



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Honorable Board of County Commissioners  
The Planning and Zoning Board

**FROM:** Jie Shao, Planner II

**DATE:** September 14, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan

---

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Little Gasparilla Island Steering Committee was formed after a group of concerned islanders met with Commissioner Horton to ask his help in trying to solve some of the problems facing Little Gasparilla Island. The Little Gasparilla Steering Committee was formed in November, 2002 for the purpose of evaluating the recommendations of the public and county staff regarding matters affecting Little Gasparilla Island, including such things as emergency medical services, fire suppression services, right-of-way and access issues. The findings were presented to the Board of County Commissioners in March of 2004. Subsequently, the Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee was formally established.

#### HISTORY

Two public meetings were held by HDR, Inc. to facilitate the gathering of background information to formulate a vision. The first public meeting was held on Saturday, November 12, 2005, on Little Gasparilla Island. Nearly 100 people participated in a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats exercise for the purpose of identifying those key issues from the position of the stakeholders. The second public meeting was held in December of 2005.

The vision statement that was derived from public input is below:

#### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Comprehensive Planning  
18500 Murdock Circle | Port Charlotte, FL 33948  
Phone: 941.743.1272 | Fax: 941.743.1929

*"Little Gasparilla Island is a pristine piece of old Florida, conveniently located minutes from the mainland and its amenities and services. Quiet, peaceful and uncrowded, Little Gasparilla Island is an informal, yet cooperative, collection of residents who cherish the breathtaking beauty of their unique island home and the easy going lifestyle it fosters. Timeless and enduring, Little Gasparilla Island combines history, nature and individuality to create one of the most endearing places in Florida."*

Based on input collected at the workshops the draft plan was formulated by the Consultant in April, 2006.

The Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee and the county staff reviewed the draft plan chapter by chapter. Four Town Hall meetings were held by the Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee and the county staff for the purpose of soliciting comments from the stakeholders on the LGI Community Plan. Nearly 50 people participated in the first and second meetings, and almost 40 people attended the third and fourth meetings.

The Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee and the county staff revised the draft plan based on the comments from the county various departments and the island stakeholders.

#### MOTION

The Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee is requesting that the Board of County Commissioners accept the Community Plan.

## Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan

**Goal 1.** Maintain and protect Little Gasparilla Island's low-density residential nature, while providing for limited non-residential uses to meet community needs.

**Objective 1.1.** Complete zoning revisions to guarantee that residential density on LGI shall not exceed the requirement of the BBIOD.

**Policy 1.1.1.** New zoning categories will be developed for Little Gasparilla Island to address the overlapping regulations including BBIOD, RMF-T, and Medium Density Residential Future Land Use designations.

**Policy 1.1.2.** New zoning may include incentives to encourage lot aggregation and other density-reduction measures.

**Objective 1.2.** Charlotte County will coordinate with the LGI Advisory Committee to identify an island site that serves as the location from which community services may be provided.

**Objective 1.3.** While low-density residential will remain the principal land use on Little Gasparilla Island, Charlotte County will explore zoning revisions and other measures to promote limited commercial and community land uses on the island.

**Policy 1.3.1.** Charlotte County recognizes that some existing uses on the island are nonconforming and that those nonconformities should be conformed to the existing County Codes.

**Policy 1.3.2.** The residents of Little Gasparilla Island expressed a desire for little, if any, commercial development on the island. Any commercial property on LGI is subject to Federal, State, and County regulations and must receive the appropriate zoning classification from its current designation of residential uses. The LGI Advisory Committee will review all proposals for zoning change and will make a recommendation to the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners. Proposed zoning changes must clearly show that there is a unique need for and resulting benefit to the LGI community. The LGI Advisory Committee will base its recommendation on varied criteria including, but not limited to, needs, benefit, scope, infrastructure, impacts, and community conformity.

**Goal 2.** Manage growth and the rate of growth in a manner that ensures the sustainability of its resources and the attainability of its community vision.

**Objective 2.1.** Consistent with Objective 1.4 of the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan, the County in partnership with the LGI Advisory Committee will explore the feasibility of reducing the number of vacant platted lots.

**Policy 2.1.1.** Land acquisition for conservation and green space will be promoted. The acquisition of land and partnership opportunities should be explored.

**Policy 2.1.2.** Charlotte County will encourage the LGI Advisory Committee to work with private entities to reduce platted lots through assembly and deplating, public acquisition, transfers of density rights, and may explore the possibility of lot swaps.

**Goal 3.** Secure a mainland site to serve the future parking and boat launching opportunities.

**Objective 3.1.** The LGI Advisory Committee will coordinate with Charlotte County to determine how to supply short and long-term parking and boat slip needs.

**Policy 3.1.1.** The LGI Advisory Committee will explore alternative funding sources to establish parking and docking facilities.

**Goal 4.** Maintain boat access to the island.

**Objective 4.1.** Charlotte County will support the LGI Advisory Committee's efforts to ensure the water-based transportation network for island residents and visitors is navigable.

**Policy 4.1.1** In coordination with appropriate agencies, LGI Advisory Committee will communicate desired boating needs for LGI stakeholders.

**Goal 5.** Establish a permanent, north/south transportation corridor.

**Objective 5.1.** Charlotte County in coordination with the LGI Advisory Committee will evaluate the different alternatives under which a north-south access could be established on Little Gasparilla Island.

**Policy 5.1.1.** The LGI Advisory Committee will work with the residents on the island to explore funding sources for the alternatives.

**Policy 5.1.2.** If established, the north/south corridor will remain unpaved.

**Goal 6.** Promote the restoration of native terrestrial habitats on Little Gasparilla Island.

**Objective 6.1.** Charlotte County recognizes that Little Gasparilla Island lots are privately owned. The Charlotte County Environmental Extension Office will work with local residents and land owners to establish an awareness campaign that promotes the restoration of native habitats on the island.

**Policy 6.1.1.** Charlotte County in coordination with the LGI Advisory Committee will investigate the means by which to conduct an assessment of the terrestrial vegetation on Little Gasparilla Island including but not limited to grant funding opportunities.

**Policy 6.1.2.** The assessment of native terrestrial vegetation should include a description of the vegetation types across the island as well as the identification of priority areas for restoration. The study should also recommend techniques to remove and dispose of exotic vegetation and replace with native species.

**Objective 6.2.** All new construction on the Little Gasparilla Island is required to remove exotic and aggressive native species, such as Brazilian pepper, Australian pine and Nicker bean. The LGI Advisory Committee will actively encourage removal of exotic species on existing developed properties.

**Goal 7.** Maintain efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions of potable water.

**Objective 7.1.** Charlotte County supports the efforts of the Little Gasparilla Island community to monitor and evaluate the quality and quantity of the potable water supply for Little Gasparilla Island.

**Policy 7.1.1.** The LGI Advisory Committee will coordinate with the Department of Environmental Protection and the State Department of Health.

**Objective 7.2.** Charlotte County, in coordination with the LGI Advisory Committee and the Public Service Commission, will support efforts to ensure that the private potable water utility plant complies with industry and regulatory standards for treatment efficiency and water quality.

**Objective 7.3** The County encourages the LGI Advisory Committee to investigate other alternatives to provide potable water in a cost-effective, reliable fashion.

**Goal 8.** Maintain efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions of wastewater regulations.

**Objective 8.1.** Charlotte County supports the efforts of the Little Gasparilla Island community to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of septic systems.

**Policy 8.1.1** The LGI Advisory Committee will coordinate with the Department of Environmental Protection and the State Department of Health to maintain the standards for wastewater systems.

**Goal 9.** Seek alternative means to provide a more efficient collection system for the disposal of solid waste generated on Little Gasparilla Island.

**Objective 9.1.** The LGI Advisory Committee will coordinate with Charlotte County to investigate the opportunity to establish a collection point on the mainland to serve the solid waste disposal needs of Little Gasparilla Island.

**Goal 10.** Enhance the capability of Fire/EMS services provided to the island.

**Objective 10.1.** Delineate geographic location for additional Fire/EMS services.

**Policy 10.1.1.** The preferred site would have frontage or access to the water, likely, on the bay side of the island; be centrally located, to facilitate access by all island residents and visitors; and should be of sufficient size to accommodate emergency equipment storage, temporary living quarters, a community activity building, and other elements that may be desired by the community.

**Objective 10.2.** Charlotte County will work with the LGI Advisory Committee to explore ways to enhance the level of police patrolling and improve the response time for emergency calls.