

3. History of the Shared Use Path System



“Of all the exercises, walking is the best.”

Thomas Jefferson

“The sum of the whole is this: walk and be happy; walk and be healthy. The best way to lengthen out our days is to walk steadily and with a purpose.”

Charles Dickens

In 1974, prior to the City’s incorporation and the introduction of the first segments of the Shared Use Path system, Sanibel bicyclists rode from the Chamber of Commerce to Bailey’s store to demonstrate to Lee County Commissioners the need for safe and separate Paths on the island.

Sanibel residents working with Lee County officials and the Project Bike Path Committee also completed in 1974 a County-wide eight-point plan to establish a network of Paths and a funding strategy for both County and State financial participation necessary to partially support construction costs.

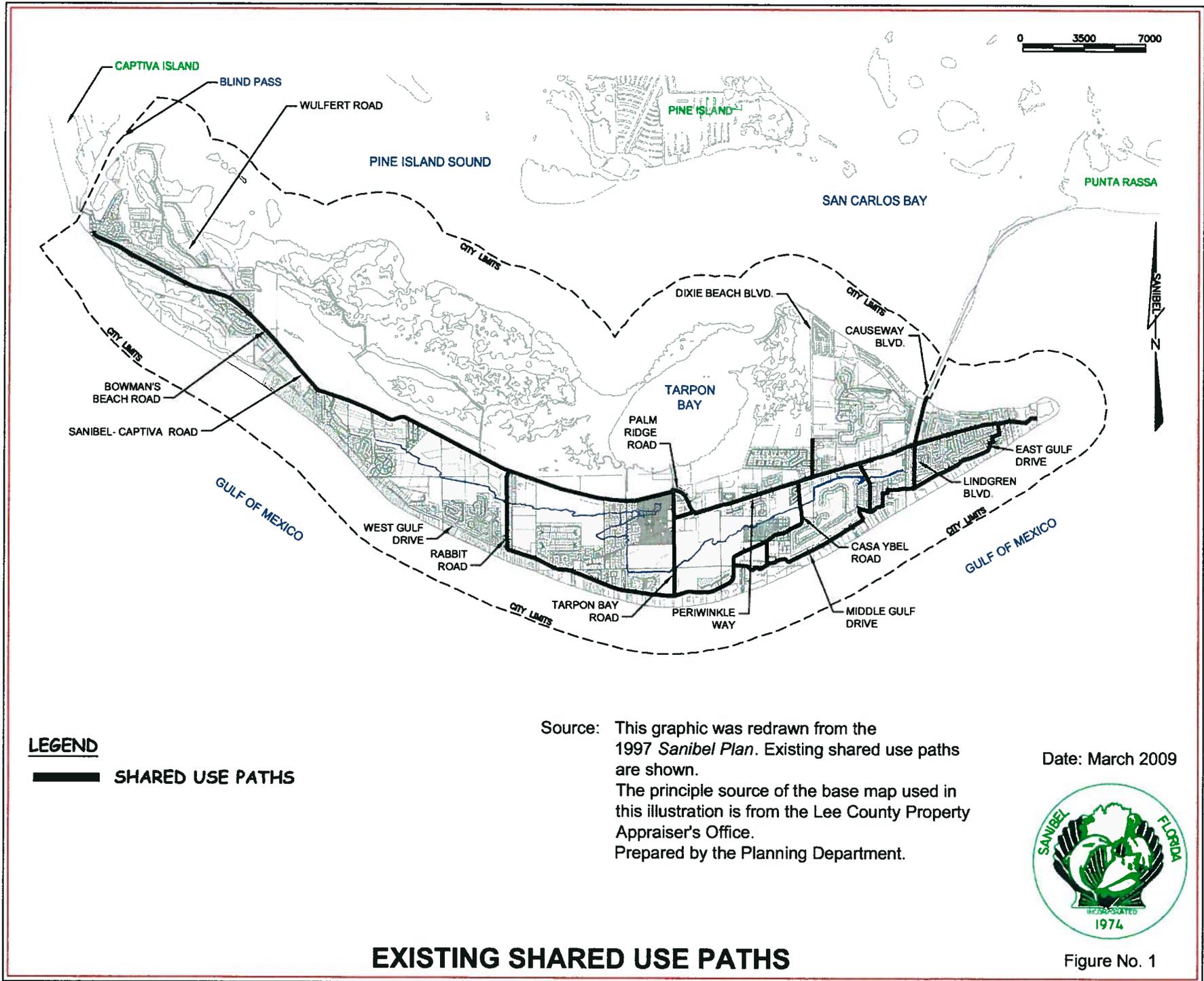
In 1975, three citizens (Grace Whitehead, Muriel Goss and Starr Thomas) spearheaded a project to raise “seed money” (\$10,000) that was matched by the State of Florida’s Department of Transportation (DOT) to build the first segment of the Shared Use Path system along Periwinkle Way from Lindgren Boulevard to Bailey’s General Store.

Between 1975 and 1996 the 23 mile Shared Use Path system that exists today was constructed (See *Figures 1 and 2*).

In 2002 the City of Sanibel completed a Parks and Recreation System Master Plan which defined the importance of a unified park, recreation and Path system.

In 2003, the City of Sanibel’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommended that the term “Bike Path” be changed to the current “Shared Use Path” classification for the following reasons: recognize the wide variety of non-motorized users and the separation of Paths from vehicular traffic; indicate that both recreation and transportation services are provided; and enable the City to successfully apply for federal and state grants and funding.

In 2003, the City’s Department of Public Works also completed a Master Plan primarily for future Path extensions. *Appendix B* identifies the 2003 Plan’s potential long term Path extensions.



LEGEND

— SHARED USE PATHS

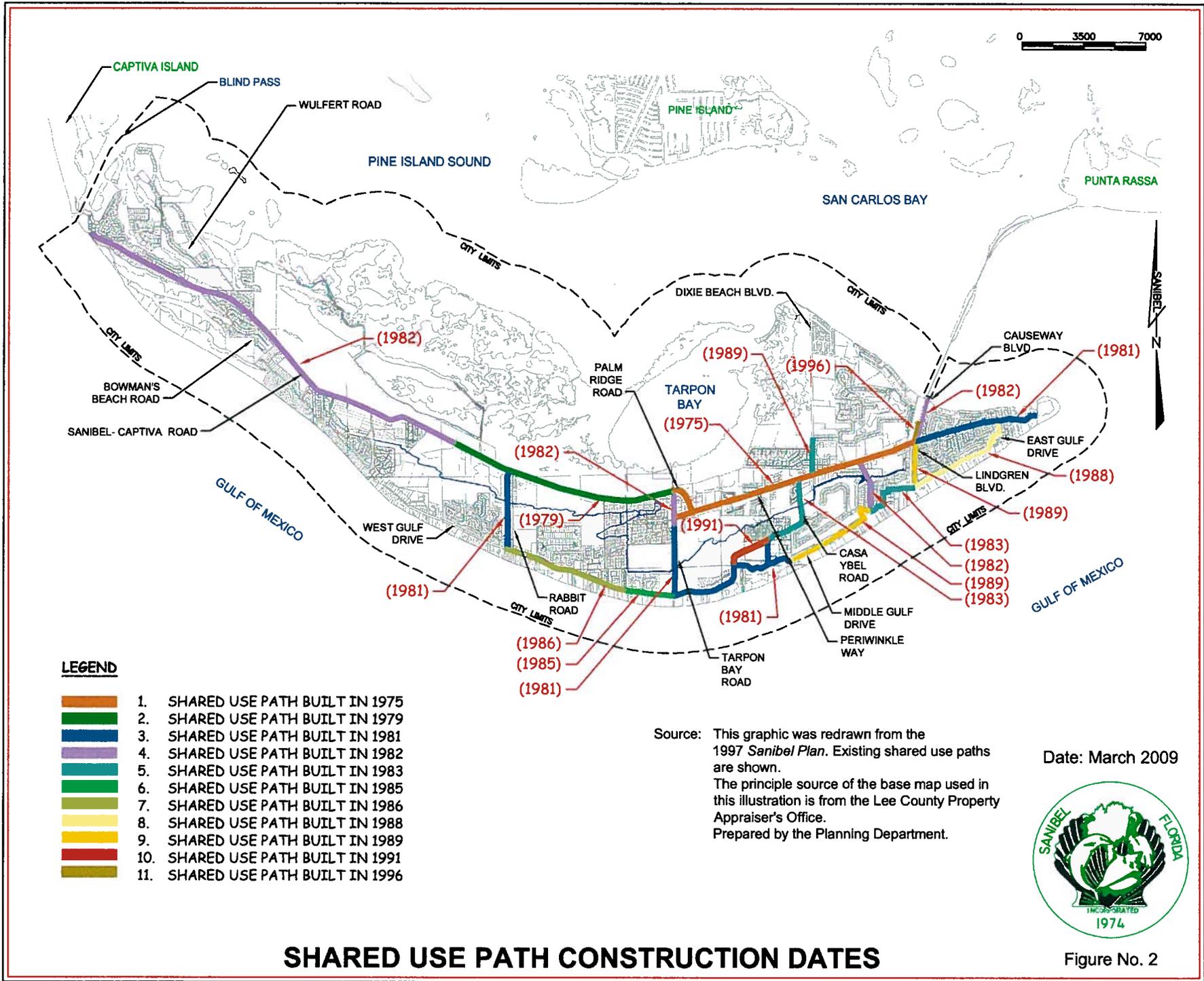
Source: This graphic was redrawn from the 1997 *Sanibel Plan*. Existing shared use paths are shown. The principle source of the base map used in this illustration is from the Lee County Property Appraiser's Office. Prepared by the Planning Department.

Date: March 2009



Figure No. 1

EXISTING SHARED USE PATHS



SHARED USE PATH CONSTRUCTION DATES

Since 2003, the City of Sanibel has completed \$2,031,000 in Shared Use Path relocations, widenings, bridge replacements, drainage and related improvements that have been financed primarily through the City's capital improvement program.

In 2005, City Council and the Sanibel Bicycle Club, Inc. discussed the need for alternative sources of funding to support implementation of Shared Use Path improvements. From these discussions emerged the necessity of preparing a more comprehensive Shared Use Path Master Plan and the essential role that such a Plan could play in securing future public and private funding.

In 2006, residents of the City of Sanibel approved a mail ballot referendum, consistent with the City Charter, to construct improvements to Periwinkle Way and the section of the Shared Use Path between 500 feet west of Casa Ybel Road and 1200 feet east of Dixie Beach Boulevard. The project included separating the Path from the road and associated road, drainage and related improvements.

In 2006, based on funding committed by City Council and "Trails in Motion", formed by the Sanibel Bicycle Club, Inc., a scope of work and objectives were defined to guide the preparation of this 2009 Shared Use Path Master Plan.