

1. Introduction and Purpose of the 2009 Shared Use Path Master Plan



“It is by riding a bicycle that you learn the contours of a country best, since you have to sweat up the hills and coast down them. Thus you remember them as they actually are, while in a motor car only a high hill impresses you and you have no such accurate remembrance of country you have driven through as you gain by riding a bicycle”

Ernest Hemmingway

The City of Sanibel has a historical and ongoing commitment to providing residents and visitors with a variety of transportation and recreation options. One of the most visible ways in which this commitment is manifested is through the City’s extensive Shared Use Path system. Per capita and per area, the City of Sanibel has one of the most extensive Shared Use Path systems in Florida and even in the country. Many residents and frequent visitors to Sanibel cite the Paths as one of their primary reasons for being here.

The Sanibel Plan (See *Appendix A*), the City’s comprehensive land use plan, states as a policy that Sanibel should continue to be a “walkable and bikeable community” and that the City’s Shared Use Path system should be “expanded in a fiscally sound manner” and “compatible with surrounding land uses”.

The City of Sanibel’s 2002 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan (See *Appendix A*), which has been incorporated as part of the Sanibel Plan, also notes the importance of “A central corridor of community parks, bikeways and gathering spaces – all sensitively woven into the Island’s existing environmental fabric”.

The purpose of the Shared Use Path Master Plan can be summarized as follows:

- Pursue implementation of the Sanibel Plan and the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan.
- Serve as the Sanibel community’s long term vision for the future of the Shared Use Path system.
- Establish a base-line of information, in a Geographic Information System (GIS) format, that defines existing Shared Use Path conditions and relationships to Sanibel land uses, destinations, natural resources and other features.
- Define potential best management and design practices.
- Provide a resource that will support both public and private fund raising efforts.

The following Shared Use Path Master Plan is composed of the following essential elements.

- Vision statement and supporting Goals and Objectives that will guide Plan implementation.
- History of the Shared Use Path system's origin, extension and improvement.
- Existing Shared Use Path Conditions and Challenges.
- Overview of Shared Use Path Uses and Users.
- Recommendations for Public Safety, Maintenance and Management, Improvement and Extension and Stewardship.
- Implementation Program defining a basic schedule and responsibilities.

2. VISION, GOALS and OBJECTIVES



“People need immediate places to refresh, reinvent themselves. Our surroundings, built and natural alike, have an immediate and a continuing effect on the way we feel and act, and on our health and intelligence. These places have an impact on our sense of self, our sense of safety; the kind of work we get done, the ways we interact with people, even our ability to function as citizens in a democracy. In short, the places where we spend our time affect the people we are and can become . . .”

Tony Hiss, The Experience of Place

The following vision statement and supporting goals and objectives have been defined to guide the implementation of the Shared Use Path Master Plan.

Vision for the Sanibel Shared Use Path System

Sanibel’s Shared Use Path system is and will continue to be an invaluable resource, one of the “crown jewels” of the island. Sanibel’s Shared Use Path system will serve as a means for residents and visitors to move about the Island safely and easily under human power, reducing the need for using motorized vehicles on City streets and roads. The Path system will be designed and maintained in a manner that provides maximum access to frequently visited island destinations and is attractive and consistent with Sanibel’s unique character as a barrier island sanctuary and small town community.

Goal: The safety of Sanibel’s Shared Use Path system and its users shall be of the highest priority.

Objectives:

- Design the Path system’s physical structure and signage to meet up-to-date standards so that Path users are safe and feel comfortable.
- Improve daytime and evening bicycle, pedestrian and motorist visibility along the Path system, particularly at intersections and commercial and residential driveways.
- Enforce City ordinances and State statutes to maximize Path safety and minimize crashes.
- Conduct an on-going safety awareness program for Path users and motorists, using the widest possible range of educational and outreach initiatives.

Goal: The Shared Use Path system will be managed and maintained in a quality manner, to support the full range of current and projected future user demands.

Objectives:

- Maintain the Path system in accordance with appropriate engineering and design practices and with State standards wherever possible, consistent with the City's unique right of way and land use conditions.
- Manage the Path system in a manner that protects the fragile nature of our island's environment.
- Implement a Shared Use Path monitoring and maintenance program that will both proactively and systematically locate, schedule and prioritize pavement, vegetation trimming and related improvements.
- Insure that Path rest areas, support facilities and signage are attractive and in keeping with the character of Sanibel.

Goal: Improvements and extensions to the Shared Use Path system will be done for the purpose of connecting residents and visitors with frequently visited island destinations and activity centers and to correspondingly reduce vehicular trips and energy consumption.

Objectives:

- Maintain a five year capital improvement schedule for the Shared Use Path system, programmed and updated on an annual basis.
- Insure that any proposed new Path improvement or extension addresses existing and future user demands and is consistent with the Sanibel Plan, the City's land use conditions and the recommendations and priorities of the Shared Use Path Master Plan.
- Design Path improvements and extensions to meet up-to-date standards whenever possible

- Insure that Path improvements and extensions are attractive and in keeping with the character of Sanibel.

Goal: The City will build a sense of stewardship for the Shared Use Path system within the greater Sanibel Community.

Objectives:

- City Council will establish policies and priorities that will both support implementation of the Shared Use Path Master Plan and engage the entire Sanibel community throughout the implementation process.
- The City Manager will continue to lead and coordinate implementation of the Shared Use Path Master Plan and oversight of the Shared Use Path system within the City administration, insuring that the Path system receives focused attention on an on-going basis.
- Initiate a communications program to inform the public on the importance of the Path system to Sanibel. This communication program will:
 - Reinforce the Path system's role as a convenient means of non-motorized transportation that will help to: reduce automobile trips, road congestion and parking demands.
 - Underscore the impact the Path system can have in protecting the natural environment.
 - Encourage use of the Path system to promote health, wellness and increased mobility.
- Encourage public-private partnerships to support the Path system.
 - Consider opportunities for volunteers and City staff to work together on a wide range of programs and projects associated with Path system safety, education, conditions and public information.

- Explore the formation of innovative public, private and not-for-profit partnerships that will have the capacity to pursue fund raising and financing strategies to support implementation of the Shared Use Path Master Plan.