native species.
- Light pollution affecting wildlife and reducing natural night sky visibility, with unclear guidance for residents.

Recommendations

- Provide targeted education for renters, rental managers, contractors, and new homeowners using pre-arrival materials and simple guidance sheets.
- Coordinate with county and state agencies to increase enforcement visibility while maintaining an education-first approach.
- Promote turtle-friendly lighting, nighttime blind-closing, and removal of beach furniture after sunset.
- Support shorebird protection through seasonal awareness campaigns and volunteer coordination.
- Install strategic No Wake and Manatee Caution signs at canal and lagoon entrances and other high-traffic areas.

- Encourage on-Island gopher tortoise relocation, population tracking, and tortoise-friendly fencing compatible with pet safety.
 - Promote participation in iguana removal programs and provide information on approved methods.
 - Offer clear, simple Dark Sky guidance on lighting fixtures, shielding, and nighttime practices.
-

2.2 Habitat and Vegetation

The Island's dunes, mangroves, native vegetation, and seagrasses form the foundation of its ecological health. Best practices involve working with nature to create landscapes that conserve water, protect water quality and support local wildlife. Florida-friendly landscaping and xeriscaping reduce irrigation needs, minimize fertilizer and pesticide use, and create low-maintenance yards that support native species.

Mangroves are especially critical, serving as nurseries for marine life, stabilizing shorelines, and improving water quality. Dunes protect against storm surge and erosion, while dune vegetation traps sand and maintains dune structure. Seagrasses support manatees, fish, and water birds, and help maintain water clarity.

Native habitat is threatened by clear-cutting, lot scraping, invasive species, excessive hardscape and mangrove removal or improper trimming. County ordinances related to lot clearing are minimal. Invasive species such as Brazilian pepper and Australian pine crowd out native plants and degrade habitat. Inappropriate beach access damages dunes and vegetation. Seawalls do not provide the benefits of natural shoreline protections.

Preserving habitat requires a combination of education, incentives, and enforcement of existing regulations.

Community Input

Residents support native landscaping, invasive species removal, and mangrove protection, but prefer education and voluntary adoption over new mandates. Many expressed concern about clear-cutting and loss of tree cover, while others emphasized balancing habitat protection with reasonable property rights. Hardscape reduction received mixed feedback—supported in principle but resisted when perceived as restrictive. Overall, residents favor guidance, examples, and incentives rather than prescriptive rules.

Issues

- Clear-cutting of lots removes mature vegetation, reduces wildlife habitat, and increases erosion.
- Invasive species (Brazilian pepper, Australian pine, melaleuca) continue to spread and displace native plants.
- Mangrove trimming and removal for views or access degrade shorelines, habitat and storm protection.
- Dune vegetation damaged by foot traffic, improper access, and storm impacts.

- Excessive hardscape increases heat retention, reduces habitat, and affects drainage.
- Homeowners lack guidance on landscaping choices that support habitat and water quality.
- Seawalls on man-made canals replace natural shoreline functions and reduce ecological benefits.

Recommendations

- Promote Florida-friendly landscaping through voluntary guidance, examples, and homeowner/contractor education.
 - Encourage pre-construction vegetation assessments to preserve mature trees and native vegetation where feasible.
 - Support invasive species removal through education, volunteer programs, and coordination with local conservancies and county agencies.
 - Strengthen mangrove protection by promoting awareness of state regulations and proper permitting.
 - Protect dune systems by encouraging use of designated access points and dune walkovers, including ADA-compliant options.
 - Provide education on pervious alternatives to hardscape, emphasizing voluntary adoption.
 - Encourage wildlife-friendly property design that supports gopher tortoise movement while allowing for pet and pool safety.
 - Promote water-conserving practices such as rain barrels, reduced fertilizer use, and native plantings.
-

2.3 Water Quality

The Island lies within the Lemon Bay, Cape Haze, Gasparilla Sound, and Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves — estuaries of statewide ecological significance. Water quality affects wildlife, recreation, public health, and the Island's long-term resilience. Water quality in the entire area is impacted by larger natural events beyond our immediate control, including rainfall, runoff, red tide, shoreline changes, and storm events.

Development increases pressure on water quality through nutrient runoff, vegetation loss, and increased boat traffic. Seagrass decline, fish kills, and algal blooms are regional concerns. Maintaining healthy water requires coordinated monitoring, data collection, and public education

Coordinated sampling programs, with input from local, state, and federal authorities, can help identify trends, guide community action, and support advocacy for regional improvements.

Community Input

Property owners strongly support independent water testing and transparent reporting. Many emphasized the need for Island-specific data rather than relying on regional assumptions.

Concerns included nutrient runoff, septic impacts, and long-term water quality trends.

Participants favored education on simple practices—reduced fertilizer use, proper vegetation management, and participation in water-quality programs. The community wants credible data, clear communication, and practical steps to protect water quality.

Issues

- Water quality affected by regional factors such as rainfall, runoff, red tide, and storm events.
- Nutrient runoff from landscaping contributes to water degradation.
- Loss of shoreline vegetation reduces natural filtration and increases erosion.
- Lack of Island-specific water quality data limits understanding and advocacy.
- Boat traffic and propeller scarring damage seagrasses and disturb marine life.
- Limited public awareness of simple water-protective practices.

Recommendations

- Establish an Island-specific water quality monitoring program with local agencies or volunteer groups.
 - Publish regular (annual or semi-annual) water quality summaries for residents.
 - Promote fertilizer-free and pesticide-free landscaping practices and provide alternatives.
 - Encourage preservation of shoreline vegetation and natural stabilization methods.
 - Support continued Health Department beach testing and share results with the community.
 - Educate residents and contractors on water-protective practices, including reduced chemical use and stormwater awareness.
 - Promote participation in water-quality improvement programs such as vertical oyster gardens and seagrass protection initiatives.
-

2.4 List of Environmental Priorities

Islanders consistently prioritize wildlife protection, habitat preservation, and water quality, with a strong preference for education-first approaches.

- Strengthen wildlife protection through improved public awareness, consistent enforcement, and targeted education for renters, contractors, and new homeowners.
- Preserve native habitat and vegetation by encouraging Florida-friendly landscaping, reducing clear-cutting, and supporting removal of invasive species.
- Protect critical coastal systems — mangroves, dunes, wetlands, and seagrasses — through education, voluntary best practices, and coordination with county and state agencies.
- Improve water quality with Island-specific monitoring, transparent reporting, and community education on nutrient reduction and shoreline stewardship.
- Reduce light pollution by promoting practical Dark Sky guidance that protects wildlife while maintaining resident safety and comfort.
- Use signage strategically — placing No Wake and Manatee signs only where needed to ensure safety without creating visual clutter.
- Promote voluntary, property-owner-friendly solutions that balance environmental protection with flexibility and respect for individual rights.

- Emphasize education over regulation, ensuring environmental goals are achieved through awareness, collaboration, and community stewardship rather than mandates.
-

2.5 Overall Conclusions

Community input reflects broad alignment with the environmental goals of the Neighborhood Plan. Residents want to protect the Island's unique ecosystems while maintaining its low-key, natural character. They favor solutions that are practical, minimally intrusive, and grounded in education, stewardship, and shared responsibility. The strongest message is clear: protect the Island's environment in ways that preserve the Island's identity and quality of life.



Chapter 3: Navigation and Coastal

3.0 Introduction

The waterways, beaches, and coastal systems surrounding Palm Island define daily life on a bridgeless barrier island. These natural and man-made channels provide access, recreation, and transportation, while the mangroves, beaches and dunes form the Island's first line of defense against storms. Managing these resources requires balancing navigation needs, shoreline protection, environmental stewardship, and the realities of limited jurisdiction and funding. This chapter outlines the community's priorities for maintaining safe waterways, protecting fragile coastal systems, and ensuring that dredging, beach management, and enforcement efforts reflect both the Island's unique conditions and the values of its residents.

3.1 The Waterways

The waterways surrounding the Island — Stump Pass, the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), and the interior canals, bays, and lagoons — are essential to Island life. The ICW is a heavily used navigational corridor connecting Gasparilla Sound to Venice, with Stump Pass serving as the nearest Gulf access. Stump Pass requires periodic dredging to maintain safe navigation.

Interior waterways fall under various jurisdictions, and Charlotte County does not currently maintain them or fund dredging. FEMA typically limits post-storm assistance to debris removal, not shoal removal. While individual property owners may apply for dock-depth dredging permits,

this does not address channel-wide issues. Spoil disposal remains challenging due to limited land area, though communal sites and barge removal are possible.

Private docks serve most properties, though some rely on shared dockage. There are no public marinas on the Island, and adding such facilities would strain fragile infrastructure. Boating regulations — speed limits, wake responsibility, lighting, and safety requirements—are often ignored, creating risks for boaters, wildlife, and ferry operations.

Community Input

Residents expressed strong support for maintaining navigable waterways but emphasized that dredging should occur only where needed and be funded by the property owners who benefit. Most agreed that canals generally do not have speeding issues, while the ICW requires more enforcement. There was broad support for additional No Wake/Manatee signage at canal entrances and for optional caution signs on private docks. Residents stressed the need for better enforcement resources on the ICW and around ferry crossings, where unsafe boater behavior is common.

Issues

- Interior waterways may require periodic dredging, but no funding mechanism currently exists.
- Property owners disagree on where dredging is needed and how it should be funded.
- ICW boaters frequently ignore speed and right-of-way rules, creating safety hazards for residents and ferry operations.
- Enforcement resources on the water are limited.
- Current zoning does not allow docks as principal structures on vacant lots, creating challenges for some property owners.
- Spoil disposal for dredging is difficult due to limited land area.
 - All adjoining and interior waterways have environmental protections for seagrass, oyster bars, and other submerged resources, but enforcement is rare.

Recommendations

- Encourage property owners on affected waterways to build consensus on dredging needs and explore forming an MSBU/MSTU for funding.
- Monitor and support administrative efforts to allow non-commercial docks as principal uses on vacant lots.
- Advocate for increased enforcement presence on the ICW and near ferry crossings.
- Install strategic No Wake/Manatee signage at canal entrances and allow optional caution signs on private docks.
- Explore communal spoil disposal sites and barge-based removal options for future dredging projects.
- Coordinate with WCIND and Charlotte County to clarify roles, responsibilities, and permitting pathways.
- Strengthen enforcement of environmental protections for seagrass, oyster bars, and other submerged resources.

3.2 The Beaches

The Island's beaches are protected by state and local regulations designed to prevent erosion, safeguard wildlife, and maintain natural shoreline processes. Beach renourishment is the primary method of maintaining storm protection and supporting sea turtle nesting. Routine maintenance occurs approximately every ten years, funded through a combination of State, County, and MSBU contributions. Severe storm damage may trigger FEMA-funded emergency renourishment.

The community has historically opposed hard structures such as seawalls and groins, favoring natural and sustainable shoreline management. Dunes play a critical role in storm protection, but they are vulnerable to storm events, foot traffic, and vegetation loss. Red tide remains an ongoing environmental challenge, affecting wildlife, public health, and local economies.

Community Input

Residents strongly supported timely dune restoration after storms, with many emphasizing the importance of vegetation—especially sea oats—over structural solutions. Opinions on dune walkovers varied: most support walkovers at public easements, but many prefer simple, low-profile, or removable designs. There was broad agreement that dune protection is essential and that erosion is a growing concern. Residents also supported continued monitoring and mitigation of red tide impacts.

Issues

- Storm events cause dune loss and beach erosion, reducing shoreline protection.
- Future funding for beach renourishment is not guaranteed.
- Regulations protecting dunes and beach vegetation are not consistently followed.
- Red tide events continue to harm wildlife, public health, and local water quality.
- Community uncertainty exists regarding the most effective dune protection methods.

Recommendations

- Prioritize timely dune restoration after major storm events to prevent further erosion.
- Support installation of dune walkovers at public easements and encourage homeowners to use DEP-compliant walkovers or removable mats.
- Explore the use of sea oats, native vegetation, and semi-permeable sand fencing where appropriate.
- Advocate for continued State, County, and MSBU funding for beach renourishment.
- Support agencies monitoring and mitigating red tide, including FWC, NOAA, and Mote Marine Laboratory.
- Promote community education on dune protection and proper beach access.

3.3 List of Navigation and Coastal Priorities

- Maintain safe navigation in interior waterways through owner-driven consensus and funding.
 - Improve enforcement of boating regulations on the ICW and near ferry crossings.
 - Install strategic No Wake/Manatee signage at canal entrances without cluttering waterways.
 - Support administrative changes allowing docks as principal structures on vacant lots.
 - Protect dunes through timely restoration, vegetation planting, and appropriate walkovers.
 - Sustain long-term beach renourishment funding and coordination with State and County partners.
 - Promote natural shoreline protection and avoid hard structures.
 - Support ongoing monitoring and mitigation of red tide impacts.
 - Emphasize education and voluntary compliance over regulation wherever possible.
-

3.4 Overall Conclusions

Residents value safe waterways, healthy beaches, and natural shoreline systems as defining features of Island life. Community input reflects strong support for practical, targeted solutions—such as strategic signage, improved enforcement on the ICW, and owner-driven dredging decisions—while avoiding unnecessary regulation or visual clutter. The community favors natural dune protection, sustainable beach management, and continued investment in renourishment. Across all topics, residents emphasized education, transparency, and stewardship as the most effective tools for protecting the Island’s coastal and navigational resources.



Chapter 4: Infrastructure

4.0 Introduction

Infrastructure and development on the Island are closely linked, with transportation access shaping both the pace and character of growth. As a bridgeless barrier island, every component of infrastructure — from roads and utilities to water systems and emergency access — must function within the limits imposed by ferry-based transportation and a sensitive coastal environment. These constraints influence not only how services are delivered but also how the community defines its identity, prioritizes resilience, and evaluates future improvements. The following sections outline the systems that support daily life on the Island and the community's shared commitment to preserving its unique character while addressing long-term operational and environmental challenges.

4.1 Transportation to and from the Island

Infrastructure and development on the Island are closely linked, with transportation access shaping both the pace and character of growth. As a bridgeless barrier island, all vehicle access is provided by water, and this inherent limitation is central to the Island's identity. Residents value the seclusion and slower pace of life that come with ferry-based access, and they recognize that the standard transportation solutions used on the mainland are neither appropriate nor desirable here.

The Island is accessed exclusively by personally-owned boats or the privately-operated Palm Island Transit ferry, which carries vehicles, equipment, emergency services, golf carts, and pedestrians. There is public or private parking on Panama Boulevard on the mainland for walk-on passengers. Overnight roadside parking is permitted on the Island, though “No Parking” zones on Panama Boulevard are enforced.

The ferry typically operates from 6:30 AM to 10:00 PM, with extended hours on weekends, and generally runs two vessels on weekdays until 5:00 PM. Service is suspended during severe weather or sustained winds of 40 mph. A separate water taxi serves the Rum Bay Restaurant.

Personally-owned boats remain an important mode of access, particularly for waterfront homeowners. However, some homes are landlocked and lack docks, requiring owners to share communal docks. Island residents who transport via privately-owned boats must maintain mainland dockage through ownership or lease. The permitting process for docks, the navigability of canals and lagoons, and the enforcement of “No Wake” zones are ongoing concerns for boat owners.

Long-term questions remain about the sustainability of a single privately-operated ferry service. While alternative ferry concepts have been discussed—including municipal, cooperative, or additional private service—no viable plan has been identified due to challenges related to landing sites, parking, stacking, zoning, and environmental constraints. Meanwhile, mainland parking capacity is increasingly strained, particularly during peak seasons and workday transitions, and may reach its limit well before full build-out.

Community Input

Community feedback emphasized the essential role of the ferry in daily life and the need for reliable, timely communication during delays or weather-related interruptions. Residents expressed concern about congestion at ferry landings, limited mainland parking, and the long-term sustainability of relying on a single private operator. Town hall discussions highlighted interest in improved traffic flow on Panama Boulevard, better stacking arrangements, and clearer organization during peak periods. Boat owners stressed the importance of consistent dock permitting, navigable waterways, and enforcement of “No Wake” zones. Overall, residents support preserving the Island’s bridgeless character while proactively addressing operational vulnerabilities and future parking constraints.

Issues

- Consistent application of dock permitting requirements.
- Maintaining navigability of canals and lagoons.
- Enforcement of “No Wake” zones for safety and wildlife protection.
- Need for mainland dockage and parking for boat commuters.
- Ferry service provides no long-term guarantees regarding continuity, cost, or service levels.
- Ferry service reliance on leased property and county parking agreements that may not be sustainable.
- Ferry line congestion during peak seasons and workday transitions.
- Limited feasibility of expanding to 24-hour ferry service.
- Strained mainland parking capacity on Panama Boulevard.

- Potential for parking shortages well before full build-out.

Recommendations

- Encourage property owners to plan for contingencies related to ferry interruptions.
 - Increase awareness of diminishing mainland docking and parking availability.
 - Explore redesign options for Panama Boulevard to improve traffic flow and stacking.
 - Investigate residential parking sticker programs for post-storm access.
-

4.2 Transportation on the Island

Islanders embrace a lifestyle defined by limited access, unpaved roads, and golf cart travel. Transportation on the Island is centered on privately-owned and rental golf carts, supplemented by cars, bicycles, and pedestrian movement. All roads are unpaved except for North Gulf Boulevard and a portion of South Gulf Boulevard, and the road network functions as a shared community space accommodating multiple modes of travel.

Unpaved roads are a defining feature of the Island's character. Their maintenance is guided by recommendations from Penn State University consultants, who advise narrow, meandering alignments with close vegetation to reduce speeds and improve durability. Paved and unpaved roads lie within county-owned rights-of-way, typically 50–66 feet wide. Parking is permitted within these rights-of-way, including designated areas near beach access points that support beach renourishment funding. Unauthorized modifications to the right-of-way constitute encroachments.

Golf carts are the primary mode of transportation, though other motorized devices—e-bikes, e-motos, scooters, ATVs, and low-speed vehicles—are increasingly present. All motor vehicle regulations apply to Island roads, and motorized vehicles are prohibited on the beach except for official personnel. One of the Island's two interior bridges retain timber decking and railings to preserve traditional character.

Community Input

Residents consistently expressed support for maintaining unpaved roads and the Island's low-speed, golf-cart-oriented transportation culture. Community feedback highlighted concerns about speeding — especially on North Gulf Boulevard — road wear from heavy construction traffic, and the need for improved enforcement of existing regulations. Community participants emphasized the importance of preserving public rights-of-way, addressing encroachments, and ensuring adequate parking at beach access points to protect renourishment funding. Golf cart safety, underage golf cart driving, and were recurring themes, along with some interest in exploring multi-use paths to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Issues

- Speeding, particularly on North Gulf Boulevard.

- Wear and degradation of paved and unpaved roads.
- Damage to unpaved roads from traffic, weather, and standing water.
- Encroachments into public rights-of-way.
- Loss of turnarounds needed for emergency vehicles.
- Underaged golf cart drives and unsafe golf cart operation.
- Unauthorized motorized vehicles on the beach.
- Environmental and safety concerns related to e-bikes.
- Persistent challenges with enforcement of existing regulations.
- Concern that transportation pressures may revive bridge proposals.

Recommendations

- Retain and maintain existing road physical characteristics and multi-purpose use.
- Coordinate paved road modifications with maintenance schedules.
- Continue current unpaved road maintenance programs.
- Support multi-year project planning through the Don Pedro/Knight Island Street and Drainage MSTU Advisory Committee.
- Hold property owners responsible for right-of-way conditions adjacent to their properties.
- Seek additional funding sources for road maintenance.
- Implement phased right-of-way clear zone plan.
- Explore multi-use path options.
- Discourage driveway aprons extending into rights-of-way.
- Support passive traffic-calming techniques.
- Enforce golf cart and motorized vehicle regulations.
- Discourage use of e-bikes on the beach.
- Encourage electric vehicles over gas-powered vehicles.
- Support golf cart registration and identification programs.
- Maintain opposition to a mainland-Island bridge connection.
- Give preference to timber character of interior Island bridges.

4.3 Water and Wastewater

The Island has a potential build-out of approximately 1,125 households, though fewer than half are currently full-time residences. Water service is provided by two privately-owned utilities — Knight Island Utilities (KIU) and Bocilla Utilities (BU) — which distribute water sourced from the Englewood Water District. Some homes rely on private wells or cisterns for irrigation.

Wastewater management is a major community concern. While the County favors central sewer, residents overwhelmingly oppose it due to cost, environmental risk, and the potential for increased density. The State recommends Enhanced Nitrogen-Reducing On-Site Treatment and Disposal Systems (ENR-OSTDS) as an environmentally protective alternative. These systems reduce nutrient pollution and avoid the risks associated with centralized sewer spills. The

community seeks a wastewater approach that protects water quality, capable of managing full build-out, and avoids unintended development impacts.

Community Input

Islanders expressed strong concern about long-term water availability, high utility costs, and the environmental impacts of wastewater systems. Resident feedback showed overwhelming opposition to central sewer due to fears of spills, mandatory hookups, and increased development pressure. Community participants supported decentralized, advanced on-site treatment systems and emphasized the importance of monitoring existing septic systems and promoting proper maintenance. Water conservation, reduced irrigation, and protection of the aquifer through permeable surfaces were also identified as important priorities.

Issues

- High cost of water relative to other utilities.
- Concerns about long-term water availability.
- Need to identify wastewater systems that are environmentally protective and reliable.
- Cost of installing advanced wastewater systems.
- Seasonal usage variations affecting system performance.
- Potential for improving existing septic systems.
- Strong community opposition to central sewer.

Recommendations

- Promote water conservation and Florida-friendly landscaping.
 - Maintain permeable roadways to protect aquifer recharge.
 - Explore County-operated potable water options.
 - Ensure future water needs are included in County planning.
 - Exclude central sewer from wastewater options.
 - Support ENR-OSTDS for new or replacement systems.
 - Support septic monitoring programs.
 - Promote maintenance of older septic systems.
 - Support County water quality testing.
 - Prepare updated cost analyses for wastewater alternatives.
 - Ensure future wastewater solutions do not enable increased density.
-

4.4 Other Infrastructural Elements

Beyond transportation and water systems, the Island's infrastructure includes internet service, street lighting, and electrical utilities. Internet access is provided through a mix of hard-wired and wireless providers. Street lighting is minimal, consistent with the community's desire to preserve dark skies for wildlife protection and nighttime visibility of the Milky Way. The Island lies outside the Charlotte County Lighting District, though expansion is theoretically possible.

Many utilities are buried underground, though some infrastructure remains above ground. Florida Power & Light has implemented a statewide storm-hardening program to improve grid resilience through undergrounding, but the program has not yet been applied to the Island. Storm vulnerability remains a concern, particularly for above-ground lines and aging infrastructure.

Community Input

Residents expressed strong support for preserving dark skies and preventing the introduction of street lighting, citing concerns about wildlife impacts and loss of natural nighttime conditions. Community feedback emphasized the need for improved utility reliability, better maintenance of existing infrastructure, and prioritization of undergrounding electrical lines to enhance storm resilience. Islanders also raised concerns about emergency readiness, aging fire hydrants and the need for regular inspections and repairs of infrastructure equipment.

Issues

- Inadequate maintenance of underground and above-ground infrastructure.
- Service disruptions caused by damaged lines.
- Lines crossing waterways and obstructing navigation.
- Potential expansion of the Charlotte County Lighting District.
- Vulnerability of infrastructure during storms.

Recommendations

- Promote adherence to permitting and maintenance requirements.
- Oppose expansion of the Charlotte County Lighting District.
- Prohibit installation of street lighting outside district boundaries.
- Support burial of utilities Island-wide.
- Encourage FPL to prioritize undergrounding on the Island.

4.5 List of Infrastructure Priorities

- Preserving the Island's bridgeless character by maintaining ferry-based access and avoiding infrastructure changes that could enable or encourage a bridge connection.
- Improving ferry reliability and communication, including better real-time updates, congestion management at landings, and long-term planning for mainland parking constraints.
- Maintaining unpaved roads and the Island's low-speed transportation culture, while addressing speeding, contractor traffic, and safety concerns on North Gulf Boulevard.
- Protecting public rights-of-way to ensure safe travel, maintain emergency access, and preserve parking needed for beach renourishment funding.
- Supporting environmentally protective wastewater solutions, including advanced on-site treatment systems and improved monitoring of existing septic systems, while firmly opposing central sewer.
- Promoting water conservation through Florida-friendly landscaping, reduced irrigation, and protection of aquifer recharge via permeable surfaces.

- Preserving dark skies by preventing the introduction of street lighting and maintaining minimal nighttime illumination to protect wildlife and Island character.
-

4.6 Overall Conclusions

The Island's infrastructure priorities reflect a unified community vision: preserve the bridgeless barrier island lifestyle while strengthening the systems that support safety, environmental protection, and long-term resilience. Island property owners overwhelmingly support maintaining the Island's unique transportation systems, natural environment, and small-scale infrastructure while addressing vulnerabilities related to storms, growth, and long-term sustainability. Community input demonstrates a clear preference for solutions that reinforce the Island's character, avoid unintended development pressure, and protect environmental resources. This chapter documents those priorities and provides a framework for future decision-making, ensuring that infrastructure planning remains aligned with the values and expectations of the Island community.



Chapter 5: Services to the Community

5.0 Introduction

As a bridgeless barrier island, Palm Island relies on a unique combination of local, county, and private services to ensure safety, emergency response, hurricane preparedness, and daily operations. Limited access, constrained infrastructure, and environmental sensitivity require service models that are reliable, resilient, and tailored to Island conditions. This chapter outlines the community's priorities for Fire/EMS, hurricane evacuation, and essential municipal services, emphasizing practical improvements, clear communication, and stewardship of the Island's character.

5.1 Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Fire and EMS services on the Island are provided by Charlotte County Fire-EMS through Station 10, funded exclusively by Island property owners via the Barrier Islands Fire Service MSBU. Station 10 is staffed 24/7 and serves as the primary responder due to the time required for mainland units to reach the Island by ferry. Backup procedures include coordinated dispatch, nighttime ferry activation, and helicopter evacuation when necessary.

Water supply for firefighting is provided by two private utilities, with hydrants fed by Englewood Water District. Fire flow capacity remains uncertain, and hydrant testing responsibilities are unclear. Narrow roads, limited turnarounds, vegetation overgrowth, and increasing development

along the beachfront complicate emergency access. As the Island builds out, helicopter landing zones and beach access routes may become more constrained.

Community Input

Property owners strongly supported improving address visibility, ensuring hydrants are functional, and clarifying fire flow capacity. Many expressed concern about inconsistent or unclear hydrant testing responsibilities and the fairness of the MSBU funding model, especially when Station 10 resources are used off-Island. Community participants emphasized the continuing need for emergency vehicle access.

Issues

- Inconsistent or unclear house numbering makes it difficult for responders to locate properties.
- Renters may not know their address or which island they are on when calling 911.
- Narrow roads, vegetation overgrowth, and limited turnarounds could restrict emergency vehicle access.
- Helicopter landing zones may become limited as development increases.
- Hydrant fire flow capacity is unknown, and testing responsibilities are unclear.
- The MSBU funding model may be inequitable if Station 10 resources are used for mainland emergencies.
- Residents perceive the MSBU tax burden as high and worry about future increases.

Recommendations

- Encourage clearly visible, reflective house numbers on all properties.
- Rental properties should display the address prominently within each unit for 911 identification.
- Continue to improve vegetation management and road access to support emergency vehicle movement.
- Preserve and monitor beach access points for emergency use.
- Ensure helicopter landing zones remain available as development increases.
- Request Charlotte County to test hydrants, confirm fire flow capacity, and clarify maintenance responsibilities.
- Explore transitioning Station 10 from an MSBU-funded unit to full integration within Charlotte County Fire-EMS.
- Monitor the Fire/EMS budget to ensure equitable MSBU assessments.
- Promote resident participation in the Red Dot and Knox-Box programs.
- Continue educating residents and visitors on emergency procedures and 911 protocols.

5.2 Hurricane Evacuation and Disaster Planning

Hurricane evacuation on the Islands is governed by Charlotte County Emergency Management (CCEM), with Palm Island Transit (PIT) providing the only vehicular route off the Island. Ferry operations depend on weather conditions and may cease before the scheduled cutoff if winds become unsafe. Re-entry is controlled by CCEM and may be delayed until conditions are safe and emergency services can return.

Residents must rely on personal preparedness, early evacuation, and accurate communication. Long-term power outages, generator safety, boil-water notices, and limited access points create additional challenges during and after storms.

Community Input

Residents support early evacuation and emphasized the need for clearer, more consistent communication about ferry operations and emergency procedures. Many expressed frustration with perceived inconsistencies in ferry access decisions and the lack of a unified communication channel. Participants also highlighted the need for better generator safety awareness and improved communication from water utilities during boil-water advisories.

Issues

- Inconsistent or unclear communication about ferry operations during emergencies.
- Not all residents are enrolled in emergency alert systems.
- Increasing year-round population may complicate future evacuations.
- Ferry operations may cease earlier than expected due to weather conditions.
- Re-entry delays cause anxiety for property owners seeking to assess damage.
- Unsafe generator use during power outages poses risks.
- Boil-water notices may not reach all residents promptly.

Recommendations

- Encourage all property owners to sign up for AlertCharlotte for official emergency notifications.
- Improve communication between PIT, CCEM, and residents regarding ferry operations.
- Promote early evacuation and personal preparedness.
- Request improved communication from water utilities regarding boil-water advisories.
- Educate residents on generator safety and post-storm hazards.
- Reinforce that emergency services will not be available during severe storms.

5.3 Other Services for the Island

Island services include solid waste removal, mosquito control, signage management, and discussions about potential mail delivery. Waste Management provides garbage, recycling, and yard debris pickup through an MSBU. Mosquito control is provided by Charlotte County on an

as-needed basis. Islanders value the Island's artistic, hand-painted signs and express concern about visual clutter from commercial and government signage. Mail delivery remains a mixed topic, with concerns about traffic, infrastructure, and aesthetics.

Community Input

Residents support continued mosquito control and identified the need for better education about waste disposal and dumping rules. There was strong concern about excessive signage including commercial, governmental and non-profit signs placed in public rights-of-way. Opinions on mail service were mixed, with many preferring to avoid additional traffic and mailbox clutter. Residents favored maintaining the Island's unique aesthetic and reducing visual pollution.

Issues

- Overfilled or unsealed garbage cans attract pests.
- Yard debris dumped on vacant lots creates fire hazards and visual blight.
- Some residents are unaware that vacant lots do not receive waste pickup.
- Illegal dumping and burning occur on vacant lots.
- Many residents do not know they can request mosquito control service.
- Hand-painted signs require maintenance. Excessive signage creates visual clutter.
- Lack of canal signage for No Wake and Manatee Zones.
- Mail delivery could increase traffic and infrastructure impacts.

Recommendations

- Publicize no-burn and no-dumping regulations.
- Promote the proper sealing and timely retrieval of waste receptacles.
- Encourage property owners to request additional receptacles if there is overflow.
- Continue mosquito control services and pursue the use of environmentally-friendly aerosol sprays for treating adult mosquitoes.
- Encourage residents to request mosquito treatment when needed.
- Maintain existing hand-painted signs and explore reducing overall signage impact.
- Work with Public Works to design government signage that complements Island aesthetics.
- Discourage lighted signs to protect dark skies.
- Improve canal signage for No Wake and Manatee Zones.
- Continue evaluating mail service options while considering traffic and aesthetic impacts.

5.4 List of Service Priorities

- Improve emergency access through better addressing, vegetation management, and maintained beach access.
- Ensure hydrant functionality, fire flow capacity, and a clear determination of maintenance responsibility.

- Strengthen communication during emergencies, especially regarding ferry operations.
 - Promote early evacuation and personal preparedness.
 - Support mosquito control, waste management education, and enforcement of dumping rules.
 - Reduce visual clutter by limiting signage.
 - Maintain the Island's aesthetic through artistic signage and dark-sky practices.
 - Ensure equitable and transparent funding for Fire/EMS services.
 - Preserve the Island's character while maintaining and adapting community services as the Islands approach build out.
-

5.5 Overall Conclusions

Island property owners consistently emphasized safety, communication, and preservation of the Island's character. They support practical improvements — such as better addressing, strategic signage, hydrant testing, and clearer emergency communication — while resisting changes that would increase visual clutter or alter the Island's low-impact identity. Across all services, the community favors education, transparency, and collaborative problem-solving. This chapter provides a framework for strengthening essential services while maintaining the unique qualities that define Island life.



Chapter 6: Enforcement of Regulations

6.0 Introduction

Preserving the Island's unique character requires striking a balance between personal responsibility, environmental stewardship, and the enforcement of existing laws. Islanders value living “gently” with the environment and preserving the Island's low-key character, while also recognizing the need for safety, order, and protection of shared resources. Because the Islands are sparsely populated and geographically isolated, enforcement must be strategic, education-focused, and respectful of individual property rights. This chapter outlines the community's priorities for improving awareness, strengthening targeted enforcement, and maintaining the Island's unique character without creating an HOA-like environment.

6.1 Enforcement of Regulations

The Island is governed by a wide range of existing ordinances, codes, and regulations that address safety, environmental protection, and responsible use of shared spaces. While these regulations are sufficient to address most issues, enforcement is limited by the Island's remote location and the availability of law enforcement resources. Residents consistently report concerns about speeding vehicles, under-aged golf cart drivers, unleashed dogs, fireworks, open fires and golf carts on the beach. At the same time, some property owners value the Island's informal atmosphere and resist increased enforcement.

A recurring challenge is lack of awareness. Many visitors—and even some property owners—do not understand the rules governing golf carts vs. Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs), dog leash requirements, beach regulations, or environmental protections. Because the community strongly opposes excessive signage, education should rely on targeted communication rather than visual clutter.

Community Input

Property owners overwhelmingly supported more visible enforcement during peak periods—especially for speeding, under-age golf cart driving, and fireworks—but emphasized that enforcement should be strategic, not constant. Many noted that residents themselves are often the biggest violators. Public input participants strongly supported education-first approaches, including renter materials, contractor guidance, and new-homeowner packets. There was broad resistance to adding more signs, with support instead for digital resources, pre-arrival communication, and a “good neighbor” approach to resolving minor issues.

Issues

- Limited deputy presence results in inconsistent enforcement of existing regulations.
- Speeding on roads and waterways remains a recurring concern, especially during peak periods.
- Under-aged golf cart driving is common and poses safety risks.
- Many visitors and some residents are unaware of leash laws, beach rules, and environmental protections.
- Fireworks and open fires on the beach create safety hazards and disturb wildlife.
- Lack of anonymity in code enforcement discourages reporting of violations.
- Excessive signage is widely opposed, limiting traditional awareness tools.
- Confusion persists regarding the rules for golf carts vs. LSVs.

Recommendations

- Coordinate with the Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office to establish targeted enforcement schedules during peak seasons, holidays, and high-traffic weekends.
- Request increased Marine Patrol presence on the ICW and near ferry crossings.
- Develop education-first tools: renter packets, contractor guidance, new-homeowner materials, and pre-arrival communications.
- Create a centralized webpage listing common regulations, safety rules, and environmental protections, with links to relevant statutes.
- Provide optional “good neighbor” letters to address minor issues without involving law enforcement.
- Explore a voluntary Neighborhood Watch program to support awareness and reporting.
- Promote understanding of golf cart vs. LSV rules through simple, accessible materials.
- Avoid excessive signage and instead use strategic, minimal signs only where safety requires it.

6.2 List of Enforcement Priorities

- Strengthen targeted enforcement during peak periods while avoiding full-time policing.
 - Prioritize education over regulation, especially for renters, contractors, and new homeowners.
 - Reduce speeding and unsafe driving on roads and waterways.
 - Address under-aged golf cart driving through awareness and enforcement.
 - Improve understanding of leash laws, beach rules, and environmental protections.
 - Limit fireworks and open fires to protect safety and wildlife.
 - Maintain minimal signage to preserve Island character.
 - Provide clear, accessible information through digital tools and pre-arrival communication.
 - Encourage neighbor-to-neighbor resolution of minor issues before involving authorities.
-

6.3 Overall Conclusions

Islanders want a safe, respectful, and environmentally responsible Island community without sacrificing the Island's informal, low-key character. They support targeted enforcement where safety or environmental protection is at risk but prefer education-first approaches and minimal signage. The strongest message from community input is clear: enforcement should be strategic, communication should be thoughtful, and solutions should preserve the Island's unique identity while promoting shared responsibility.



Chapter 7: The Future of the Island

7.0 Introduction

Preserving “Pure Florida” hinges on the community’s ability to retain the qualities that make the Island unique while preparing for the challenges and opportunities ahead. The preceding chapters reflect a unified vision: Islanders want to maintain the bridgeless barrier island lifestyle, protect the natural environment, sustain low-density residential character, and ensure that infrastructure and services remain resilient, practical, and tailored to the Island’s limitations. Looking forward, the community recognizes that proactive planning, transparent decision-making, and greater local influence will be essential to sustaining the Island’s unique identity far into the future.

7.1 More Island Control

Across surveys, workshops, and public meetings, Islanders expressed a strong desire for greater control over decisions, solutions, and spending that directly affect their community. Residents recognize the strength of the Island’s tax base and the significant value the community contributes to Charlotte County. With that recognition comes a growing interest in ensuring that tax dollars are used effectively, transparently, and in ways that reflect the Island’s priorities.

Community input revealed a willingness to invest time, expertise, and resources into exploring mechanisms that provide more influence over local infrastructure, services, and long-term planning. While the Neighborhood Plan does not create self-governance, it establishes a foundation for future conversations about how the Island can play a more active role in shaping its own future — whether through enhanced advisory structures, new partnerships with the County, or other models that increase local participation and oversight.

7.2 Issues Related to Island Control

Islanders recognize that the coming years will bring important decisions about infrastructure, services, and long-term community needs. In the past, the Island has often had to respond to issues only after they became urgent. Community input reflects a strong desire to shift toward a more proactive approach—one that anticipates needs, evaluates options early, and organizes solutions before challenges escalate.

Looking ahead, the Island is likely to encounter a range of infrastructure and service considerations that will require thoughtful planning, financial clarity, and community involvement. Residents want a stronger voice in determining priorities, assessing alternatives, and ensuring that any future initiatives remain consistent with the Island's character, environmental sensitivity, and logistical constraints.

As property values and the cost of living continue to rise, Islanders also emphasized the importance of maintaining equity and inclusivity. Future planning must consider the needs of residents of all ages and incomes, ensuring that long-time community members can continue to live on the Island without undue economic hardship.

7.3 The Future of the Neighborhood Plan

The Neighborhood Plan is intended to be a living, adaptable document. As conditions change and new challenges emerge, the Island community will need to amend or update the Plan to ensure it continues to reflect the community's voice and priorities.

Maintenance of the Neighborhood Plan will require monitoring community needs, tracking the status of relevant issues, and hosting public workshops and town hall meetings as needed to discuss concerns and explore solutions. The community anticipates that the County will uphold FLU Policy 6.1.2, which provides for a Neighborhood Planning effort supported by technical assistance from County staff.

While the Plan does not call for any new regulations, there may be future issues that require governmental action — such as local ordinance or code changes — to implement

community-supported solutions. Any such pursuit must remain consistent with the intent of the Neighborhood Plan and be supported by clear documentation of community consensus.

Recommendations

- Upon acceptance of the Neighborhood Plan by the Board of County Commissioners, the Plan shall remain unchanged for five years.
 - Amendments or changes may be considered on a bi-annual basis thereafter.
 - The procedure for amending the Plan shall follow the same protocols used in its original development:
 1. Publicize proposed amendments through websites, social media, and email.
 2. Solicit community input through surveys with opportunities for additional comments.
 3. Hold a minimum of two Town Hall meetings to discuss issues under consideration.
 4. Post draft updates and accept community input for a minimum of five weeks.
 5. After the input period, forward recommended amendments to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration and acceptance.
 - The community supports exploring a source for a modest administrative budget for ongoing engagement with the Plan.
-

7.4 A Path Forward

The future of Palm Island will require collaboration, transparency, and long-term planning. Several themes from earlier chapters shape the path ahead:

- The bridgeless barrier island lifestyle must remain protected.
 - Environmental stewardship must guide all decisions.
 - Infrastructure solutions must be customized to the Island's unique limitations.
 - Services must remain reliable, resilient, and responsive to emergencies.
 - Enforcement should be practical, respectful, and education-first.
 - Community involvement must be strengthened, ensuring Islanders have a meaningful role in shaping policies and investments.
-

7.5 Overall Conclusions

The community envisions a Palm Island that continues to reflect its natural beauty, quiet character, and boat-only way of life, while also being thoughtfully prepared for future infrastructure, service, and environmental needs. Islanders share a commitment to preserving the qualities that make the Island extraordinary as they plan responsibly for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The Neighborhood Plan provides a roadmap for that future. It documents the community's values, identifies its priorities, and establishes a framework for decision-making that honors the Island's past, protects its present, and guides its future. With continued engagement, collaboration, and thoughtful stewardship, Palm Island can remain one of the last true examples of "Pure Florida" for generations to come.

Appendix A: Project History and Outreach Timeline

Appendix A.1 Project Timeline

The following timeline documents the development of the Don Pedro/Knight Islands Neighborhood Plan, including County actions, committee deliberations, consultant procurement efforts, and community-driven initiatives undertaken by PIE Action.

2023

April 6, 2023

Commissioner Bill Truex attended an Info Central Town Hall-style meeting, bringing a copy of the 2004 Community Plan. He noted that the County's neighborhood planning program had no current funding but that the Don Pedro/Knight Islands Street and Drainage MSTU could allocate funds for planning activities. He recommended beginning with an introduction to neighborhood planning for Island stakeholders. [23.04.06_commissioner_truex_Q-A](#)

July 13, 2023

The MSTU Advisory Board held its first meeting following Info Central and added Neighborhood Planning to its agenda. [don-pedro-knight-islands-sd-20230713-minutes.pdf](#)

July 15, 2023

In an email to the MSTU Advisory Board, Charlotte County Community Development (Jie Shao) provided Future Land Use (FLU) policies related to Neighborhood Planning. [23.07.15_guidelines_Jie-Shao](#)

October 19, 2023

Shaun Cullinan attended the MSTU Advisory Board meeting to discuss neighborhood planning. The MSTU Advisory Board allocated \$50,000 for the effort. [don-pedro-knight-island-sd-20231019-minutes.pdf](#)

2024

January 11, 2024

County staff reported to the MSTU Advisory Board that work had begun on a Request for Letters of Interest (RLI) for the Neighborhood Plan. [20240425122545523.pdf](#)

April 24, 2024

A draft RLI was presented to the MSTU Advisory Board, which recommended revisions. [20241126142232622.pdf](#)

July 11, 2024

No engineering firms responded to the RLI. The MSTU Advisory Board discussed increasing the project's budget cap. [20241126142151864.pdf](#)

November 21, 2024

The MSTU Advisory Board voted to raise the budget cap to \$200,000. [20241126142151864.pdf](#)

2025

February 20, 2025

The MSTU Advisory Board recommended revisions to the February 2025 RLI and, at the County's request, reduced the budget cap to \$195,000. [don-pedro-knight-islands-sd-20250220.pdf](#)

May 9, 2025

A revised proposal package was issued by the County with submittals due June 6. [25.05.09_RFP253602_DPI-KI-plan](#)

June 6, 2025

Deadline for the proposal submissions for the Neighborhood Plan project. Three engineering firms submitted proposals. [25.06.06_johnson-engineering-submission.](#)

June 26, 2025

The PIE Action Committee established a two-pronged approach to the planning project:

- A **formal process** led by the County and the engineering firm.
- An **informal process** led by PIE Action to educate the community and gather input through surveys. [25.06.26_plan-for-neighborhood-plan](#)

July 6, 2025

PIE Action distributed an informational email to approximately 500 Islanders explaining the purpose and importance of the Neighborhood Plan. [25.07.06 PIE-email_new-project](#)

July 10, 2025

The County's Purchasing Department ranked the three proposals submitted with the highest ranking being awarded to Johnson Engineering. [Legislation Text - 2025-7299](#)

July 22, 2025

The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the staff's ranking of the proposal submissions and authorized the start of contract negotiations. [July 22, 2025 BCC Regular and Land Use Meeting](#).

July 24, 2025

At the MSTU Advisory Board meeting, the Committee was informed that the BCC authorized negotiations with Johnson Engineering. Community meetings were anticipated to begin in October. Discussions began regarding Island representation in the planning process and expanded community involvement. [don-pedro-knight-islands-sd-20250724.pdf](#)

August 15, 2025

The County Liaison provided the Committee with Johnson Engineering's project schedule, noting that contract approval by the BCC could not occur before September 22, requiring schedule adjustments. [25.08.15_email_engineer-schedule](#)

August 15, 2025

PIE Action issued a community update explaining the consultant's role, the requirement for four community input sessions, and the forthcoming town hall meetings once the contract was executed. [25.08.15_PIE-email_going-forward](#)

September 11, 2025

Public Works notified the MSTU Advisory Board via email that the County Attorney had withdrawn MSTU funding for the project. [25.09.11_email-cancellation-NP](#)

September 29, 2025

PIE Action met with Commissioner Truex. All parties agreed that MSTU funding was not necessary to proceed. Commissioner Truex affirmed that Community Development staff time could support plan completion. PIE Action committed to updating the plan, gathering community input, and providing progress updates. The Commissioner agreed to arrange a workshop with the

Commission to approve the allocation of staff time and recommend a team member to help facilitate the Plan development File: [25.09.29_meeting-notes_Bill-Truex](#)

October 9, 2025

The County Liaison to the MSTU Advisory Board announced the cancellation of the project. Neighborhood Planning is removed from future MSTU Advisory Board agendas. [25.10.09_cancellation of NP](#)

October 14, 2025

The BCC voted to formally withdraw MSTU funding for the Neighborhood Plan. [10142025-rlu.pdf](#)

October 27, 2025

PIE Action notified the community of the funding withdrawal and affirmed its intention to continue the planning effort independently. [25.10.27 PIE-email_starting-over](#)

2026

January 3, 2026

At the PIE Annual Meeting, a unanimous show-of-hands vote authorized PIE Action to move forward with development of the Neighborhood Plan. [PIE Meeting Minutes / Agendas 2026](#)

January–April 2026

PIE Action conducted ongoing email outreach and community engagement activities. See *Appendix A.2 Calendar of Email Campaign*.

February 11, 2026

PIE Action issued an explanatory email describing the survey methodology and the importance of collecting verifiable input from Island property owners to ensure accuracy and prevent outside influence. [26.02.11_PIE-email_why-surveys](#)

May 3, 2026

PIE Action releases a slideshow to the community of public input survey results for the Neighborhood Plan Vision Statement. [26.05.03_vision-stats_slideshow](#)

May 13 and May 16, 2026

Town Hall Meetings were held to gather additional community input for the Neighborhood Plan. [26.05.26_town-hall-meetings-recap](#)

Appendix A.2 Calendar of Emails and Social Media Posts

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
“A New Project” sent July 6, 2025. “Going forward” sent Aug. 15, 2025. “Starting Again” sent Oct. 27, 2025.				1	2	3 PIE ANNUAL MEETING
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 Email #4: Fresh Start Vision Statement	21	22 Email #5: Land Use 1.1 Principal Regulations	23	24
25	26	27 Email #6: Land Use 1.2 Non-Conformities & 50% Rule Social Posts: Getting Started	28	29 Email #7: Land Use 1.3 Other Regulations	30 Social Posts: 1.3 Other Regulations	31

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Email #8: Land Use 1.4 Build-out & Zoning Social Posts: Land Use 1.4	4	5 Email #9: Land Use 1.5 Green Space Social Posts: Land Use 1.5	6	7
8	9	10 Email #10: Land Use 1.6 Commercial Social posts: Land Use1.6	11	12 Email #11: Land Use 1.7 Rentals	13	14
15	16	17 Email #12: CHAPTER 1 is Complete: summary Social Post: Chapter 1	18 Social Posts: How Surveys Work	19 Email #13: Environment 2.1 Wildlife Social Post: Environment 2.1	20 Social Posts: 30% Chapters Complete	21
22	23	24 Email #14: Environment 2.2 Habitat Social Posts: Environment 2.2	25	26 Email #15: Environment 2.3 Water Quality Social Posts: Environment 2.3	27	28

March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 Email #16: Coastal 3.1 Waterways Coastal 3.2 Beaches Social posts: Coastal 3.1 & 3.2	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Email #17: Infrastructure 4.1 & 4.2 Transportation Social Posts: Infrastructure 4.1 & 4.2	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 Email #18: Infrastructure 4.3 Water & Wastewater 4.4 Other Infrastructure Social posts: Infrastructure 4.3 & 4.4	31				

April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5 EASTER	6	7	8	9	10 Email #19: Services 5.1 Fire & EMS Services 5.2 Disaster Planning Social Posts: Services 5.1 & 5.2	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 Email #20: Services 5.3 Other Chapter 6 Enforcement Social Posts: Services 5.3 Enforcement 6	29	30		

May 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Social Posts: Survey Call to Action Social media Animation: Vision Statement Survey Results	5 Social media Animation: Vision Statement Survey Results	6 Social Posts: Survey Call to Action	7 Social Post: Meeting dates	8 Social Posts: Survey Call to Action Social Video: Meet the Moderator	9
10	11 Email #21: Meeting Announcement & Video Social Posts: Survey Call to Action Social Video #1: The 50% Rule	12 Email #22: Meeting Reminder Social Video #2: Bridge Social Posts: Meeting reminder Social Posts: Myth vs Fact	13 Email #23 and Social Posts: Meeting Today Reminder Social Posts: Why a Plan 1:00 PM Public Meeting	14 Social Video #3: Meeting 1 follow-up & Join us for Meeting 2	15	16 10:00 AM Public Meeting Social posts: Meeting reminder
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Social Posts: Meeting followups
24	25	26 Email #24: Meeting Recap, Surveys Closed and Next Steps	27	28	29	30

Appendix B: Public Input and Community Engagement

Appendix B.1: Introduction and Methodology

The development of the Neighborhood Plan relied on a comprehensive, transparent, and inclusive public-participation process designed to engage Island property owners and ensure that the final Plan reflects broad community consensus. PIE Action employed multiple communication channels — including email outreach, Facebook postings, and a dedicated webpage on the PIE website — to circulate draft materials, solicit feedback, and encourage participation throughout the planning period.

Circulation of draft Plan sections began on January 19, 2026, and continued through April 28, 2026. As each chapter or section was completed, PIE Action announced its release through coordinated email and social-media outreach, directing residents to the Neighborhood Plan webpage for review and comment. Over this four-month period, **22 emails** were distributed — several containing multiple sections — and all posted materials remained available online throughout the engagement process. Surveys remained open through May 31, 2026. Social-media outreach accompanied the email campaign, with postings on both the Don Pedro Island Facebook page (private group, 6.4K members) and the PIE–Palm Island Estates Facebook page (nonprofit organization, 273 followers).

Across all chapters, the surveys presented **88 individual questions or statements**, along with opportunities for open-ended comments. All written comments submitted by participants were recorded and are included in Appendix B.3. In total, **203 Islanders** participated in the surveys, representing **189 discrete Island properties**.

The Neighborhood Plan webpage served as the central hub for public engagement. Each chapter page included three components:

1. **A brief summary,**
2. **The full text of the chapter section,** and
3. **A short survey** designed to measure levels of support or opposition to specific statements and recommendations.

To ensure accuracy and prevent duplicate or non-resident submissions, each survey required the respondent's name, contact information, and property address. As stated on the survey page, this verification process ensured that responses reflected the views of actual Island property owners and that each property was counted fairly. Personal information was used solely for verification or follow-up clarification and was not shared or distributed.

The purpose of the surveys was to document majority consensus on key issues, priorities, and recommended best practices. Survey results were supplemented by in-person engagement at two Town Hall Meetings held on May 13 and May 16, 2026. Each meeting began with an overview

of the planning process and its purpose: to gather input on the characteristics that make the Island unique, to identify shared concerns, and to explore potential recommendations. Facilitators emphasized that the meetings were intended for listening and information-gathering — not debate or persuasion — and that the Neighborhood Plan would not create new regulations but instead document community-supported best practices using language such as “suggested” and “encouraged.”

Participants divided into three workshop groups, each led by a facilitator and supported by a note-taker. The 3 facilitators then rotated among the groups, guiding discussions on two assigned chapters each to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to provide input on each topic. Sign-in sheets were circulated to document attendance of approximately **90 participants**.

Together, the surveys, email outreach, online materials, and Town Hall workshops formed a robust and inclusive methodology for gathering public input. This appendix presents the results of that process, including survey data, written comments, and summaries of workshop discussions.

[Appendix B.2: Table of Survey Results](#)

[Appendix B.3: Additional Survey Comments](#)

[Appendix B.4: Summary of Input from Town Hall Meetings](#)

Appendix C: Letters of Support



July 9, 2026

Board of County Commissioners Charlotte County, Florida

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my full support for the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan. As President and CEO of Island Harbor Beach Club, Palm Island Resort, Palm Island Transit, Palm Island Properties, and Island Harbor Resort Management, I have followed the development of this Plan closely from its inception. I have read the complete document, participated in the public planning process, and observed the extensive community engagement that shaped its content. It is clear that this Plan reflects a thoughtful, balanced, and forward-looking vision for the future of Palm Island.

Over the course of 5 decades, my businesses have operated on Palm Island, and our success has always depended on the Island's natural beauty, its quiet and low-density character, and the unique "Old Florida" experience that draws visitors and homeowners alike. The Neighborhood Plan aligns fully with the values that guide our operations and the environment we promote to our guests, residents, and property owners. Its emphasis on preserving the natural environment, maintaining single-family residential character, and protecting the "Old Florida" lifestyle is consistent with the qualities that make Palm Island one of the most distinctive destinations in coastal Florida.

I am particularly supportive of the Plan's focus on conservation and eco-tourism. Our businesses rely on healthy beaches, clean waterways, thriving wildlife, and the preservation of natural landscapes. These resources are not only essential to the Island's identity—they are central to the long-term sustainability of the local economy. The Neighborhood Plan's commitment to environmental stewardship, responsible coastal management, and community-led conservation efforts will help ensure that Palm Island remains a model for low-impact tourism and nature-based recreation.

The Plan also provides a clear framework for addressing future challenges in a way that respects both the Island's limitations and its opportunities. It offers practical guidance for land use, infrastructure, transportation, and community services, while honoring the Island's character and the expectations of those who live, work, and visit here. I believe this Plan will strengthen

collaboration between the County and the Island community and will support responsible decision-making for years to come.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board of County Commissioners to adopt the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan. It represents a unified community vision, a commitment to environmental protection, and a roadmap that supports both quality of life and sustainable economic activity. I appreciate the County's consideration and look forward to continued partnership in preserving the extraordinary place we are fortunate to call home.

Sincerely,

Adam Beckstead

President & CEO

Island Harbor Beach Club

Palm Island Resort

Palm Island Transit

Palm Island Properties

Island Harbor Resort Management

From: Robin Madden <robinmadden@islanderproperties.com>

Sent: Friday, July 3, 2026 2:58 PM

Subject: Letter to the BCC

Board of County Commissioners

Charlotte County, FL

July 3, 2026

Dear Commissioners:

This is to advise that I am in support of the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan. As the Owner and Broker of Islander Properties and a member of the Charlotte County Tourism Development Council, I have worked in the real estate and vacation rental industry for 20 years. The current plan, as I see it, enhances what is already in place with regard to statutes and laws and provide some of a guide to living on our island. It certainly is an improvement/enhancement to the previous plan developed 20 years ago by the Advisory Committee.

Palm Island's real estate market is built on a very specific set of qualities: natural beauty, low-density residential character, and a peaceful, authentic coastal environment. These are not marketing slogans – they are the reasons buyers choose to invest here and the foundation of stable property values. The Neighborhood Plan reinforces these strengths by protecting single-family residential zoning, preserving natural landscapes, and ensuring that future development remains compatible with the Island's character. This clarity and consistency are essential for maintaining buyer confidence and long-term market stability.

Guests visit our Island because it is different from other coastal destinations – quiet, natural, and unspoiled. Clear expectations for renters and property managers help protect the Island's quality of life. The Plan aligns with the growing demand for nature-based, low-impact travel experiences. Visitors increasingly seek destinations that offer wildlife, clean beaches, and a sense of authenticity. Protecting these assets is not only good for the island – it is good for Charlotte County's broader tourism economy.

I respectfully encourage the Board of County Commissioners to adopt the neighborhood plan. It represents a balanced, forward-looking approach that benefits homeowners, businesses, and the County as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin Madden

Owner Islander Properties, Inc. 330 South Gulf Blvd. Unit 40, Don Pedro-Knight-Palm Island
Member, Charlotte County Tourist Development Council
robinmadden@islanderproperties.com

From: Amy McCully <amymccully11@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 8:10 AM

Subject: Palm Island Neighborhood Plan

Palm Island Estates Association, Inc.

A Voluntary, Island-Wide Civic and Social Organization
pie@palmislandestates.org

July 7, 2026

Board of County Commissioners
Charlotte County, Florida

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Palm Island Estates Association, Inc. (PIE), I am writing to express our strong support for the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan. PIE is a voluntary, island-wide civic and social organization that has served the Palm Island community for more than four decades. Founded in 1980 as an environmental nonprofit, PIE has evolved into a broad-based organization that provides services, fosters community engagement, and supports initiatives that enhance the quality of life for Island residents and property owners. Throughout this evolution, our commitment to

protecting the Island's natural character and supporting responsible stewardship has remained constant.

PIE has been actively involved in the Neighborhood Plan process from the beginning. Our autonomous subcommittee — PIE Action — arranged public meetings, encouraged community participation, and followed the development of the Plan closely. We have read the full document and believe it accurately reflects the values, priorities, and concerns expressed by residents across the Island. The Plan is not only a statement of shared vision — it is a practical tool that will help guide future decisions in a way that respects the Island's unique character and the expectations of those who call it home.

The Neighborhood Plan aligns with PIE's long-standing mission in several important ways. First, it reinforces the importance of preserving the Island's natural environment — an issue central to PIE's origins and still a core part of our identity. The Plan's emphasis on protecting wildlife, maintaining natural landscapes, and supporting community-led stewardship reflects the values PIE has promoted for more than 40 years.

Second, the Plan supports the civic and social fabric of the Island. PIE has always worked to bring residents together, strengthen communication, and provide services that benefit the community as a whole. The Neighborhood Plan's focus on transparency, education, and collaboration mirrors PIE's approach and provides a framework for continued partnership between residents and the County.

Third, the Plan recognizes the practical realities of life on a bridgeless barrier island. Issues such as transportation, emergency services, infrastructure limitations, and environmental vulnerability require thoughtful, island-specific planning. The Neighborhood Plan addresses these challenges in a balanced and realistic manner, ensuring that future decisions are grounded in the lived experience of the community.

Finally, the Plan provides clarity and stability for the future. As a voluntary homeowners' organization, PIE has long served as a conduit for communication and cooperation among residents. The Neighborhood Plan strengthens this role by documenting the community's shared vision and providing a reference point for future discussions, decisions, and County actions.

For these reasons, the Palm Island Estates Association, Inc. respectfully urges the Board of County Commissioners to adopt the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan. It is a well-crafted, community-driven document that honors the Island's history, reflects its present needs, and provides a thoughtful path for its future.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of the Palm Island community.

Sincerely,

Palm Island Estates Association, Inc.
Board of Directors

Amy McCully, President

Linda Cotherman, Vice President, Community Liaison, Director of Action Committee, Island Watch

Deb Knighten, Treasurer

Ember Harker, Recording Secretary, Communications Chair

Georgiana Sinnett, Corresponding Secretary, Membership Chair

Michael McCully, Administrative Secretary

Kelly Lube, Social Chair

Jeanie Adams, Info Central Chair



Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc.

A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

Dedicated to Land Conservation, Habitat Protection, and Environmental Education

July 6th, 2026

Board of County Commissioners

Charlotte County, Florida

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc. (BICI), I am writing to express our strong support for the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to acquiring land for green space, preserving wildlife habitat, and providing environmental education to the community, we view this Plan as an essential step toward ensuring the long-term ecological health and resilience of Palm Island.

BICI's mission is rooted in the belief that people and nature can thrive together when stewardship is intentional, informed, and community-driven. Through land acquisition, habitat restoration, educational programming, and hands-on conservation experiences, we work to protect the natural systems that define Palm Island and support the wildlife that depends on them. The Neighborhood Plan aligns closely with these goals and provides a framework that reinforces the values our organization has championed for years.

The Plan's emphasis on preserving native vegetation, protecting wildlife, and maintaining the Island's low-density character is critical to sustaining the fragile ecosystems of this bridgeless barrier island. The community's strong support for environmental protection, reflected throughout the planning process, demonstrates a shared understanding that the Island's natural resources are both irreplaceable and vulnerable. By documenting these priorities, the Plan helps

ensure that future decisions will respect the ecological limits of the Island and the importance of maintaining natural buffers, wildlife corridors, and open space.

Equally important is the Plan's focus on education and stewardship. BICI has long believed that conservation succeeds when residents, visitors, and property owners understand the environment around them and feel empowered to protect it. The Neighborhood Plan reinforces this approach by encouraging practical, science-based strategies that rely on awareness, voluntary best practices, and community participation rather than additional regulation. This philosophy mirrors our own work, whether through guided nature walks, lectures, youth programs, or restoration projects, and strengthens the foundation for long-term environmental responsibility.

The Neighborhood Plan also recognizes that Palm Island's natural environment is central to its identity, its economy, and its future. Healthy dunes, intact vegetation, clean waterways, and thriving wildlife are not only ecological assets. They are the very qualities that make the Island a desirable place to live, visit, and invest in. Protecting these resources is essential to sustaining the Island's character and ensuring that future generations can experience the same "Pure Florida" landscape that exists today.

For these reasons, the Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc. respectfully urges the Board of County Commissioners to adopt the Palm Island Neighborhood Plan. It reflects a thoughtful, community-driven vision that honors the Island's ecological significance and supports the long-term stewardship necessary for people and nature to coexist in a sustainable way.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to protecting Charlotte County's natural heritage.

Sincerely,

Ember Harker

President of Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc.