



# Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan

September 2007

Citizens of Little Gasparilla Island



HDR

LGI Advisory Committee

# **Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan**

**Prepared by:**

**The Citizens of Little Gasparilla Island,  
The Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee  
and  
Charlotte County**

**With assistance from Consultant:**

**HDR Engineering, Inc.**

## **Community Vision:**

*"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."*

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose of the Plan .....	1
1.2 Community Planning in Charlotte County .....	2
1.3 The Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee .....	2
1.4 Current Conditions .....	4
<b>2. Little Gasparilla Island Community Planning Process.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. Land Use Element .....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Current Conditions Summary.....	10
3.2 Analysis of Community Needs .....	14
3.3 Goals, Policies and Objectives .....	15
<b>4. Transportation Element .....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 Current Conditions Summary.....	17
4.2 Analysis of Community Needs .....	18
4.3 Goals, Policies and Objectives .....	20
<b>5. Natural Resources and Coastal Planning Element.....</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1 Current Conditions Summary.....	21
<b>6. Infrastructure Element .....</b>	<b>23</b>
6.1 Current Conditions Summary.....	23
6.2 Analysis of Community Needs .....	23
6.3 Goals, Policies and Objectives .....	23
<b>7. Community Facilities and Services Elements.....</b>	<b>26</b>
7.1 Current Conditions Summary.....	26
7.2 Analysis of Community Needs .....	26
7.3 Goals, Policies and Objectives .....	26
<b>8. Implementation .....</b>	<b>28</b>

## List of Appendices

- A. Resolution Number 2004-062, Establishing the Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee
- B. Minutes from Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee Meeting, 5/5/05
- C. Consultant's Scope of Work for Little Gasparilla Community Plan
- D. Summary of SWOT Analysis

## List of Figures

1.	Charlotte County Community Planning Areas .....	1
2.	Little Gasparilla Island Location Map.....	5
3.	Little Gasparilla Island Zoning Map .....	10
4.	Little Gasparilla Island Future Land Use Map.....	11
5.	Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay .....	12
6.	Little Gasparilla Island Current Land Use .....	13
7.	Little Gasparilla Island Water Based Access .....	17
8.	Manatee Speed Zones .....	18
9.	Networks of Roads/Paths on Little Gasparilla Island .....	19
10.	FDEP Environmental Sensitivity Map .....	21
11.	Little Gasparilla Island Utilities.....	24
12.	Artist's Depiction of Community Center .....	27

## List of Photos

1.	Participants listened to the consultant's presentation. ....	6
2.	Participants worked in groups.....	6
3.	Participants voted for the issues.....	6
4a.	Single-Family Residential Units .....	14
4b.	Condominium Units .....	14
5.	Typical Little Gasparilla Island Road .....	18
6.	Beach Erosion .....	21
7.	Typical Vegetation .....	21

## List of Tables

1.	Highest Ranked Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats .....	7
2.	Results of Goal Exercises .....	8
3.	RMF-T Zoning .....	10
4.	Land Use on Little Gasparilla Island .....	14
5.	Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan Implementation.....	28

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Plan

Charlotte County’s Community Planning process is a community-driven planning initiative that addresses the individual needs of the respective community planning areas. Little Gasparilla Island is one of nine community planning areas in Charlotte County on the west coast of Florida (Figure 1). The Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan addresses important community needs, identifies issues affecting these needs, and provides goals, objectives and policies in order to meet these needs.

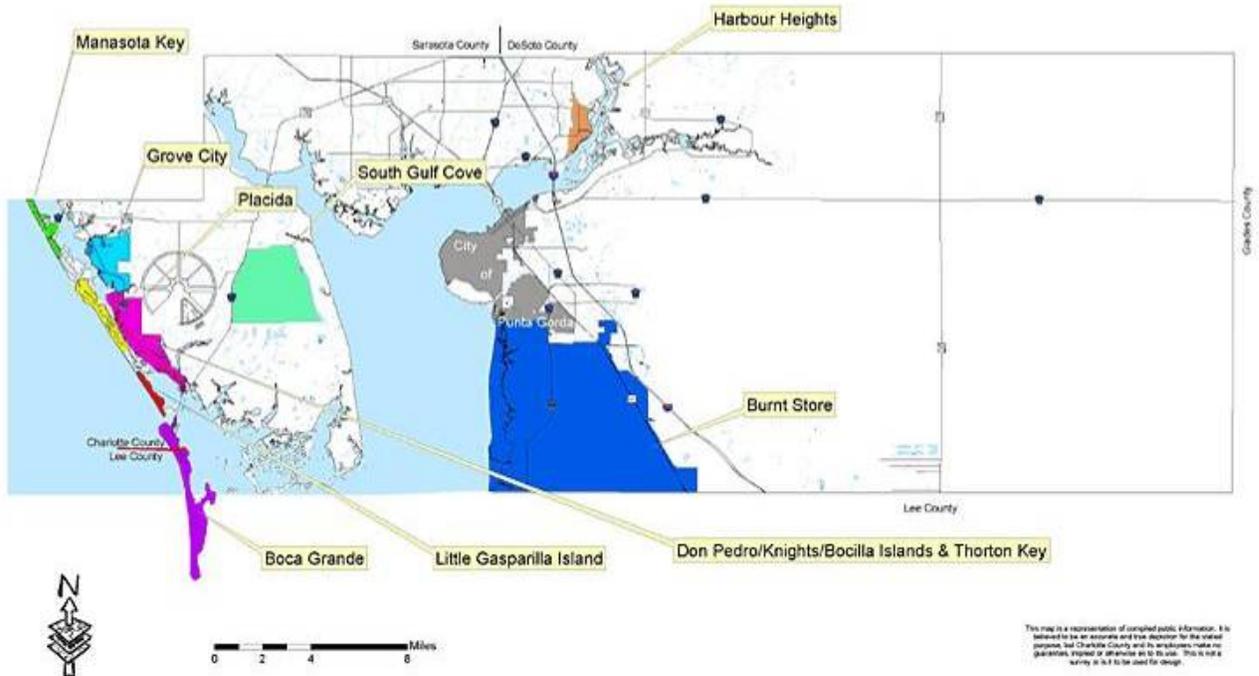


Figure 1. Charlotte County Community Planning Areas (Source: Charlotte County)

This Community Plan expresses the community’s vision and values, and embodies public policy relative to the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan. The Community Plan does not replace the County’s Comprehensive Plan, but expands it to address local needs. The document is organized in a manner that mirrors the County’s Comprehensive Plan.

According to state legislation, local comprehensive plans should accomplish four primary tasks:

1. Guide and control future development;
2. Overcome present problems and deal effectively with future problems, which may result from the use and development of land;
3. Preserve, protect and improve health, safety and welfare; and
4. Protect human, environmental, social and economic resources.

Charlotte County's Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1997, but due to protracted challenges by the State of Florida, the plan entered into effect in 2000. The Comprehensive Plan contains the County's goals, objectives and policies for implementation of the state mandated growth management actions through the year 2010. The Comprehensive Plan applies throughout the County and is implemented based upon the local community conditions.

## **1.2 Community Planning in Charlotte County**

The Charlotte County Community Development Department instituted a "Community Planning" program to assist neighborhoods and communities in coordinating their planning efforts. The Community Planning process provides a vision, core values and policy guidance to balance the needs of a community while enhancing the quality of life of its residents. Typically, a neighborhood or stakeholders group will form and begin to discuss areas of concern or improvement. Once a community identifies the desire to initiate the community planning process, the Charlotte County Board of Commissioners approves funding assistance for the neighborhood and formally designates the area for community planning. The County also assigns a County staff member who serves as a neighborhood liaison to the community planning area.

The County then hires a consultant who assists the community in identifying a vision for the area and establishing goals, objectives and policies for the community. These goals, objectives and policies preserve and maintain the existing amenities and aim at addressing the community's specific needs. There are nine community planning areas in Charlotte County: Manasota Key, Grove City, Placida, South Gulf Cove, Harbour Heights, Burnt Store, Boca Grande, Don Pedro/Knights/Bocilla Islands/Thornton Key and Little Gasparilla Island. Of these, Manasota Key, South Gulf Cove, Placida, Burnt Store and Boca Grande have completed a community plan. Harbour Heights and Grove City are in the process of completing their community plans.

The community plan provides specific policy direction and actions to meet community needs related to land use, the natural environment, economic development, infrastructure, community character, public facilities and services. Preserving and building community character, while ensuring an efficient and predictable development approval process, is a central theme of the plan. Each community plan is tailored to the specific community planning area. For example, the Community Plan for South Gulf Cove emphasized density reduction, while the Community Plan for Harbour Heights focuses on quality commercial development. In turn, the Community Plan for Little Gasparilla Island focuses on preserving island character while improving mainland services and support.

## **1.3 The Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee**

In November 2002, the Little Gasparilla Island Steering Committee was established to formulate a vision for Little Gasparilla Island and to begin addressing concerns of the residents. The Committee members included island residents and property association

members. Due to the lack of land access to the island, the Little Gasparilla Island residents initially identified issues regarding emergency medical services, fire suppression services, right-of-way and access. Over the next two years the Committee met and discussed the characteristics of the island. The Committee documented their findings and concerns in a report presented to the Board of County Commissioners in March 2004. The Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution and the Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee (hereafter, LGI Advisory Committee) was formally established (Appendix A).

The LGI Advisory Committee drafted and presented a set of bylaws in July 2005. The LGI Advisory Committee is represented by a seven-member Board, the purpose of which “is to discuss matters of concern to the island residents including, but not limited to, the development of a community plan, emergency medical services, fire suppression services, right-of-way and access issues, the development of recommendations regarding island infrastructure and environmental issues, the development of the findings of the prior Little Gasparilla Steering Committee and to advise the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners on said matters.” Since its inception, the LGI Advisory Committee has addressed such topics as establishment of a north/south easement, property rights, density of structures, red tide, Stump Pass Dredging Project, Gasparilla Pass, water taxis, trash disposal, sewer facilities, island emergency services, Municipal Service Benefit Units (MSBU)/Municipal Service Taxing Units (MSTU) and aggressive exotic plant growth. The Community Plan seeks to address some of these concerns.

The LGI Advisory Committee approached their district's Commissioner in 2004 with a written request to formally initiate the Community Planning process. The Commissioner forwarded the request to the Community Development Department. The LGI Advisory Committee and the Little Gasparilla Property Owners Association (LGPOA) collaborated on the request to initiate a Community Plan. Both groups developed a list of specific areas of concern. On May 5, 2005, the LGPOA presented a memorandum to the LGI Advisory Committee recommending the following areas of concentration regarding the Community Plan (Appendix B):

- Zoning
- Future Land Use
- Access to the Island
- Roadway Easements
- Water Supply
- Sewage Treatment
- Garbage Collection
- Fire Protection
- Emergency Medical Treatment and Transportation
- Community Center Building, and
- Taxes and Costs of County Services

The LGI Advisory Committee then expanded the list provided by the LGPOA and provided a summary of issues and considerations to be addressed in the Community Plan. This summary was used to create the Request for Letters of Interest (RLI). A RLI outlines the scope of services the consultant is asked to perform. A consultant was retained in September 2005.

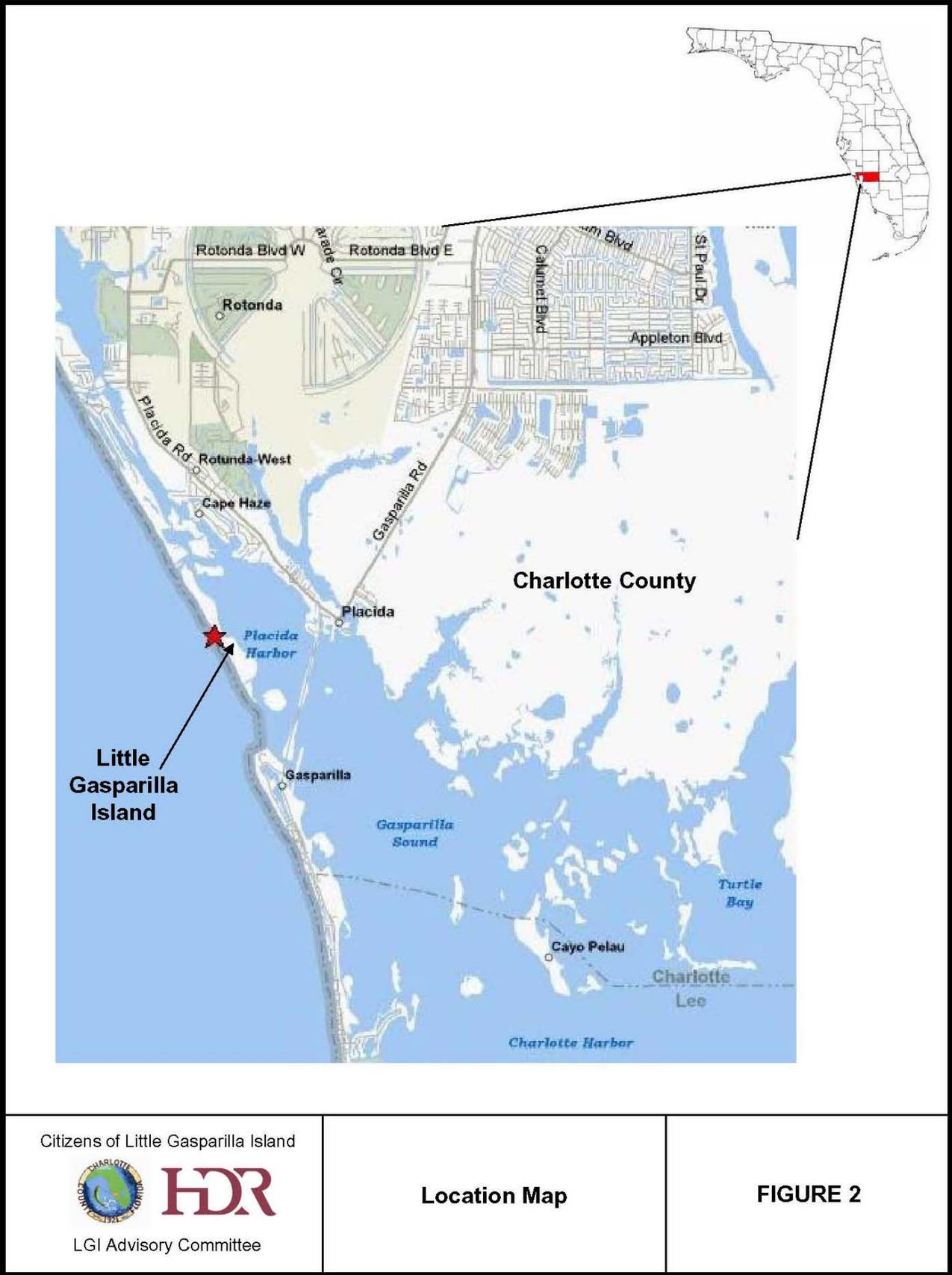
#### 1.4 Current Conditions

Little Gasparilla Island is a bridgeless barrier island located off Florida's west coast in Charlotte County (Figure 2). It is the southernmost island of the chain formed by Don Pedro, Palm Island and Little Gasparilla Island. Little Gasparilla Island is approximately 2.5 miles in length and averages between  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in width. The island has access to both the Gulf of Mexico and Placida Harbor. The island is physically connected to Don Pedro Island to the north; however, the Don Pedro State Park serves as a buffer that only allows for pedestrian access. Therefore, Little Gasparilla Island is accessible only by watercraft and emergency vehicles (such as All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) that are utilized by the Charlotte County Sheriff's Department).

All parcels on Little Gasparilla Island are privately owned. There are 642 platted lots ranging in size from one-tenth of an acre to 13.6 acres. There are two condominium developments on the island: Placida Beach Condos and Hideaway Bay Condos. Placida Beach Condos have 30 single-family residential units and Hideaway Bay Condos have 102 single-family residential units. The majority of the island is single-family residential; 10 parcels are zoned Planned Development. Little Gasparilla Island is located outside the Urban Service Area. There are no public lands or facilities on the island with the possible exception of roads which may or may not be considered to be public. Vehicular and pedestrian access is limited to a network of unimproved paths. Docks on the island are owned by individual waterfront property owners, property owner associations, neighborhood groups or the two condo associations.

Infrastructure and public facilities are limited on the island. Florida Power and Light provides electricity and Sprint provides phone service. Potable and non-potable water is provided by individual cisterns, shallow wells and a privately owned for-profit water company that utilizes a deep drilled well to provide water. The Little Gasparilla Island Water Utility has a reverse osmosis desalinization plant. Wastewater from single-family units is disposed of in septic tanks and drain fields located on individual lots. The condominiums have a single wastewater treatment system.

Emergency and medical services are provided by the volunteer fire department located on the island. Fire protection for the island is provided by a subsidized chief who resides on the island. The fire services are funded by contributions from island residents. Law enforcement is provided by the Charlotte County Sheriff's department. Amenities on the island include the Leydon-Mirza Chapel. A stakeholder maintains a common-use library on the island that is free to all islanders.



## 2. Little Gasparilla Island Community Planning Process

The LGI Advisory Committee, along with Charlotte County, established a comprehensive list of needs with which to establish a RLI. The RLI was produced in order to hire a consultant to assist Little Gasparilla Island in the community planning process. The County hired a consultant in September 2005. The consultant's Scope of Work is reproduced in Appendix C. The consultant met with the LGI Advisory Committee on October 11, 2005, which served as the Kick-Off Meeting for the Community Planning Project. At this meeting the consultant was introduced to County staff and the LGI Advisory Committee and a schedule for the project was established.

Two public workshops provided opportunities for the Little Gasparilla Island stakeholders to define a community vision and goals for the Plan.

### Workshop 1 – November 12, 2005

The first public workshop was held at the Chapel on Little Gasparilla Island on November 12, 2005, with the participation of 89 island residents as well as County staff and consultants (Photos 1-3). The consultant introduced and described the planning process, its schedule, and the structure and scope of the final Plan.



**Photo 1. Participants listened to the consultant's presentation.**



**Photo 2. Participants worked in groups.**



**Photo 3. Participants voted for the issues.**

In a group exercise, attendees brainstormed and identified community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Finally, the attendees ranked the SWOT elements to determine the main issues of the community (Table 1, Appendix D).

Table 1 Highest-Ranked Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (number of votes in parenthesis)	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No bridge = No cars (53)</li> <li>Peaceful old Florida environment (48)</li> <li>Low residential density (26)</li> <li>No commercial development (24)</li> <li>Safe environment for kids (16)</li> <li>No paved roads (13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Lack of] mainland parking (44)</li> <li>Lack of value for taxes paid (40)</li> <li>Access to the island (marina) (32)</li> <li>No north/south access (14)</li> <li>Few public docks (11)</li> <li>Lack of island EMS (10)</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control future growth and development on island (46)</li> <li>Create additional marinas/parking on mainland (38)</li> <li>Island ownership of marina (25)</li> <li>Explore Little Gasparilla Island residential ferry (22)</li> <li>Resolve North-South corridor (17)</li> <li>Maintain green areas/island ecology (12)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sale of marinas (mainland) (50)</li> <li>Taxes (36)</li> <li>Overdevelopment (32)</li> <li>MSBU/MSTU (26)</li> <li>Paved roads (23)</li> <li>Bridge to island (22)</li> </ul>

\*The discussion relative to green space was to encourage lot owners to consider density reduction through the Transfer Density Units process to provide more green space on the island, but also to pursue acquisition of a common area to construct a public use facility.

The consultant summarized the results of the SWOT analysis in a statement provided to the County via email on November 17, 2005:

*“The Little Gasparilla Island community relishes its geographic autonomy and the quiet, natural, safe environment it provides. Yet, they want more support from the mainland, such as larger return on taxes paid, provision of EMS services, and securing a permanent mainland site for parking/boat launching. They see this juncture as an opportunity to control future growth and strengthen the connection with the mainland. They are leery of increasing taxes, uncontrolled development, and losing a parking/boat launching facility on the mainland. They also want to address the island-side issue of a north/south corridor.”*

### Workshop 2 – December 9, 2005

The second workshop was held on December 9, 2005 at County facilities in Port Charlotte, with the participation of 17 community members. In the workshop, the consultant facilitated a discussion that yielded the community vision and the main goals to be incorporated into the Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan.

The following Community vision statement synthesizes the desires of the Little Gasparilla Island community:

*"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."*

The group then worked to identify the issues the Plan goals should address (Table 2).

<b>Table 2 Results of Goal Exercises</b>	
<b>Future Land Use</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider Barrier Island Act</li> <li>• Single-family residential zoning</li> <li>• Set-back requirements</li> <li>• Grandfather in Golf Cart business</li> <li>• Consider limited neighborhood commercial activities</li> <li>• Essential Services</li> <li>• Require property owners to maintain junk free status</li> </ul>	
<b>Transportation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the island is accessible from the mainland</li> <li>• No vehicles on the beach</li> <li>• No bridge or vehicle access</li> <li>• Create north/south access easement</li> <li>• Maintain current sand paths</li> </ul>	
<b>Natural Resources and Coastal Planning</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove exotic, aggressive vegetation</li> <li>• Erosion control</li> <li>• Maintain/dredge Gasparilla Pass</li> <li>• Red tide</li> <li>• Water quality of the bay</li> <li>• Continual testing of water contaminants</li> <li>• Follow the coastal construction line</li> <li>• Enforce existing dock restrictions and restrict motorized boat traffic over low seabeds and grass flats</li> <li>• Controlled/regulated burning</li> </ul>	
<b>Infrastructure</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid waste pick up and heavy trash collection</li> <li>• County should acquire water system</li> <li>• Pursue a feasibility study of the sewer system and ensure the existing septic systems are operating properly</li> <li>• Utilities run along easements versus private property</li> <li>• Need efficiently operated potable water system with adequate fire flow pressure</li> <li>• Tie into Charlotte County 2" water main located on Don Pedro</li> </ul>	

<b>Table 2 (continued)</b> <b>Results of Goal Exercises</b>	
<b>Recreation and Open Space</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain free and open beach where pets are allowed and prohibit all vehicle traffic</li> </ul>	
<b>Housing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No condos, hotels, resorts, townhomes or mobile homes</li> <li>• Ensure that height restrictions and set backs are enforced</li> <li>• Homes are low scale with appropriate architecture</li> </ul>	
<b>Intergovernmental Coordination</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that Charlotte County will coordinate with Little Gasparilla Island, specifically regarding fire, EMS and law enforcement services</li> <li>• County to work with island Advisory Board</li> </ul>	
<b>Community Facilities and Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMS at island stations</li> <li>• Trash removal</li> <li>• Road and easement maintenance</li> <li>• Gathering place for community</li> <li>• Develop effective EMS, fire and police response to island emergencies</li> </ul>	
<b>Capital Improvements</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underground power</li> <li>• Provide boardwalks to beaches through easements</li> <li>• Ensure that an appropriate sized chipper and equipment are purchased to manage tree debris</li> </ul>	

### *Technical Workshop*

On February 14, 2006 the consultant and County staff met at the Charlotte County offices from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The work session was structured around the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan elements. County staff addressed seven topics: Land Use; Transportation/MSBU; Utilities; Fire/EMS; Parks and Recreation; and Environmental Extension and Natural Resources. For each topic, the group discussed the key issues raised by the community and how the Community Plan could address them.

### 3. Land Use Element

#### 3.1 Current Conditions Summary

##### Zoning & Future Land Use

Little Gasparilla Island is primarily residential; all parcels are privately owned. With the exception of 10 parcels zoned for Planned Development (PD) (aka Preserve Unit II), the island is zoned Residential, Multi-Family/Tourist (RMF-T) (Figure 3). The future land use for Little Gasparilla Island is Medium Density Residential (Figure 4).

The PD and RMF-T zoning designations are defined as follows in the County land development regulations (Sections 3-9-34 and 3-9-49):

**RMF-T-** The RMF-T zoning district is intended to permit multi-family dwellings, apartments and tourist-related commercial facilities (Table 3). The locations of RMF-T district are primarily along arterials as designated in the Comprehensive Plan and in resort areas on the barrier islands.

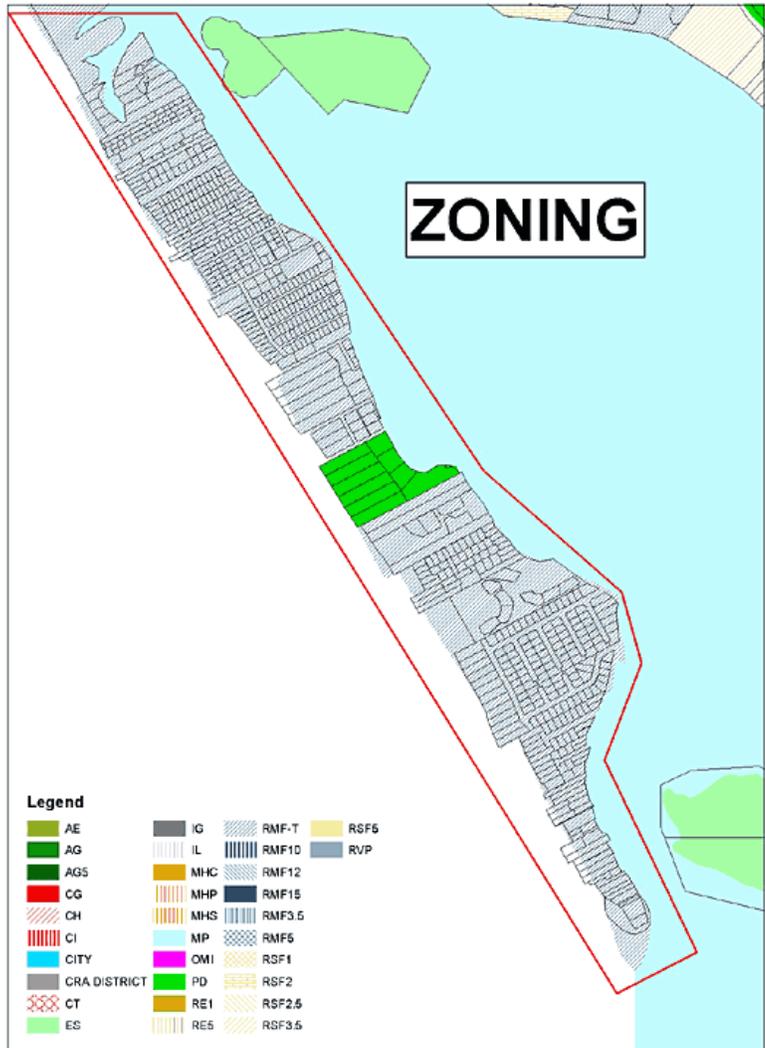
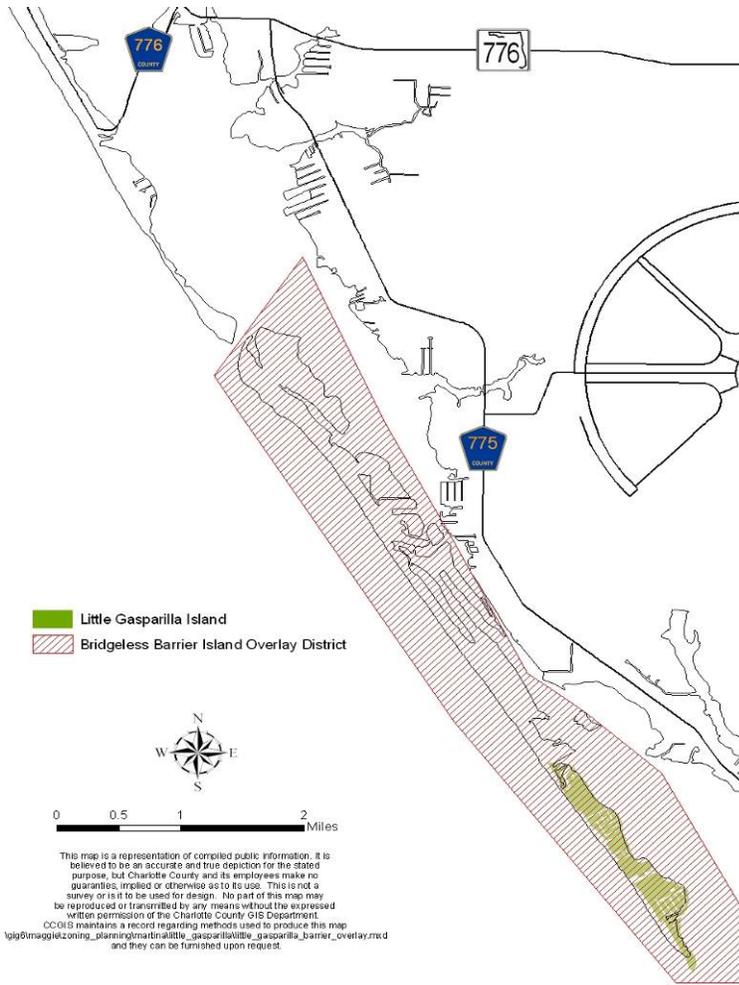


Figure 3. Little Gasparilla Island Zoning

Table 3 RMF-T Zoning						
District	Setbacks			Max Height*	Minimum Lot Coverage	Primary Uses
	Front	Side	Rear			
RMF-T	25	15/25/20	7.5/15/20	38 feet	7,500 square ft	Multi-family, apartments & tourist related commercial

\*The maximum building height is measured from the base flood elevation.



**Figure 4. Little Gasparilla Island Future Land Use**

**PD-** The PD zoning district permits any residential, commercial, industrial or public land uses, provided the proposed development is shown to be consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, and consistent with the future land use element and relevant standards and criteria contained in the County land development regulations.

Future land uses are defined in the Comprehensive Plan Objective 2.2. Policy 2.2.1 defines the Medium Density Residential Category as follows:

*“These lands are designated for urban residential uses. Medium Density Residential lands may be developed at a density from 5 dwelling units per acre to 10 dwelling units per acre. Uses on land designated as such include: single-family residential dwelling units, multi-family residential dwelling units, manufactured residential dwelling units, recreational facilities, sub-neighborhood commercial centers, and schools.”*

Therefore, both the zoning and future land use designations for Little Gasparilla Island allow for multi-family, medium density developments, including both residential and commercial units.

However, Little Gasparilla Island is located within the Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay District (BBIOD) of Charlotte County (Figure 5). An overlay district is an additional zoning requirement placed on a geographic area that does not change the underlying zoning. Overlay districts have been used to impose development restrictions in specific locations in addition to standard zoning requirements. The District essentially restricts density and intensity of residential development mainly to reduce the potential for devastation caused by hurricanes.

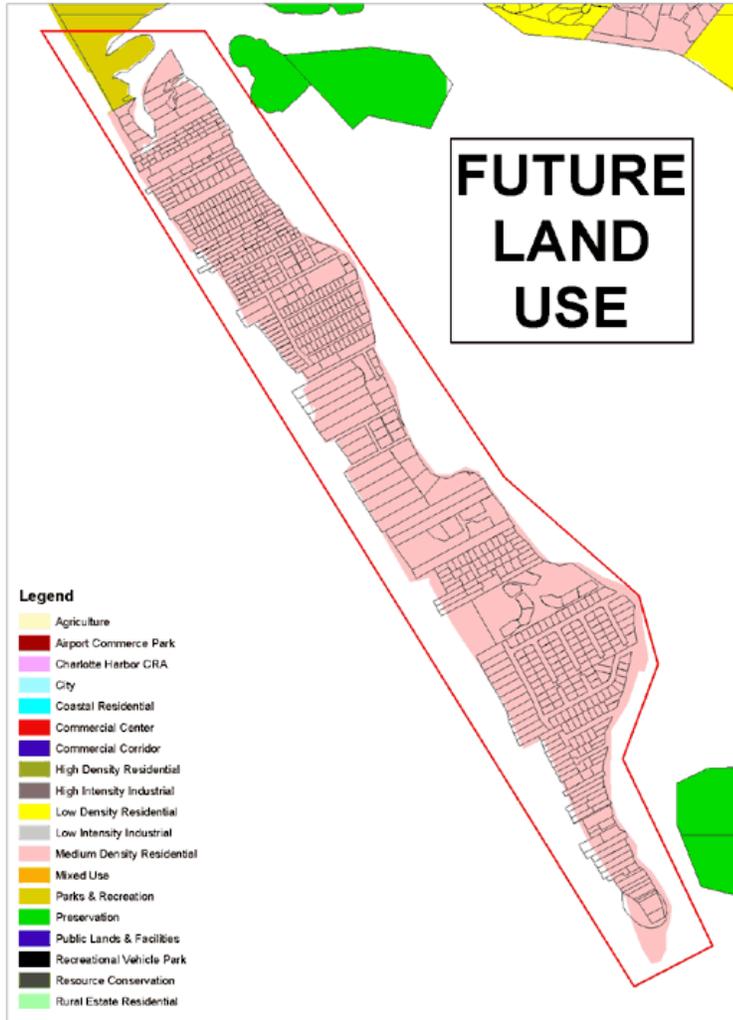


Figure 5. Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay

The BBIOD is described and implemented through the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan. Policy 2.5.3 defines the District as follows:

*“The Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay District (BBIOD) consists of Charlotte County’s bridgeless barrier island chain and includes Don Pedro Island, Knight Island, Thornton Key, and Little Gasparilla Island. In order to reduce the potential for devastation resulting from involuntary natural disasters, this overlay district restricts the intensity of residential development. Residential densities within the district may not exceed one (1) dwelling unit per gross acre. All residential lots created within the Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay District subsequent to February 1, 1992 shall not exceed one (1) dwelling unit per gross acre requirement. However, all residential lots created consistent with the Charlotte County Subdivision Regulations shall have an allowable density of one (1) dwelling unit per subdivided lot.”*

Therefore, the BBIOD is more restrictive than the current zoning and future land use designations on Little Gasparilla Island.

Non-conforming structures and uses occur on Little Gasparilla Island. Section 3-9-10 of the Charlotte County Code addresses non-conforming structures and recognizes as “legally non-conforming” those structures built prior to the enactment of the current zoning. On Little Gasparilla Island, typical non-conformities include improper setbacks and improper use (e.g., golf cart repair in a residential area), among others. The Charlotte County Code establishes limits and sets criteria for rebuilding non-conforming structures in the event of destruction.

### Land Use

A review of the Charlotte County Property Appraiser’s database shows that there are 642 parcels on this 206.5-acre island (Table 4). Nearly half of the parcels and half of the area are vacant. Vacant parcels occur throughout the island (Figure 6).



Citizens of Little Gasparilla Island



LGI Advisory Committee

**Land Use  
on Little Gasparilla Island**

**FIGURE 6**

Table 4 Land Use on Little Gasparilla Island (as of 01/12/2007)		
	Parcels (%)	Area in acres (%)
<b>Total</b>	642 (100%)	206.5 (100%)
Vacant Residential	273 (43%)	93.9 (45%)
Single-Family Residential	344 (53%)	88 (43%)
Multi-Family (132 Units)	16(2.9%)	22.4 (1.4%)
Miscellaneous (Water Plant, FPL, Other)	3 (.4%)	0.4 (.2%)
Mobile Homes	2 (.2%)	0.4 (.2%)
Miscellaneous Residential	3 (.4%)	0.4 (.2%)
Institutional (Chapel)	1 (.1%)	1.0 (.4%)



Photo 4a. Single-Family Residential Units

Ninety-three percent of the developed parcels are developed as single-family residential (Photo 4a). The 344 single-family residential parcels occupy nearly 88 acres of the island. Eleven parcels are listed as “condominium.” There are two condominium developments on the island (Photo 4b): Placida Beach Condos with 30 units and Hideaway Bay Condos with 102 units.



Photo 4b. Condominium Units

To estimate the number of developed parcels occupied permanently, we assumed that an owner with a post office box mailing address on Little Gasparilla Island or Placida resides on the island permanently. Under this assumption, there are 86 permanent households on the island, seven of which are condominiums. The balance of the available units (approximately 380) are occupied temporarily or seasonally.

Little Gasparilla Island is outside the Urban Service Area. There are no public lands or facilities on the island.

### 3.2 Analysis of Community Needs

The Little Gasparilla Community, through the LGI Advisory Committee and the community workshops held during the preparation of this plan, nearly unanimously expressed a desire to remain a low-density residential community, with only a minimal, strictly necessary public/commercial use to meet basic community needs.

The BBIOD restricts new residential densities to a maximum of one dwelling unit per one gross acre or one unit per platted lot. The current zoning and future land use designations allow for higher densities, as well as for commercial uses. The community wants to eliminate the discrepancies between the BBIOD, the zoning, and the future land use designations. Ultimately, zoning and future land use should allow only single-family units on a minimum lot size of one acre or on a previously platted lot.

Of the 273 vacant residential parcels, 240 (88%) are smaller than 0.5 acres; 13 (5%) are between 0.5 and 1 acre, and 20 (7%) are larger than 1 acre. Should development continue unchecked on these vacant parcels, the BBIOD's goal of one dwelling unit per gross acre would be unattainable. The community wants to find mechanisms to reduce the number of parcels available for development and thereby approximate the goal of the overlay. The LGI Advisory Committee discussed some potential mechanisms, such as land acquisition for conservation, incentives to aggregate small lots, or transfer of development rights.

Conversely, the zoning and future land use designations should allow for limited public or commercial uses to meet basic community needs, such as emergency management. The limited existing non-residential uses, such as golf cart repair and the water treatment plant should be allowed to remain as non-residential uses. The community also expressed a strong desire to have an on-island site where they can meet and hold public meetings and other community activities. This plan includes provisions to help the community establish a public area to meet these needs.

While the community desires some public or commercial uses on the island, it also wants to ensure that such uses are limited. Therefore, this plan calls for limits on the number of parcels and total parcel area potential devoted to public or commercial uses (see Policy 1.3.2).

Finally, the community needs clarification on the treatment of non-conforming uses. Existing non-conforming uses should be inventoried and recorded and their current status should be grandfathered. Also, the 50% replacement rule should be clarified for the island. Charlotte County Code, Section 3-9-10, Nonconformities, applies to the Little Gasparilla Island as well.

### 3.3 Goals, Objectives and Policies

**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 Little Gasparilla Island 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 Little Gasparilla Island 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 Little Gasparilla Island 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.

**Policy 2.1.3.** In order to provide viable development alternatives to Little Gasparilla Island lot owners, stakeholders shall work with the LGI Advisory Committee to explore land development alternatives.

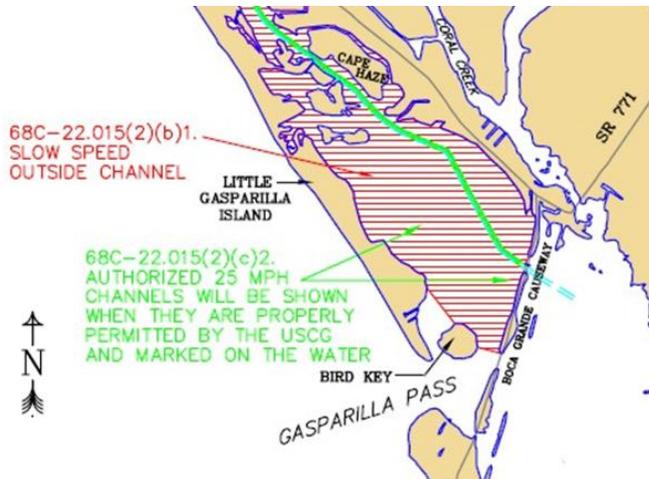
## 4. Transportation Element

### 4.1 Current Conditions Summary

Little Gasparilla Island is accessible only by watercraft. Once on the island, there is no dedicated road network. This summary addresses both issues: access to the island and mobility on the island.

Most residents and visitors park their vehicles and launch their boats at the Charlotte County Public Boat Ramp located just across Placida Sound from the island, other locations include Gasparilla Marina, Eldred Marina, and to a lesser extent, Palm Island Marina (Figure 7). Hideaway Condos operates its own marina with 30 boat slips on Little Gasparilla Island and 4 slips on the mainland near the parking lot with 100 auto parking spaces.





Navigation to and around Little Gasparilla Island is constrained by channels and aids to navigation. The entire area within Placida Sound is a manatee protection zone, subject to minimal wake restrictions (Figure 8); however, there are some designated areas limited to 25 miles per hour (MPH). There are 117 docks on the bay side of Little Gasparilla Island. Most of these docks are used by several dwelling units; others are private. In most cases, docks are aligned with access easements or rights-of-way, which provide access to the island interior.



Photo 5. Typical Little Gasparilla Island Road

Mobility on Little Gasparilla Island is limited by the lack of a designated road network. There are some dedicated County-owned rights-of-way. As a result, the transportation network is a series of ad hoc pathways that traverse the island in north/south and east/west directions (Figure 9, Photo 5). These roads of convenience are maintained with a sand or shell surface and used almost exclusively by golf carts.

## 4.2 Analysis of Community Needs

The community wants the County's assistance to investigate ways to establish facilities on the mainland and on the island to facilitate transportation between the island two. Ideally, these facilities should accommodate private boats; barge transportation of bulk items; transport of emergency equipment and personnel; and car and boat trailer parking on the mainland.

The community clearly wants to avoid road widening and paving, yet residents would like to secure a north/south corridor that would allow for access across the entire island. The current legal status of the path network remains unclear. Easements exist for some roads on the island, but much of the network has been established through long-time use. The community is not interested in surrendering ownership or maintenance of the roads to the County.



Citizens of Little Gasparilla Island

LGI Advisory Committee

**Network of Roads/Paths on Little Gasparilla Island**

**FIGURE 9**

### 4.3 Goals, Policies and Objectives

**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 as well as 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, the LGI Advisory Committee will communicate desired boating needs for Little Gasparilla Island 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.

## 5. Natural Resources and Coastal Planning Element

### 5.1 Current Conditions Summary



Figure 10. From the FDEP Environmental Sensitivity Map.

Little Gasparilla Island is located along the southern end of the Lemon Bay Aquatic Preserve. The coastal and marine environment around the island includes sensitive elements, such as seagrass beds on Placida Sound, mangrove areas, manatee habitat, nesting areas for sea turtles, and available habitat for bivalves and other marine and wetland species (Figure 10). Beach erosion is evident on the ocean side of the island, particularly on the northern shore, where the surf nearly reaches residences (Photo 6).

The FDEP Strategic Beach Management Plan (FDEP, 2000) recognizes a 0.4 mile segment of "critically eroded beach" on Little Gasparilla Island, just south of the former Little Gasparilla Pass. The plan calls only for monitoring this segment. The island is also within Charlotte County's Coastal High Hazard Area, requiring evacuation in the event of a Category One hurricane.

Native vegetation on the island has been severely impacted. A mangrove fringe occurs along the bayside shore (Photo 7). Inland, the vegetation canopy is dominated by the exotic species Australian pine (*Casuarina equisetifolia*). Brazilian pepper (*Shinus terebinthifolius*), another exotic invasive species, occurs throughout the island. Among the most common native species, cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*), and sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) occur in patches throughout the island. Coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera*) and a variety of ornamental species are also common on the island.

County staff indicated that gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) occur on the island, but no population census or mapping has been conducted.



Photo 6. Beach Erosion



Photo 7. Typical vegetation: Mangrove along the bayside shore and Australian pine dominating the island canopy.

## ***Analysis of Community Needs***

The community wants to address key restoration issues, such as getting help restoring native vegetation and controlling beach erosion. The residents cherish their natural setting and want to ensure the protection of the marine and terrestrial resources.

## ***Goals, Policies and Objectives***

**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.

## 6. Infrastructure Element

### 6.1 Current Conditions Summary

Infrastructure on Little Gasparilla Island is limited. Potable water is obtained through private wells, cisterns, or the island's water treatment plant. According to the property appraiser's records, the water treatment plant serves the 132 condo units as well as an additional 113 dwelling units (Figure 11).

Wastewater in the condominiums is treated; the sludge is transported off the island periodically. All other dwellings rely on septic tanks for wastewater disposal and treatment.

Each household is responsible for disposing of its solid waste. Residents transport waste to the mainland and deposit it at the nearest available waste disposal site.

The County supplied the LGI Advisory Committee with the results of an evaluation regarding the feasibility of connecting Little Gasparilla Island to the County water supply system. According to the study (Conceptual Implementation Plan Barrier Islands Utility Service, dated October 2004), a 2 inch subaqueous waterline to Don Pedro State Park is insufficient to provide adequate service to Little Gasparilla Island. The study states that it would cost approximately \$1.2 million to increase the pipe size to 10 inches.

### 6.2 Analysis of Community Needs

The community desires a reliable source of drinking water and a safe method of disposing and treating wastewater. They recognize the logistic and economic constraints that prevent the establishment of a centralized waste disposal and collection system for the island, but would like to explore potential options.

While the public perception regarding water quality in the surrounding marine environment is unfavorable, there is no data to evaluate the actual status of water quality. The community wants to know the current levels of water quality.

### 6.3 Goals, Policies and Objectives

**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.



Citizens of Little Gasparilla Island  
   
LGI Advisory Committee

**Utilities on Little Gasparilla Island**

**FIGURE 11**

**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.

## 7. Community Facilities and Services Elements

### 7.1 Current Conditions Summary

Currently Little Gasparilla has limited or no community facilities and services. This issue was repeatedly raised during the community planning workshops and identified in reports generated by the LGI Advisory Committee. There is a privately owned church that serves as a meeting place for the residents. Other than the church there are no community facilities. There is a small library, that operates on an honor system, attached to a home owned by a stakeholder.

Little Gasparilla has a private funded island Fire and Rescue service that operates as a member owned non-profit organization. The volunteer Fire and EMS is a 501(c)3. The equipment is owned by the corporation and the current fees are \$100/house or \$25/lot for membership. Currently approximately 250 of the islands 700 property owners are members. The Fire and Rescue service receives donations from the island residents and some help from the Charlotte County Fire Department.

All 911 calls for the island are handled as part of an agreement between the Little Gasparilla Island rescuers and Charlotte County EMS. All residents are requested to call 911 if an emergency occurs. The fire rescue volunteers respond to all 911 calls. For medical calls the Charlotte County fire department sends a County Marine Boat to transport the injured party to the mainland and then the hospital. According to the Fire Chief, due to the limited water supply, when there is a fire on the island, water is used to prevent the fire from spreading rather than fully extinguishing the fire.

### 7.2 Analysis of Community Needs

Based upon the community workshops and discussions with Little Gasparilla Island stakeholders, the community feels they need a small county owned lot that would provide a dock area, mosquito control, community facilities and trash removal area (Figure 12). A study should be conducted to determine the best suitable location for the lot.

### 7.3 Goals, Policies and Objectives

**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.

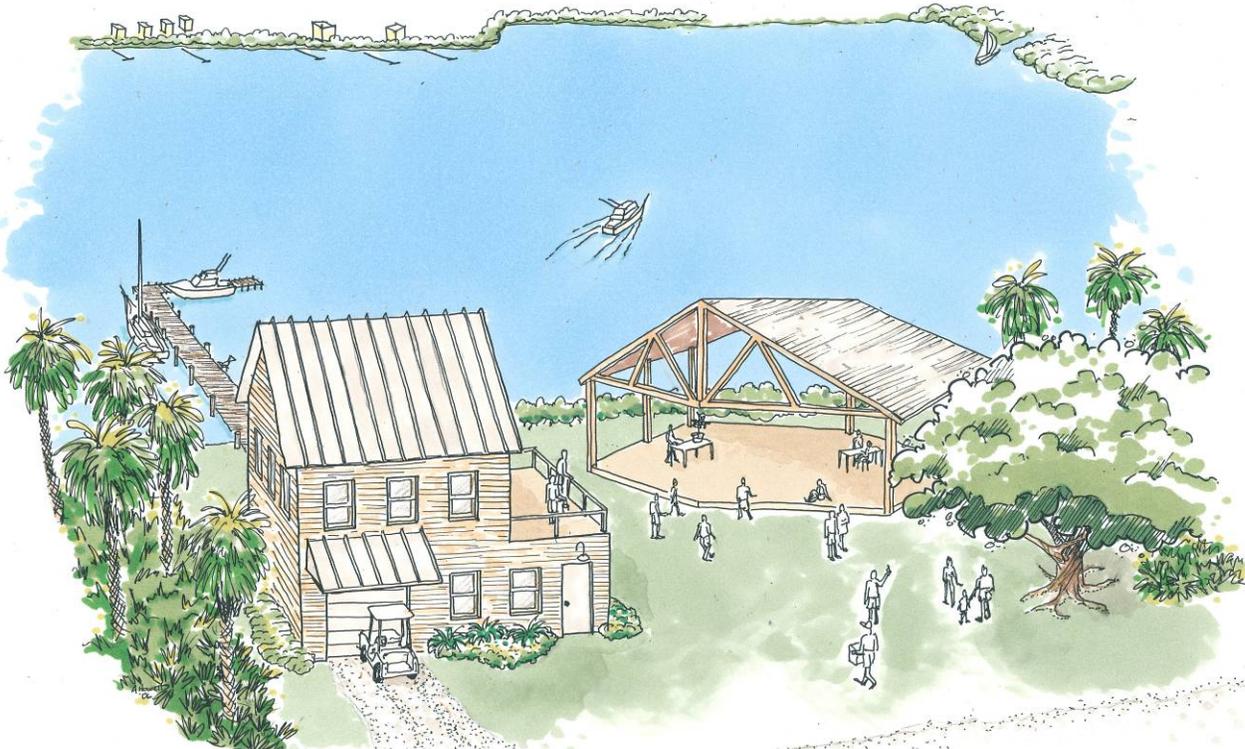


Figure 12. Artist's Depiction of Community Center

## 8. Implementation

The implementation of the Little Gasparilla Community Plan will require the commitment and continuous attention of the County and the Little Gasparilla community. Table 5 summarizes key elements of the implementation of each objective of the Plan.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1.1 Complete zoning revisions to eliminate discrepancies among main land use regulations.	Charlotte County Community Development Department	This objective is subject to administrative discretion and budget constraints.	The County should work with the community to complete the evaluation of options and enact the necessary revision to the zoning and future land use to meet the intent of the Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay District.
1.2 Identify island site for community services	LGI Advisory Committee	December, 2008	Criteria must be established to select the appropriate site.
1.3 Implement zoning revisions to allow for limited commercial and community uses.	Charlotte County and LGI Advisory Committee	This objective is subject to administrative discretion and budget constraints.	See above. Revisions must ensure that commercial and community uses remain limited. No proliferations of non-residential uses will be allowed.
2.1 Explore feasibility of reducing the number of vacant lots.	LGI Advisory Committee	In the future	In the future, if the County will identify incentives, the County will publicize them so that property owners become aware.
3.1 Determine how to supply short- and long-term parking and boat slip needs.	LGI Advisory Committee & Charlotte County's Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Resources Department	On-going	A study can be commissioned.
4.1 Ensure water-based transportation network for island residents and visitors is navigable.	LGI Advisory Committee and Charlotte County	2008	See above.
5.1 Evaluate the different alternatives for a north-south access.	LGI Advisory Committee and Charlotte County Department of Public Works	This objective is subject to administrative discretion and budget constraints.	See above.
6.1 Establish an awareness campaign which promotes the restoration of native habitats on the island.	LGI Advisory Committee and Charlotte County	As soon as practical in coordination with appropriate agencies	The County may appoint a staff member to coordinate with agencies and with the LGI Advisory Committee.
7.1 Monitor and evaluate quality and quantity of the potable water supply.	LGI Advisory Committee and Charlotte County	As soon as practical in coordination with appropriate agencies	The County may appoint a staff member to coordinate with agencies and with the LGI Advisory Committee.
7.2 Ensure that the private water utility complies with applicable standards.	Charlotte County and LGI Advisory Committee	As soon as practical in coordination with appropriate agencies	The County may appoint a staff member to coordinate with agencies and with the LGI Advisory Committee.
7.3 Investigate other alternatives to provide potable water in a cost-effective, reliable fashion.	LGI Advisory Committee	2008	

<b>Table 5</b> <b>Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan Implementation</b>			
8.1 Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of septic systems.	LGI Advisory Committee and Charlotte County Health Department	As soon as practical in coordination with appropriate agencies	
9.1 Investigate feasibility of establishing a waste collection point on the mainland.	LGI Advisory Committee and Charlotte County	2008	The County may appoint a staff member to coordinate with agencies and with the LGI Advisory Committee.
10.1 Delineate geographic location for additional Fire/EMS services.	LGI Advisory Committee (with support from Charlotte County)	2009	
10.2 Explore ways to enhance the level of police patrolling and improve the response time for emergency calls.	LGI Advisory Committee and Charlotte County	2008	

**Appendix A**  
**Resolution Number 2004-062, Establishing the Little**  
**Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee**

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**RESOLUTION**  
**NUMBER 2004- 062**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING THE LITTLE GASPARILLA ISLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE; PROVIDING FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP, DUTIES, POWERS, APPOINTMENT, AND REGULATION; AND REQUIRING COMPLIANCE WITH ALL APPLICABLE LAWS.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Charlotte County (hereinafter the "Board") is authorized to establish advisory committees; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that it would be in the best interests of the residents of Little Gasparilla Island to establish an advisory committee to discuss matters of concern to the Island's residents, including, but not limited to, the development of a community plan, emergency medical services, fire suppression services, right-of-way and access issues, the development of recommendations regarding island infrastructure and environmental issues, the development of the findings of the prior Little Gasparilla Island Steering Committee, and to advise the Board on said matters.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of County Commissioners of Charlotte County, Florida:

1. Committee Is Established. There is hereby established the Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee (hereinafter the "Committee").
2. Purposes. The purposes of the Committee include evaluating the recommendations of the public and county staff regarding matters affecting Little Gasparilla Island, including such things as the development of a community plan, emergency medical

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services, fire suppression services, right-of-way and access issues, island infrastructure, environmental issues, and the development of the findings of the prior Little Gasparilla Island Steering Committee.

3. Membership. The Committee shall consist of seven (7) members. One member shall represent the Hideaway Beach Club Owners Association, one member shall represent the Placida Beach Club Owners Association, one member shall represent the Gaspar's Hideaway Homeowners Association, one member shall represent the Little Gasparilla Property Owner's Association, Inc., and three members will serve as at-large positions. The Committee shall have one hundred and twenty (120) days to design a set of protocols (by-laws). The initial membership of the Committee shall consist of all members of the previous Little Gasparilla Island Steering Committee, who shall be reappointed. Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Board as vacancies arise. All members shall serve without compensation.

4. Member Requirements. Each member must be able to devote the time necessary to fulfill the purposes of the Committee.

5. Removal from Office; Failure to Attend Meetings.

(a) Any member of the Committee may be removed from office, with or without cause, by a majority vote of the Board of County Commissioners.

(b) In the event that any Committee member is absent from three (3) consecutive Committee meetings without a satisfactory excuse acceptable to the Committee Chairman, the Committee Chairman shall state such fact at the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting and shall thereafter notify, in writing, the Chairman of the

Board of County Commissioners of the Committee member's failure to attend without satisfactory excuse. The Board of County Commissioners shall review the Committee Chairman's notification at a County Commission meeting and may declare the Committee member's position to be vacant if the County Commission concurs that the Committee member was absent from three (3) consecutive Committee meetings without a satisfactory excuse and shall promptly fill the vacant position. The Committee member shall not serve at any meetings after his or her position is declared vacant.

(c) If any member of the Committee is absent for more than one-third of the Committee's meetings in a given fiscal year, it shall be deemed that the member has tendered his/her resignation from such Committee. The Board of County Commissioners shall as soon as practicable after such resignation, declare the position to be vacant and shall promptly act to fill the vacancy. The Committee member shall not serve at any meetings after his/her position has been declared vacant by the Board of County Commissioners.

6. Officers, Quorum and Rules of Procedure.

(a) Annually the membership of the Committee shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, and a secretary from among the members. Officers' terms shall be for one (1) year, with eligibility for reelection.

(b) The presence of four (4) or more members shall constitute a quorum of the Committee necessary to take action and transact business. In addition, an affirmative vote of a majority of members present and voting, after quorum requirements have been met, shall be necessary in order to take official action. A tie vote shall not be considered

an affirmative vote. In addition, approval of a revision to the bylaws to forward to the Board of County Commissioners for approval shall require a two-thirds vote of Committee members present and voting.

(c) The Committee shall keep a written record of meetings, resolutions, reports, findings, determinations, and exhibits. Copies of all Committee minutes, resolutions, reports, findings, determinations, and exhibits shall be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners. All meetings shall be open to the public and shall be subject to Chapter 286, Florida Statutes.

(d) The Committee, its members, and all its proceedings shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the Florida Sunshine Law, Chapter 286, Florida Statutes, the Florida Public Records Law, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and the Florida Ethics Code, Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, and any other State or County statute, ordinance, or rule. The Committee, its members, and its proceedings shall be governed by and conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, insofar as they do not conflict with any other provision(s) of this Resolution.

7. Reimbursement of Expenses. Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to receive reimbursement for expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties upon approval of the Board of County Commissioners.

8. Meetings. The Committee shall first meet as soon as practicable. Thereafter, the Committee Chair shall determine the frequency of meetings. Meetings shall

be scheduled to facilitate the attendance of such county personnel as may be necessary for items under discussion.

9. Notices. The Committee Chair shall take all necessary steps to cause the publication of notice of Committee meetings, to make a record of the meetings and actions of the Committee, and to report the activities of the Committee to the Board from time to time or upon request of the Board.

10. Support. The Community Development Department shall provide the Committee with technical or administrative support.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED this 13 day of April, 2004.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: Matthew D. DeBoer  
Matthew D. DeBoer, Chair

ATTEST:  
Barbara T. Scott, Clerk of Circuit  
Court and Ex-officio Clerk to the  
Board of County Commissioners

By: Anne L. Pfahler  
Deputy Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

By: Renée Francis Lee  
Renée Francis Lee, County Attorney

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**Appendix B**  
**Minutes from Little Gasparilla Island**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting, May 5, 2005**

**Little Gasparilla Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**May 5, 2005**

**Call to Order**—Bob Hill, Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the HideAway Bay Beach Club meeting room.

**Public Notice**—Notice of this meeting was posted on the Charlotte County website.

**Determination of A Quorum**—A quorum was met. The committee members present in person were Bob Hill, Dick Stickle, Rande Ridenour, & Jimmy Lewis. Dick Bublitz, Mac McCarthy, Ken Bonds was not present. Martina Kuche, Charlotte County Planner, was present.

**Approvals of Minutes**—Rande Ridenour made a motion to waive the approval of the minutes until the next meeting after several corrections are identified and the minutes are amended. Jimmy Lewis gave the second. Those present approved the motion.

**Introduction of Guest:**

There was no guest speaker.

**Discussion:**

**Continuation of Discussion Relating to Documents For Submission to Community Development Board for Use in Searching Out Consultant Candidates**—The LGPOA statement was amended and resubmitted for consideration by the Advisory Committee. There were no changes recommended on the amended statement. Dick Stickle made a motion to accept this LGPOA statement for inclusion of documents delivered to Community Development Department for the compilation of the RLI to recruit consultant candidates. Rande Ridenour gave the second. All present voted to approve. The statement is attached to and made a part of these minutes. They appear at the end of the minutes as [Attachment #1](#).

Jimmy Lewis requested a provision that provides for the two existing condominium developments on the island be protected by a grand-father clause should future zoning changes prohibit the rebuilding of these existing condominiums if damaged. Various individuals raised many related questions. Martina Kuche offered to bring out a land development supervisor to come out and respond to these kind of concerns and questions. Martina will try to have some answers for the next meeting. Dick Stickle made a motion to instruct the Community Development Department to include the assurance in the community plan that the existing condominium developments be allowed to rebuild should they be partially or totally damaged. Jimmy Lewis gave the second. All present voted to approve.

Bob Hill reports that the bylaws are not ready for presentation to the committee. The document will be available at the next meeting.

### **Items from Board Members:**

Rande Ridenour brought up a concern raised to him by an island resident about the use of donated monies to the volunteer fire department to fund the rental of property on the island. The committee members acknowledge that this matter could be addressed at a future meeting, however issues already on the table need to be resolved before new matters are considered.

Dick Stickle brought up concern for the limitation to the Advisory Committee Bylaws provision limiting the ability for committee members from serving on more than one board other than the board they represent on the Advisory Committee. Bob Hill expressed his concern over a perceived conflict of interest without this provision. Discussion followed. Martina Kuche brought up concerns with Sunshine Laws when decisions are made on the same issue on more than one committee. She added that is not a concern at this time because the Advisory Committee is not making decision to recommend to the County for implementation. No resolution was reached.

**Next Meeting**—The date of the next meeting will be determined at another time and the committee members will be notified.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dick Stickle, Secretary

**FINAL**

5-3-2005

To: LGI Advisory Board

From: Little Gasparilla Property Owners Association - LGPOA

Re: Material proposed for inclusion in the LGI Scope of Services document

After extensive consultation with LGPOA members and other property owners on LGI, the LGPOA recommends that the Advisory Board include the following elements in the Scope of Services document that the Advisory Board and County Planner Martina Kuche will use to construct the **RLI** as part of the development of the Community Plan for LGI.

**Description of LGI**

LGI is a low-lying, environmentally sensitive, bridgeless, barrier island approximately two and one-half miles in length. It averages between one fourth and one-half mile in width. LGI lies entirely within Charlotte County. Although LGI now is physically connected to Don Pedro Island to the north and then to Palm Island north of Don Pedro, the state park on Don Pedro prevents all but pedestrian access between LGI and Palm Island. Thus, LGI remains a physically well-defined community accessible only by boat across Placida Harbor.

All land on LGI is privately owned, primarily in the form of 833 platted lots ranging in size from approximately \_\_\_\_\_ acre to five acres. All existing development on these individually platted lots is in the form of free-standing single family residential units. There currently are approximately \_\_\_\_\_ such single family homes on LGI. The remaining \_\_\_\_\_ platted lots remain undeveloped, thus providing a substantial amount of “green” or open space in its natural condition. There also are two condominium complexes on LGI. One contains a total of 102 single family residential units on a total of 18 acres. The second contains a total of 30 single family units on a total of 7.5 acres.

The county zoning classification for the entire island currently is RMF-T which allows, in addition to single family residences, multifamily dwellings, apartments, and tourist-related commercial facilities such as hotels. However, development on the island currently is restricted by the terms of the county’s Comprehensive Plan and by the terms of a legal settlement between the county and the state Department of Community Affairs. Both the legal settlement and the county Comprehensive Plan that was enacted pursuant to the settlement allow only residential development and restrict that residential development to one single family dwelling unit per acre, except that one single family dwelling unit is allowed on each previously platted lot.

There are no state or county maintained lands or rights-of-way on LGI, and there are no state or county owned, or otherwise “public” dock facilities on LGI. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic on LGI moves on a network of narrow unimproved sand and shell roads located on public easements across privately owned lots. These public easements exist either by virtue of grants and reservations in recorded deeds or by paths of convenience as a result of longstanding and customary use. All dock facilities on LGI are owned either by individual waterfront property owners, property owners associations, neighborhood ad hoc groups or by the two condominium associations.

Electricity is provided to LGI homeowners by FP&L, and phone service is provided by Sprint. Electric and telephone lines reach the island from the mainland under the ICW and then are located, mostly overhead rather than buried, in granted easements or other means across private lots and generally follow the roadway easements. Water is obtained for home use from rain-catch cisterns, from shallow wells, and from a privately owned for-profit water company which draws from a deep drilled well on LGI. The water company’s distribution lines generally coincide with the roadway easements, but not in all cases.

The sewage produced by each free-standing residence is disposed of in a septic tank and drain field located within each residential lot. The sewage generated by the two condominium complexes is disposed of in a single treatment and drain field system located on the property of the larger of the two condominium complexes. The system that serves the two condominium complexes settles the solids which are then pumped into a truck and barged off the island approximately once each month. The remaining waste water is disposed of in a large raised drain field. A private for-profit company associated with the water company recently applied to the Public Service Commission for certification to provide a low-pressure pumped sewer system for LGI and the islands to the north. That application for PSC certification was withdrawn and no further action in that regard is contemplated.

Fire protection is provided by a volunteer fire department organized around a trained and qualified chief and several pieces of equipment that are parked at the house rented by the chief as a residence. Because the volunteer fire department is financed only by voluntary contributions and does not own any land on which to establish a permanent base, the continuing existence of the volunteer fire department is tenuous at best.

A system for providing emergency medical treatment and transportation to mainland hospitals currently is under development. In most cases, a member of the volunteer fire department travels by boat to the mainland to pick up county EMTs and transport them to the point of need on LGI. That same

individual then transports the EMTs, and if necessary, the patient to the mainland where the EMTs vehicle is waiting. In other instances, friends and neighbors of the patient immediately transport the patient by boat to the mainland marina where the county EMTs have been dispatched to meet them.

Law enforcement on LGI is provided by the county Sheriff's Department. A sheriff's deputy conducts routine patrols of the island on a four-wheeler during holiday periods when the island population is at its greatest. At other times, the Sheriff's department responds by boat to specific complaints by island residents. Generally speaking, standards of civil conduct are "enforced" on LGI by the social pressures of living in a "small town" environment where one's misdeeds are quickly known by the neighbors with whom one must continue to live. As a result, nuisance behavior is kept to a minimum and usually is confined to those with no long term stake in the LGI community. Periodic thefts of boats and motors by non LGI residents are the most serious law enforcement problem on the island.

Boat access to the single family homes on LGI is primarily by small privately owned boats. These boats are stored on the mainland at either Gasparilla Marina or Eldred's marina, or are brought to the public launching ramp by their owners. Parking for island residents while on the island is at either Gasparilla Marina or Eldred's Marina. Parking at these two facilities has become extremely tight in recent years. There are two private water taxi services that can be used to travel from the mainland to the island. It is unclear where users of these ferry services park their cars on the mainland when they travel to the island. Both condominium complexes on the island maintain regular ferry service to the island for their condominium residents and provide parking for their condominium residents at the shore base of their ferry services.

All boat traffic to LGI from the mainland crosses the bay that is known as either south Lemon Bay or Placida Harbor. In the fall of 2002, the Florida Wildlife Commission enacted a rule designating the entire bay between LGI and the mainland as a manatee protection zone where a maximum 5 mph boat speed was permitted. The rule permitted a 25 mph access channel to LGI but did not specify the location of the permitted channel. Because it was not possible to serve the three sections of LGI (north, middle, and south) with a single channel, extensive three-party negotiations involving the FWC staff, the county, and the Navigation Committee of the LGPOA were undertaken. It was decided in February of 2004 that the authorized channel would be located in a way that served the middle of LGI and then turned north to serve the north end of LGI.

The county is near the end of an extremely lengthy process of obtaining permits to install the channel markers for the access channel to the middle and north of LGI approved by the FWC in February of 2004. Installation of those channel markers should follow promptly after the last permit is obtained.

The need for 25 mph access to the south end of LGI was referred to the FWC at its April 2004 meeting where the FWC directed the FWC staff to initiate rule change proceedings to change the existing rule to allow the addition of a south fork to the already authorized channel. The FWC staff is about to begin work on the proposed rule change. The first step in this lengthy rule change process will be a letter to the county informing the county of the initiation of the rule change process and requesting that the county establish a local committee of boat users and environmentalists to review the proposed rule change.

### **General Recommendation**

**Every effort should be made to maintain and preserve the current low-density entirely residential character of LGI so as to place minimum stress on the surrounding natural environment and to preserve the ambience of “early” coastal Florida before the advent of intense residential and commercial development.**

### **Specific Recommendations**

1. **Zoning.** The single highest priority for the Community Plan is to change the county’s zoning for LGI to allow only free-standing single family residences on a minimum lot of one acre or on a previously platted lot. This change will bring the zoning into conformity with the requirements of the county’s Comprehensive Plan and the legal settlement between the county and the state Department of Community Affairs. This change also will bring the controlling zoning into conformity with the nature of existing development on the island and with the character of the established community on the island.

Certain activities such as the existing golf cart repair business should continue to be permitted after the zoning change as a “grandfathered” use established prior to the zoning change. Some provision should be made for a procedure to seek special limited exceptions to the zoning in order to establish small commercial units that are necessary to provide essential services to island residents ie: the golf cart repair facility. Such special exceptions should be made only upon a showing of real need and the support of a substantial majority of island homeowners.

2. **Land use planning.** All available planning and zoning devices, such as the transfer of development rights to the mainland, should be used to reduce the number of existing platted lots that are substantially less than one acre in size. Lot owners should be encouraged to combine two or more smaller lots into re-platted single lots closer to one acre in size. The possibility of purchasing smaller lots for combination into larger lots for re-platting and resale should be explored. . Owners of undeveloped tracts should be encouraged to donate title or conservation easements to appropriate entities for preservation of natural open space. The possibility of joint efforts with land owners, preservation trust organizations, Charlotte County and funding agencies to purchase undeveloped land for transfer to preservation trusts to maintain undeveloped natural open space should be investigated

An estimate should be made of the rate at which vacant lots will be developed and the number of residences that will exist at complete build out of the island. These estimates should inform and guide all planning for public facilities and for necessary county services.

3. **Access to the island.** Installation of the channel markers for the access channel to the middle and north end of LGI already approved by the FWC should be expedited. As soon as the county receives notice from the FWC that work has begun on the rule change process to allow the addition of a south fork to the already approved channel to serve the south end of LGI, the county should move quickly to appoint the necessary local review committee and otherwise expedite its part of the rule change process as much as possible. When that process ultimately produces an FWC rule change allowing the addition of a south fork to the access channel, the county should expedite the process of obtaining channel marker permits from the DEP and from the Office of Boating Safety, and should expedite the installation of the channel markers for the south fork.

The county should investigate ways to establish facilities on the mainland and on the island to facilitate transportation back and forth between the island and the mainland. These facilities should accommodate private boats, barge transportation of bulk items, transport of emergency equipment and personnel, and car and boat trailer parking on the mainland. Such facilities might be financed and maintained by a system of user fees.

4. **Roadway easements.** All roadways on the island should be maintained as sand and shell pathways for golf cart usage. Use by vehicles larger

than golf carts should be actively discouraged except for construction and repair equipment, vehicles delivering construction materials and other large items, and fire and emergency vehicles.

*All existing public roadway easements, whether by grant or reservation in recorded deeds or by (prescription as a result of) longstanding use, should be inventoried and recorded on an official plat of the island. The county should not acquire ownership of any roadways and should not assume any responsibility for maintenance of any roadways on LGI.*

5. **Water supply.** Undertake a study of the operation of the existing private water company and evaluate the long term reliability of that operation as the primary source of potable water for the islands residents. The county should assess the long term environmental effects of pumping all of the island's water supply from the aquifer underlying the island. The county should investigate the possibility of purchasing the private water company and integrating its operations into the county's water system by a water line from the mainland.
6. **Sewage treatment.** A procedure should be established monitor the environment on the island and in the surrounding waters to ensure that continued use of individual septic tank systems for the disposal of sewage remains an adequate method of dealing with waste water on the island. In the event that this system proves inadequate at some point in the future, the county should assume responsibility, in consultation with the homeowners on LGI, for design and implementation of an alternative system.
7. **Trash collection.** Under the current informal system, each household is responsible for the removal of its own household garbage to some mainland collection point. Vegetation trash is disposed of either by private commercial chipper services or by contained burning. While this system appears adequate for the present, we should monitor the continued adequacy of this system. If it appears at some future date that this system is not adequate to serve the needs of the residents and preserve the environmental quality of the island, the county should assume responsibility, in consultation with the homeowners on LGI, for the design and implementation of an adequate system for trash removal.
8. **Fire protection.** The county should assist to the maximum extent possible in the organization and maintenance of the volunteer fire department. The county should investigate the possibility of acquiring a centrally located piece of property to make available for the storage of the equipment of the volunteer fire department.

9. **Emergency medical treatment and transportation.** The county's emergency service agencies should continue to develop and refine communication and coordination procedures with the volunteer fire department that will minimize the time required to transport EMT personnel to the island and to transport patients off the island.
  
10. **Community Center building.** Investigate the possibility of acquiring, by a combination of donation and purchase, a centrally located piece of property for the construction of a multipurpose meeting room to serve the increasing need of various island organizations for meeting space and to meet the needs of the entire community for a central location for a variety of social and civic functions. The tract on which this facility is located would then also serve as the storage site for the volunteer fire department's equipment.
  
11. **Taxes and costs of county services.** It should be determined what county services should be provided to LGI out of the existing tax structure applicable to island properties and which county services would require additional sources of revenue. To the extent that services are required beyond those whose costs should be covered by the existing tax structure, a variety of financing devices such as user fees should be explored.

**Appendix C**  
**Consultant's Scope of Work for**  
**Little Gasparilla Community Plan**

## SCOPE OF WORK

Contract No. 2005000387  
Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan

Prepared by: HDR Engineering, Inc.

### Background

Little Gasparilla Island is the southernmost island of the chain formed by Don Pedro, Palm Island, and Little Gasparilla Island. Access to the island is available only by watercraft. There is a Planned Development (PD) Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation located roughly at the center of the island. The rest of the island has a FLUM designation of medium density residential. The entire island is zoned Residential Multi-family -10. Little Gasparilla is covered by the Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay District, excerpted below:

#### *Policy 2.5.3*

*The Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay (BBIOP) consists of Charlotte County's bridgeless island chain...Residential densities within the district may not exceed one (1) dwelling unit per gross acre. All residential lots created within the Bridgeless Barrier Island Overlay District subsequent to February 1, 1992 shall not exceed one (1) dwelling unit per gross acre requirement. However, all residential lots created consistent with Charlotte County Subdivision Regulations shall have an allowable density of one (1) dwelling unit per subdivided lot.*

The Little Gasparilla Island Committee drafted an initial summary of issues and considerations to be addressed in the community plan. Issues include:

- Parking on mainland
- Waste disposal and removal
- On-island landing area(s)
- North/south easements (roads, utilities)
- Sewer system
- Waterway maintenance
- Land use and zoning restrictions
- Maintenance of paths
- Island services
- Taxes and County services
- Facility for community use(s)
- Short-term residential rentals
- Signage
- Communications with fire/EMS systems.

The Little Gasparilla Island Property Owners Association (LGPOA) also drafted an initial list of issues of concern, which include the following:

- Zoning and land use
- Access to the island
- Roadway easements
- Water supply
- Sewage treatment
- Trash collection
- Fire protection
- Emergency medical treatment and transportation
- Community Center building
- Taxes and cost of County services.

The objective of the Little Gasparilla Island Community Plan project is to involve the Little Gasparilla Island community, apply County resources, and employ a Consultant to interpret the community's vision into a plan that is organized after, and complies with, the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan, while addressing the unique needs and expectations of the Little Gasparilla Island community.

### **Tasks**

**Task 1 - Project Kick-Off.** Upon Notice to Proceed, HDR will convene a meeting with County personnel to discuss the project objectives, timeline, and the responsibilities of each party. During the kick-off meeting, the County will provide the consultant with pertinent data and information to support the project, including, among others, the following items:

- Census data, population projections, and other demographic data for the study area.
- Aerial photography, GIS data, and other readily available mapping data.
- Zoning, FLUM and property appraiser's data.
- Studies, reports, or raw data regarding current water supply sources, stormwater management facilities, wastewater systems, waste collection and disposal, and other utilities information.
- Readily available information regarding how other bridgeless communities have addressed similar issues.

The project kick-off meeting will also include the introduction of the Consultant to the LGI Committee.

**Task 2 – Field Reconnaissance and Photographic Documentation of the Study Area.** The County will make arrangements to provide access to the island for HDR. HDR will then complete a reconnaissance of the area and develop photographic documentation for the project. The field reconnaissance will be accomplished within the same day as the project kick-off meeting.

**Task 3 – Data Evaluation.** With the exception of data generated in the public meetings, the County will supply all necessary data for the project. HDR will evaluate the information in order to assist the County in developing the goals, objectives, and policies to be included in the Community Plan.

**Task 4 – Public Meetings.** HDR will facilitate two public meetings, which will be organized by the county, including the location, invitations, and logistics. HDR will provide audiovisual materials (PowerPoint presentations, boards, flipcharts, etc.). Each meeting will be 2 hours long.

The first meeting will focus on discussing the current conditions of the island and will include a participatory exercise to help the community identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). This exercise will lay the foundation for the community plan.

The second public meeting will build on the SWOT analysis and will facilitate a public discussion to establish a community vision and the key goals necessary to reach the community vision. Goals will be addressed in the context of the Comprehensive Plan elements.

Within one week after each meeting, HDR will provide the county with a summary of findings.

**Task 5 – Community Plan Work Session.** HDR will co-host a 2-day technical workshop with the County, in which technical staff from both parties will work together to develop the objectives and policies necessary to further the community's goals, in the context of the Comprehensive Plan. Each Comp Plan element will be addressed as needed. HDR assumes that some elements will not be applicable.

**Task 6 – Prepare and Deliver Draft Community Plan.** After the 2-day technical workshop, HDR will prepare the Draft Community Plan. HDR will work with the County to develop an outline for the document; for each comp plan element addressed, there will be a brief discussion of current conditions, a brief discussion of the community needs, and then the goals, objectives and policies. HDR will submit the Draft Plan electronically, in a print-ready PDF format.

The outline of the Community Plan will be a streamlined version of the Charlotte County Model Community Plan Outline, and will include the following sections:

1. Introduction (background, relationship to County Comp Plan and State requirements, summary of current conditions). Approximately 10 pages.
2. Community Planning Process. A description of the community involvement process and results, including the goals.
- 3..X Sections for each pertinent Comp Plan element. For each goal pertinent to the element, the section will include:
  - Summary of Current Conditions (pertinent to the goal). One to two pages.

- Summary of Community Needs. About one page.
- Objectives and Policies.

X+1 Implementation Plan. A description of the implementation steps and general cost necessary to carry out the Community Plan.

**Task 7 – Prepare and Present Final Community Plan.** The County will review the draft plan and provide HDR with one set of consolidated comments. HDR will address the comments and finalize the plan. HDR, if requested by the County, will assist in presenting the plan to the Board of County Commissioners.

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions apply to the cost estimate presented in Table 1:

- The County will provide existing data. HDR will not gather primary data in the field or perform data manipulation.
- The County will take the lead on zoning and land use issues. HDR will provide assistance and ideas, but the County will remain responsible for this element of the Community Plan.
- Cost benefit analysis of policies will be limited to comparing alternatives based on a semi-quantitative basis for a set of 3-5 criteria. No econometric modeling nor an exhaustive funding analysis is included.

### **Consultant Project Team**

Resumes are provided under separate cover. The following two individuals will lead the project team on this project:

**Ricardo N. Calvo, Ph.D.** Dr. Calvo will serve as the project manager and will be responsible to the County for the successful execution of the Community Plan. Dr. Calvo was the Project Manager of the Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study, winner of the *2003 National Grand Award for Engineering Excellence* from the American Council of Engineering Companies. He was the Project Director for the Community Master Plans for Big Pine and Key Largo, as well as for the Tavernier Design Guidelines and Historic Preservation Guidelines.

**James A. Moore, Ph.D., AIA.** Dr. Moore has 18 years of experience in community planning and urban design, with a focus on community redevelopment. He has an extensive record of successful community visioning efforts.

Other members of the team include:

- Terri Holcomb, PE. Water and Wastewater
- Alexis Massaro, MS. Land Use/Zoning
- Gary Kleker, PE. Transportation

- Drs. Moore and Calvo. Facilitation

### **Schedule**

- Week of September 26th, 2005: Notice to Proceed is issued to the Consultant. The Advisory committee will be notified.
- Week of October 17th, 2005: Kick-off meeting and Site Reconnaissance.
- Months of November and December, 2005: County gathers background information; Consultant holds community meetings.
- Week of December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005: Conduct 2-day technical workshop.
- Week of December 19th, 2005: an initial draft "Community Plan" document should be complete and ready for review by applicable County departments
- Week of December 19th, 2005: staff and the consultant should be ready to begin one-on-one meetings with the Commissioners to discuss the draft document and any other issues that may arise
- Week of January 9th, 2006: Any major issues with the draft document or effort as a whole should be documented and addressed.
- Week of January 16th, 2006: Final draft documented ready for final department review.
- Week of January 16th, 2006: Planning and Zoning Board meeting and BCC meeting scheduled for this effort.

## Appendix D

# Summary of SWOT Analysis



**Little Gasparilla Island  
Visioning 11-12-2005  
SWOT Analysis**



	<b>Strengths</b>	<i>Voting Totals</i>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<i>Voting Totals</i>
1	No Bridge = No Cars	53	Mainland parking	44
2	Peaceful Old Fla Env - Pristine	48	Lack of value for taxes paid	40
3	Low Residential Density	26	Access to the island (marina)	32
4	No Commercial Development	24	No north south access	14
5	Safe Environment For Kids	16	Few Public Docks	11
6	No Paved Roads	13	Lack of mainland EMS	10
7	Clean, Uncrowded Beaches (For Pets Too)	10	Outdated septic tanks	7
8	Low Rise Building Heights	8	Abandoned junk	7
9	Volunteer Fire Dept	4	Lack of trash removal	6
10	Isolated	4	Lack of mosquito control	6
11	No vehicles on Beach	3	Barge service monopoly	6
12	Minimal Government Intervention	3	Trail and Road Maintenance	5
13	Wildlife	1	Police protection, limited	5
14	Recreational Opportunities	1	Zoning doesn't conform with Comp Plan	4
15	Community Parties	1	Too much County Government	4
16	Single Family Zoning	0	Kids driving carts, etc	3
17	Neighbors Helping Neighbors	0	Four Wheeler and ATVs	3
18	Informal Living	0	Over regulation of turtle nesting requirements	1
19	Emergency Services	0	Lack of boating recreation areas	1
20	Chapel	0	Holiday intruders	1
21	Beach on one side, boats on the other	0	Boat Debris	1
22			Beach erosion gets lip service	1
23			Unbalanced voting rights	0
24			No hurricane response program	0
25			No community organization and resources to address problems	0
26			No community center	0
27			No access (EMS) from Don Pedro	0
28			Beach fireworks	0



**Little Gasparilla Island  
Visioning 11-12-2005  
SWOT Analysis**



	<b>Opportunities</b>	<i>Voting Totals</i>	<b>Threats</b>	<i>Voting Totals</i>
1	Control future growth and development on island	46	Sale of marinas (landside)	50
2	Create additional marinas/parking on mainland	38	Taxes	36
3	Island Ownership of Marina	25	Over development (opportunistic)	32
4	Explore LGI residential ferry	22	MSBU/MSTU	26
5	Resolve North South Access corridor	17	Paved roads	23
6	Maintain green areas/Island ecology	12	Bridge to Island	22
7	Create an island community center	9	Eminent domain laws	8
8	Community assistance for fire, ems, mosquito control	8	Treatment plant (sewer)	4
9	Re-open G. Pass	6	Major fire	3
10	County help to maintain open land	5	Red Tide	2
11	Scheduled police protection especially on holidays	3	No plan for exotic species control	2
12	Establish golf cart laws	3	Loss of native plants during development	2
13	Dock maintenance program	3	Health issues	2
14	Maintain our uniquely beautiful environment	2	Lack of community organization	1
15	Beach and Island Clean-up	2	Iguanas	1
16	Septic inspections/plans	1	Erosion	1
17	Modify land development regulations	1	100% build-out = more people	1
18	Fund raising for fire rescue	1	Restrictive environmental regulations	0
19	Be included in Gasparilla Pass monitoring program	1	North South Corridor	0
20	County help to set up transfer of development rights program	0	Last on the County List	0
21	County help to set up land trusts	0	Lack of available land for community projects	0
22	Community organization	0	Combustible debris and trash	0