City of Sanibel

Planning Department

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 17, 2009

TO: Judie Zimomra, City Manager

FROM: Robert J. Duffy, AICP, Planning Director

SUBJECT: **ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IN PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS PROJECT - MARCH 17, 2009 STATUS REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL**

On March 17, 2009 the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Project team including representatives from J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Lee Trans and the project consultant team will brief City Council on the project's progress.

For your review prior to that meeting are the following documents:

1. Interlocal Agreement for Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program Grant by and Between Lee County, Florida, the City of Sanibel, Florida, and J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge

2. City of Sanibel Policy and Position Statement of the Proposed Transit Authority

If you have any questions regarding the enclosed documents, please contact me at your convenience.

RJD/stb

Atch (2)

CC: City Council
Paul Tritaik, J. N. "Ding" Darling Refuge Manager
Patrick Martin, J. N. "Ding" Darling Deputy Refuge Manager

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

Sanibel City Council Update (March 17, 2009)

Sanibel City Council Update (March 17, 2009)

A. ATPPL Study Update

   a. Purpose & Need

      i. Description of study area (Refuge, Islands, & Islands + Punta Rassa)

   b. Goals & Objectives of the ATPPL Program

      i. Goal & objectives vital to refuge

      ii. Goals & objectives vital to City of Sanibel

      iii. Goals & objectives vital to LeeTran

   c. Brief review of the history of project

      i. Description/difference of ATPPL project and MPO Transit Authority Proposal

   d. Project efforts to date (milestones and deliverables)

   e. How Implementation of this project will support City efforts

B. Preliminary Findings

   a. Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

   b. Summary of First Public Workshop

   c. Seasonal Surveys Conducted to Date

   d. Summary Scoping Report to be provided

C. Next Steps (Current Schedule)

   a. Spring 2009

      i. Continued outreach of Stakeholders and Public

      ii. Second Public Workshop

         1. Goal: Alternatives Development

         2. Goal: Threshold Development

iii. Third Public Workshop

1. Goal: Identify Preferred Alternative(s) for Testing
2. Goal: Identify Methodology for Impacts Analyses

b. Summer 2009

i. Continued outreach of Stakeholders and Public

ii. Alternatives Testing and Impact Analysis

c. Fall 2009

i. Continued outreach of Stakeholders and Public

ii. Alternative(s) Testing Results and Recommendations

iii. Alternative(s) Costs and Implementation Strategies

D. Tasks (2 Phases due to incremental funding)

a. Overall set of tasks as laid out in Scope of work

b. Tasks performed to date (Phase 1)

c. Tasks to be performed under Phase 2 (Continuation of Original Scope of Work)

E. Attachments

a. Inter-local Agreement

b. Lee County MPO Summary on Transit Authority

c. Study Area Figure

d. Executive Summary of Existing Conditions Report

e. Draft agenda for second public workshop

f. Stakeholder Interview Summary

06\07-048

Item No. _____
Date _____

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IN PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS PROGRAM GRANT BY AND BETWEEN LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA, THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, AND J. N. "DING" DARLING NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

THIS INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT is made and entered into this 22 day of May 2007, by and between LEE COUNTY, a political subdivision and charter county of the State of Florida, hereinafter referred to as "County", acting by and through its Board of County Commissioners, the governing body thereof, the City of Sanibel, a municipality incorporated in the State of Florida, hereinafter referred to as "City", acting by and through its City Council, the governing body thereof, and the J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, hereinafter referred to as the refuge, collectively, the "Parties" hereto.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, both the County and City are duly empowered pursuant to Florida Statutes, in particular, Section 163.01, to enter into Interlocal Agreements for the sharing of certain governmental powers and obligations; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration announced the selection of projects to be funded under the Fiscal Year 2006 appropriations for the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands (ATPPL) program authorized by Section 3021 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU) and codified in 49 U.S.C. 5320; and

WHEREAS, the goals of the ATPPL program are to conserve natural, historical and cultural resources; reduce congestion and pollution; improve visitor mobility and accessibility; enhance visitor experience; and ensure access to all, including persons with disabilities through alternative transportation projects; and

C6a
5-22-07

WHEREAS, the County, City and J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge jointly submitted a proposal on May 2, 2006 for funding consideration under the ATPPL program which provides for the tasks to be undertaken in this project; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration has issued notice in the Tuesday, September 12, 2006 Federal Register, Volume 71, Number 176, of funding award for the public land unit known as J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, identifying the eligible funding recipient as Lee County Transit on behalf of the County to conduct a study for the planning, technical analyses, evaluation and coordination of alternative transportation systems as provided in the approved proposal; and

WHEREAS, the parties to this Interlocal Agreement desire to participate cooperatively in the performance of planning processes identified in the proposal submitted to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and

WHEREAS, County, City, and J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge find that entering into this Interlocal Agreement serves a public purpose and is to the public's benefit.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the above recitations and the mutual covenants herein set forth, the Parties hereto mutually agree as follows:

SECTION ONE: PURPOSE

A. The purpose and intent of this Interlocal Agreement is to define the terms and conditions by which the Parties will coordinate participation in the project processes for completion of the planning tasks identified in the grant proposal.

B. The Interlocal Agreement will insure close collaboration between the County, J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge and the City throughout the process so that the project results will meet the expectations of all Parties and be able to move forward without objection.

C. The Parties agree that the above named Parties will enter into this Interlocal Agreement. This Interlocal Agreement shall be binding only upon the Parties that execute this Interlocal Agreement. No Party that executes this Interlocal

Agreement shall be bound by its terms to any third party who has not entered into this Interlocal Agreement.

SECTION TWO: TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. County will coordinate, manage and otherwise direct the day-to-day consultant(s) professional planning services.

B. The Sanibel City Manager and Sanibel Planning Director shall serve as the primary project management staff representing the City.

C. The Refuge Manager or designee shall serve as the primary project management staff representing Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

SECTION THREE: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

A. County will prepare and administer the Request for Proposals for the procurement and award of professional planning services to consultant(s).

B. County will coordinate with the Parties for the ranking and selection of consultant(s) to perform the necessary transportation planning tasks.

C. The City of Sanibel's Planning Director shall serve as the City's representative for the proposal review and consultant interview team.

D. Sanibel City Council shall review and approve the Request for Proposals and Scope of Services prior to release by County.

E. The Refuge Manager or designee will serve as the Refuge's representative for the proposal review and consultant selection team.

F. The Refuge Manager or designee will review and approve the Request for Proposals and Scope of Services prior to release by County.

SECTION FOUR: CONSULTANT CONTRACT, SCOPE OF SERVICES AND WORK ORDERS

A. Pursuant to this agreement, County will contract for professional and technical planning services through the issuance of work orders with an established scope of services and budget.

B. All consultant(s) studies and work orders will be completed in accordance with the scope of services provided by the County and agreed to by the Parties to this Agreement.

C. The scope of services will be completed consistent with all State and local plans including:

1. Federal policy and environment assessments needed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Section 4(f) on the US DOT Act of 1996, as amended, Section 6(f) Land and Water Conservation Funds Act; and
2. Plans and policies of J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge; and
3. The "Sanibel Plan", the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and the Sanibel Policy and Position Paper on the proposed Transit Authority.

D. The consultant contract, final scope of services and project work program shall be submitted to Sanibel City Council for review and approval prior to execution.

E. Amendments to the Study's contract, scope of service and work program shall be submitted for review and approval by Sanibel City Council prior to execution.

F. County will negotiate the terms of the work orders.

SECTION FIVE: ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION TO BE EVALUATED

A. The one (1) preliminary and two (2) final ranges of alternative forms of transportation will be evaluated as part of the study, including a no-build alternative, shall be submitted for review and approval by Sanibel City Council.

B. The alternative forms of transportation that will be evaluated and recommended pursuant to the Study's scope of work shall conform to the "Sanibel Plan", the City's

Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and the Sanibel Policy and Position Paper on the proposed Transit Authority.

SECTION SIX: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

A. A detailed public participation process shall be developed in conjunction with Sanibel's Planning Director and defined as part of the final work program submitted to Sanibel City Council for review and approval.

B. All public meetings and related public involvement processes shall be conducted on Sanibel consistent with the prior work program approved by the City Council.

C. The results/data of all public participation events will be tallied after each event and provided to all Parties prior to formulating decisions.

D. The Refuge will participate in all public participation processes developed as defined in the adopted grant proposal.

SECTION SEVEN: COMPENSATION AND METHOD OF PAYMENT

A. The County agrees to pay for costs incurred to carry out the professional planning services once the County approves a negotiated scope of work in accordance with the terms of this agreement.

B. Payment will be made by the County within thirty (30) days of completion of the scope of work and acceptance by the County.

SECTION EIGHT: MONITORING, AUDIT

All cost records and accounts shall be subject to audit by representative(s) of either the County or the City, at their election, during normal work hours and upon reasonable notice. Said records and accounts shall be made available at the offices of Lee County Transit, Lee County, Florida.

SECTION NINE: MODIFICATIONS, DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND TERMINATION

A. All modifications to this Interlocal Agreement hereto must be in writing and signed by all Parties with the same formality as that contained herein.

B. Any disputes arising from this Agreement which cannot be resolved by the Parties may be settled through arbitration of the disputed matters by following the procedures as set forth in Section 44.104, Florida Statutes, or the Parties may utilize any other legal remedies available to them with respect to the disputed matters.

C. Any Party may terminate this Agreement for any reason by giving the non-terminating parties thirty (30) days written notice of its cancellation.

SECTION TEN: LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

Parties agree that by execution of the Agreement, no Party will be deemed to have waived its statutory defense of sovereign immunity, or increased its limit of liability as provided for in Section 768.28, Florida Statutes, as may be revised or amended from time to time.

SECTION ELEVEN: NOTICES

All written notices to the Parties under this Interlocal Agreement shall be directed to the following addresses:

For Lee County:

Steven L. Myers, Director
Lee County Transit Department – Lee Tran
6035 Landing View Road
Fort Myers, Florida 33907

For the City of Sanibel:	Judie Zimomra, City Manager City of Sanibel 800 Dunlop Road Sanibel, FL 33957
For J. N. "Ding" Darling Wildlife Refuge	Rob Jess, Refuge Manager J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge 1 Wildlife Drive Sanibel, FL 33957

SECTION TWELVE: SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Interlocal Agreement is held invalid, the remainder of the Interlocal Agreement shall not be affected thereby and all other parts of this Interlocal Agreement shall nevertheless be in full force and effect.

SECTION THIRTEEN: FILING

This Interlocal Agreement and any subsequent amendments hereto shall be filed with the Lee County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Clerk of the City of Sanibel and the Director of J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the PARTIES hereto have caused this Interlocal Agreement to be executed on the date and year first above written.

Attest:
CITY OF SANIBEL

By: _____
ACTING Clerk

CITY OF SANIBEL

By: _____

Title: City manager

Approved as to form:

By: _____
City Attorney

FINANCIAL SUFFICIENCY APPROVED
5/8/07
Renee M. Lynch, FINANCE DIRECTOR

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SEAL
LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Attest: Charlie Green,
Clerk of the Courts

By: _____
Clerk

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____

Title: Chair

Approved as to form:

By: _____
Office of the County Attorney

JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge

Attest:

By: _____
Deputy Refuge Manager

By: _____

Title: Refuge Manager

Approved as to form:

By: _____

LEE COUNTY MPO
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

1926 Victoria Avenue, Fort Myers, Florida 33901 • (239) 338-2550 • www.mpo-swfl.org

March 6, 2009

Mr. Robert Duffy
Planning Director,
City of Sanibel
800 Dunlop Road
Sanibel, FL 33957

Re: Status of the Lee County Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Duffy:

The *Lee County Transit Authority Action Plan* identifies the execution of several tasks in order to implement a transit authority. Task 1 includes the development and adoption of an interlocal agreement. An interlocal agreement for support and participation in the Lee County Transit Authority was finally adopted towards the end of last year by all the local governments in Lee County. The next step, identified in part in Task 3, calls for surveys and other information gathering tools designed to identify those transit related issues that are most sensitive to the public and public officials. Accordingly, the MPO will be conducting a public opinion survey to gain greater insight into the opinions and attitudes of voters in Lee County with the objectives being to measure satisfaction and performance approval levels for the County's existing transportation infrastructure, determine public priorities for future transportation needs, and test levels of support for various aspects of a sales tax or bond issue that may be placed before voters for approval in order to determine viability and, importantly, the optimal time to place it on the ballot. The survey questionnaire will be designed through pre-survey interviews with key transportation officials, designated consultants who are familiar with the parallel push for a sales tax in Lee County for highway projects, and decision makers deemed essential to the process.

MPO staff has developed the scope of services for the public opinion survey and will issue a task order to one of its general planning consultants in May to conduct the survey. Currently, we are running an advertisement for Request for Proposal for general planning services in the Florida Administrative Weekly, and we expect to have contracts of the successful consultants approved and executed by the MPO Board at its April 18th meeting.

Please feel free to call me at 239/338 2550 extension 239 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ron Gogoi, AICP
Deputy Director, Lee County MPO

Mpo\letters\2009\Transit Authority Status

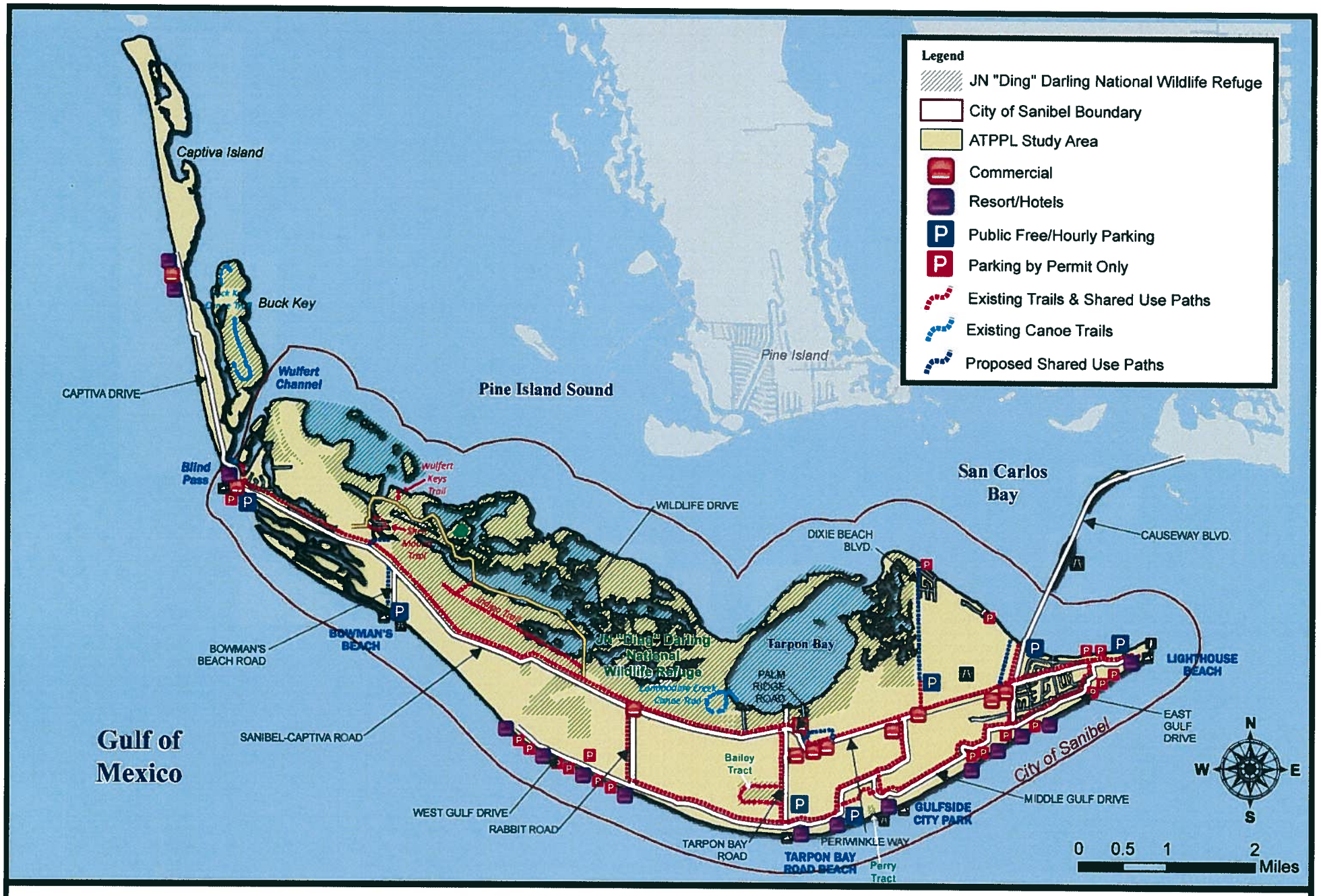

Figure 1.1: Overview of Study Area

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

FTA

This map is for illustrative purposes only

Sources:
US Fish & Wildlife Service (JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Boundary)
Florida Department of Transportation (Roads)

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge

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Summary Excerpt from Existing Conditions Report (January 2009)

Prepared for

Prepared by JACOBS

1. Project Purpose and Description

J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter known as the "Refuge") was established by Presidential Executive Order December 1, 1945 on Sanibel Island in Lee County, Florida. The Refuge encompasses prime estuary and mangroves habitats and is home to several threatened and endangered species including the eastern indigo snake, American alligator, American crocodile, bald eagle, wood stork, peregrine falcon, west Indian manatee and the Atlantic loggerhead turtle, and serves as a rookery with over 238 birds species identified (**Figure 1.1**).

As one of the most visited refuges in the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) network, the Refuge struggles to meet its goal of ecological conservation and wildlife habitat protection while providing an educational experience. This problem is also felt by the City of Sanibel, which is committed to remain a sanctuary barrier island community.

In May 2006, the Refuge working in partnership with the City of Sanibel (hereafter known as the "City") and Lee County (hereafter known as the "County"), applied for the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands (ATPPL) Program sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in cooperation with the USFWS. Agency cooperation between the Refuge, the City, and the County was further empowered by the adoption of an interlocal agreement in May 2007.

This existing conditions report provides a detailed description of the project's history, partners, Study Area, and challenges facing its three primary environments (Natural, Human, and Transportation).

1.1. Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

The three-agency partnership applied for funding through the ATPPL program in May 2006. The Federal ATPPL program was established in August 2005 as Section 3021 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Codified in 49 USC 5320, the program is administered by the FTA in partnership with the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

The ATPPL program funds capital and planning expenses for alternative transportation systems such as shuttle buses in national parks and other federal lands. The goals of the program are to conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources; reduce congestion and pollution; improve visitor mobility and accessibility; enhance visitor experience; and ensure access to all, including persons with disabilities.[1]

1.2. Project Description

The Refuge's ATPPL project and three-agency partnership provides an opportunity to examine environmentally sensitive solutions to reduce and manage the number of vehicles visiting the Refuge and circulating on Sanibel Island.

Through the evaluation of alternative transportation options (Modes of transportation other than the typical single occupant car) for the Refuge and Sanibel Island, the project seeks to balance the preservation of natural areas with human activities. These alternative scenarios, developed with public input, identify transportation strategies that are consistent with the environmentally sensitive character of the Refuge, the City, and the County. The project is

[1] *Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands, Program Manual 2007,* FTA

designed to identify and rank these potential alternative scenarios, including a no-build option, with analyses of environmental, capital, operating, and management factors.

1.2.1. Need

As one of the most visited national wildlife refuges in the Federal system, the Refuge experiences high visitation and traffic volumes. Traffic associated with visitors has been perceived to have a negative effect on animal species and the quality of habitat provided by the Refuge. Visitors attracted to the Refuge create congestion and circulation issues within the Study Area during peak seasonal periods. However, the Refuge is a significant natural resource—that defines the sanctuary island character. A balance between an enjoyable visitor experience and potential disturbance to the environment needs to be established both within the Refuge and surrounding Sanibel and Captiva Islands.

1.2.2. Goals

The ATPPL Program is designed to assist the Refuge in managing its visitation, while meeting the primary goal of providing sanctuary habitats for various wildlife species. The goals of this ATPPL project are to:

- Conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources
- Reduce congestion and pollution
- Improve visitor mobility and accessibility
- Enhance the visitor experience

1.3. Project Partners and Stakeholders

Project partners and stakeholders have been identified for purposes of coordination, information, insight, and guidance. Project partners are defined as representatives from the Refuge, the City, and the County, all of which have a role in the direction of the project. These local project partners also form the project steering committee which meets on a monthly basis to discuss project updates. A list of the local project partners is provided in **Section 7.0**.

The project's national partners are made up of representatives from the USFWS regional office in Atlanta, as well as the USFWS Federal Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. Another national project partner is the FTA, in association with Lee County Transit, represented by staff members of the regional office and Federal headquarters.

Through coordination with project partners, a list of community stakeholders was identified. These community stakeholders represent various agencies, environmental associations, business associations, and civic associations. These community stakeholders are an integral component of the public engagement process. Input from these representatives and the general public provides a framework for the development of scenarios that are sensitive to the needs of the community. A list of these community stakeholders has also been provided in **Section 7.0**.

1.4. Existing Studies, Plans and History of Implementation

Past and current studies and their implementation histories are important indications of how a community has been shaped over time. **Table 1.1** lists a few of the plans reviewed for this project. Detailed descriptions of the more commonly used sources include the Refuge's efforts to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and the City's Sanibel Plan.

Table 1.1: Current and Past Studies and Plans

Source	Title	Date
City of Sanibel / Planning Dept.	Sanibel Comprehensive Plan	2007
J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR	Comprehensive Conservation Plan	2008
City of Sanibel	Shared Use Path Master Plan	2007
The Conservation Foundation	The Sanibel Report	1976
LeeTran / Planning Dept.	2006 Trolley Passenger Survey Analysis from 2006-1025 Transit Development Plan Update	2006
LeeTran/ Planning Dept.	Transit Development Plan	2006
Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization	2030 Long Range Transportation Plan	2005
Lee County Department of Comprehensive Planning	Lee County Comprehensive Plan, Lee Plan 2030	2007
Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (Public Law No. 106-541, of the 106th Congress)	The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)	2000
J. N. "Ding' Darling National Wildlife Refuge's	Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) [Not complete]	2008-2009

1.4.1. J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The Refuge is currently developing their Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) to begin evaluating the past, present, and future management of the Refuge and its associated services. The Refuge has completed the preplanning stage of the CCP and is currently working on public scoping. Public scoping will include public comments collected on issues, concerns, and challenges facing the Refuge over the next 15 years.

The goal of the CCP is to identify a clear management direction and provide Refuge's neighbors, visitors, and government officials with an understanding of services on and around the Refuge. The CCP will also be used to ensure that services, including land protection, recreation, and education programs are consistent with the mandates of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Being developed concurrently, elements from the ATPPL study and CCP will be incorporated into both studies.

1.4.2. The Sanibel Plan

The Sanibel Plan was created as the City's nationally recognized and environmentally based Comprehensive Land Use Plan and vision for the City. Throughout its history, Sanibel Island community has tried to sustain, preserve, and restore the ecological balance between its residents, visitors, and wildlife.

The original Sanibel Plan was adopted in 1976 as a departure from the existing County zoning and development standards. Without the development of the Sanibel Plan 30,000 residential units would have been permitted on Sanibel Island. The original Sanibel Plan limited that to just 7,800 residential units. Currently, the plan allows up to 9,000 residential units. The plan also set forth new planning guidelines designed to reduce the potential hurricane threat to life, beaches, and structures; to provide for adequate

supplies of good quality water; to design a safe and efficient network of roads and bicycle paths; and to provide for sanitary disposal of sewage.

Over the past few decades this plan has evolved to keep pace with changes occurring on Sanibel Island. The following is a brief description of the historical changes to the Sanibel Plan.

The Sanibel Report and Plan, 1976

The Sanibel Report, prepared in 1974-75 and incorporated into the Sanibel Plan in 1976, reports on all facets of Sanibel Island's natural systems, such as beaches, mangroves, interior wetlands, hydrology and wildlife information.

The goal of the Sanibel Plan and the accompanying Comprehensive Land Use Plan is to design with nature in mind. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan sets forth development and density requirements according to what the native landscapes can reasonably sustain.

The Sanibel Plan Amendment, 1989

To meet new challenges and budgetary considerations, extensive revisions to the Sanibel Plan were conducted and adopted in 1989. This amendment was part of the continuing planning process for the community.

The Sanibel Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report, 1995

This evaluation and appraisal report in 1995 indicated that the Sanibel Plan was being successfully implemented with regards to surface water, waste water management, and beach management plans. The City Council resolved to update the safety and housing elements of the plan.

The Sanibel Plan, Extensive Revisions, 1997

An extensive revision to the Sanibel Plan was adopted in 1997. This revision to the Sanibel Plan is guided by a three part statement of the community's vision for the future which is described below.

- The first part outlines Sanibel's desire to remain a barrier island sanctuary. The City will resist pressure to accommodate increased development and redevelopment and will guard against and oppose activities in other jurisdictions which may harm Sanibel Island's habitats.
- Secondly, Sanibel wishes to retain its small town community, through diversity, beauty, uniqueness, character, and stewardship.
- The third and final part of the three tiered vision states that Sanibel wishes to maintain its attractiveness to visitors and wildlife for years to come.[2]

The Sanibel Plan, EAR Based Amendments, 2000 – Present

An evaluation and appraisal report for the Sanibel Plan was adopted by the City Council in 2005. This latest evaluation and appraisal report amendments to the Plan were adopted by the City Council in 2007. These evaluations and revisions to the Sanibel Plan (Ordinance NO. 05-07, 2007) are part of the continuing planning process for the community and were found to be consistent with Florida Statutes, the Southwest Florida Regional Strategic Policy Plan, and the State Comprehensive Plan.

[2] The Sanibel Plan, The Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the City of Sanibel (1997)

1.5. Study Area Description

1.5.1. Local and Regional Planning Context

The Study Area is located within the Cape Coral – Fort Myers metropolitan area in southwest Florida (**Figure 1.2**). The Cape Coral – Fort Myers metropolitan area is home to many attractive destinations; two in particular being Sanibel Island and the Refuge.

The County was formed and named in 1887 (**Figure 1.3**). Fort Myers, the County's first incorporated area, preceded county formation as a military post during the Seminole Wars and later as a Union outpost. As time passed, other parts of the County were settled such as Alva, Bonita Springs, Estero, Fort Myers Beach, North Fort Myers and Sanibel. Sanibel became the third City in the County in 1974.

The Lee County economy is primarily based on tourism and the retirement industry, with a large number of second homes. Recent growth in retail trade and service industries, combined with the constant influx of retired residents, has fueled population growth. During 2000, the Census total for the County was estimated at 440,888 residents. The population in 2005, as provided by the Bureau of Economic Business Research, was estimated at 523,866 residents, yielding a population growth of over 18 percent. This growth trend is expected to continue over the twenty five-year planning horizon. The 2030 population forecasts expect approximately 850,000 residents, yielding population growth of over 94 percent as compared to the year 2000.[3]

The cities of Cape Coral and Fort Myers have also created comprehensive plans with the goal of shaping future development in a way that is most beneficial for its residents, wildlife, and natural areas. The County created a long range plan (LeePlan 2030) whose vision is to maintain a distinction between its urban and rural areas, protect natural resources in order to maintain a high quality of life for its residents, diversify its economic base, and to expand cultural, educational and recreational opportunities.

Thus, the local planning context is one focused on addressing development in an intelligent and open way, while also maintaining the pristine ecological environment of the area. The area's existing plans, identified above (**Section 1.4**), coupled with this ATPPL project place the City on the right track towards reaching their goal of maintaining the environment while managing growth.

1.5.2. Study Area

The Study Area is first defined as the Refuge and then by Sanibel Island and Captiva Island and adjacent water bodies (**Figure 1.4**). Additional consideration is given to areas on both side of the Sanibel Causeway.

1.5.3. JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge

The total area of the Refuge is 6,406.79 acres with approximately 2,825 acres designated as a wilderness area by Congress. The Refuge is part of a larger conservation area that also includes the Caloosahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Matlacha Pass NWR, Pine Island NWR, and Island Bay NWR. As a whole the entire conservation area is approximately 7,600 acres.

The Refuge is located in Lee County, Florida and is mostly within the boundaries of the City of Sanibel. The Refuge lies on the northern side of Sanibel Island and includes several habitat types, including estuarine habitats of open water, sea grass beds, mud

[3] Lee County MPO, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (2005)

flats and mangrove islands, and interior freshwater habitats of open water ponds, spartina swales and West Indian hardwood hammocks/ridges. The Refuge is home to a variety of animal species including over 1480 bird species, 51 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 13 species of mammals. Ten federally listed species may be found within the refuge boundaries: American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*), American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*), eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempi*), loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and it's designated critical habitat, West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) and its designated critical habitat, and wood stork (*Mycteria americana*). The refuge may provide suitable habitat for the smalltooth sawfish *(Pristis pectinata*); however, none have been located to date. Two candidate species are also known to occur within the refuge including the red knot (*Calidris canutus rufus*) and the aboriginal pricklyapple (*Harrisia aboriginum*).

While the Refuge is the primary Study Area, Wildlife Drive and its designated parking areas and trailheads are where much of the study will be focused. Since most of the interaction between the Refuge's visitors and wildlife takes place in this area.

1.5.4. City of Sanibel

The City of Sanibel, incorporated in 1974, encompasses over 17.5 square miles with 24.5 miles of shoreline along the Gulf of Mexico and San Carlos Bay. Of the total 11,600 acres that make up Sanibel Island 7,200 acres have been designated conservation lands. A total of 400 acres of Sanibel Island have yet to be developed. From its inception in 1974 Sanibel has experienced an increase in population. Over a 30 year period between 1975 and 2005 the City added over 3,000 new residents to reach a high of 6,272 full time residents in 2005. In addition to the over 6,000 full time residents, the City also receives over 12,000 seasonal residents and another 13,000 day visitors. More info on the demographic composition of the City of Sanibel can be found in **Section 4.2** of this report.[4]

1.5.5. Unincorporated Captiva Island

Unincorporated Captiva Island is located to the Northeast of Sanibel Island. Captiva Island has an area of 10.5 square miles, 1.2 of which are land, and the remaining 9.2 square miles are water, primarily made up of the Gulf of Mexico and Pine Island Sound. In 2000, the following demographic characteristics are true for Captiva Island:

- Total population of 379
- Median age of 58
- Predominantly Caucasian ethnicity
- Average household size of 1.95 people
- 1,150 total housing units[5]

1.5.6. Lee County, Florida

The County is located on the southwest coast of Florida. It is the most populous county in the southwest region of Florida. The county contains the Cape Coral – Fort Myers

[4] City of Sanibel, Florida Facts and Figures, Sanibel Island & Captiva Island Chamber of Commerce (January 2008)
[5] United States Census Bureau (2000 Census)

metropolitan area. The county seat is Fort Myers with Cape Coral being the most populous city.

The County has a total area of approximately 1,212 square miles, 804 of which are land and 408 of which are water. The following demographic characteristics are true for Lee County:

- Total population of 571,344
- Median age of 42.6
- Predominantly Caucasian ethnicity
- 341,117 total housing units[6]

1.6. Project Purpose and Description Maps

The following figures are provided to graphically illustrate and support the information presented in **Section 1.0**.

[6] United States Census Bureau (2000 Census)

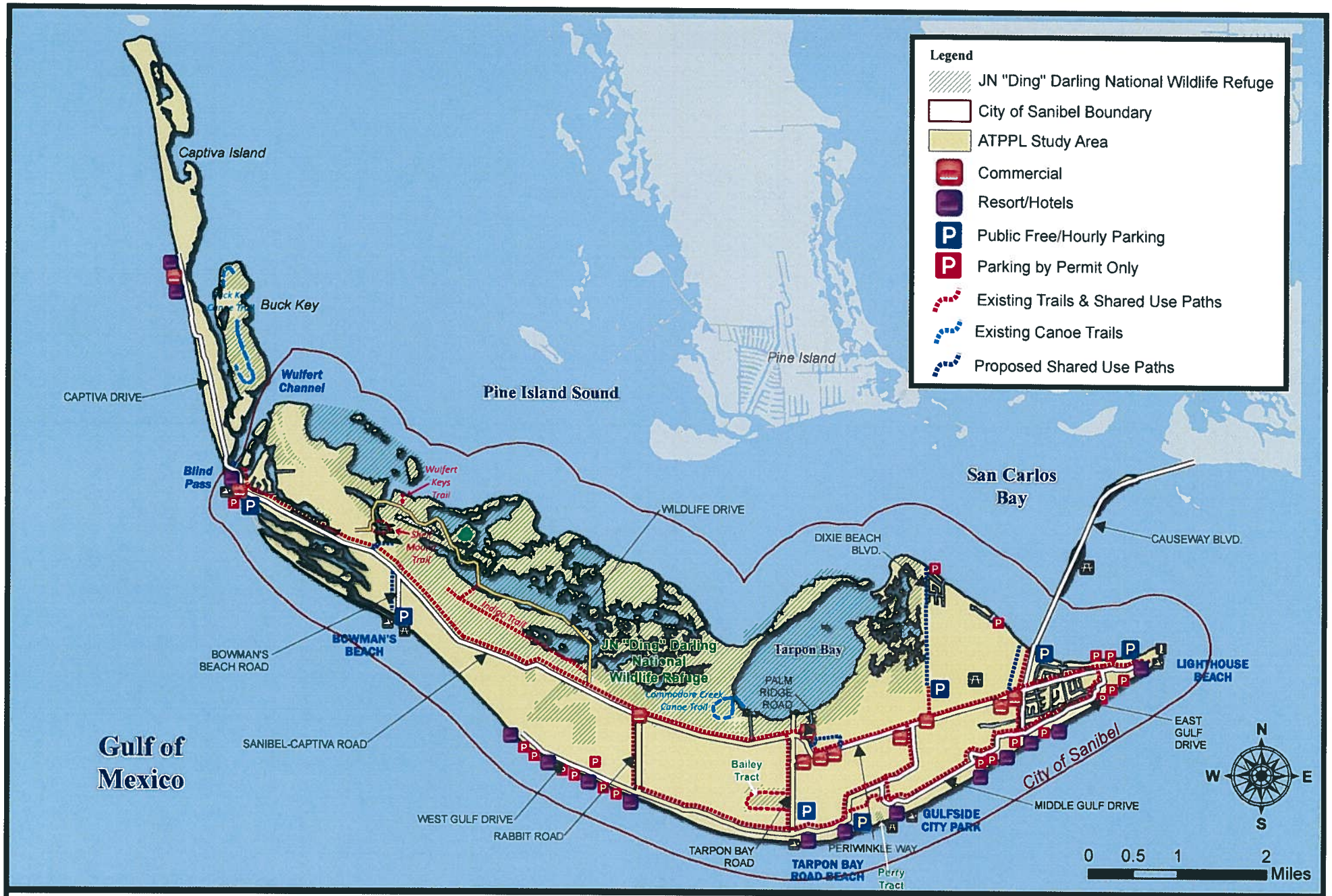

Figure 1.1: Overview of Study Area

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

FTA

This map is for illustrative purposes only

Sources:
US Fish & Wildlife Service (JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Boundary)
Florida Department of Transportation (Roads)

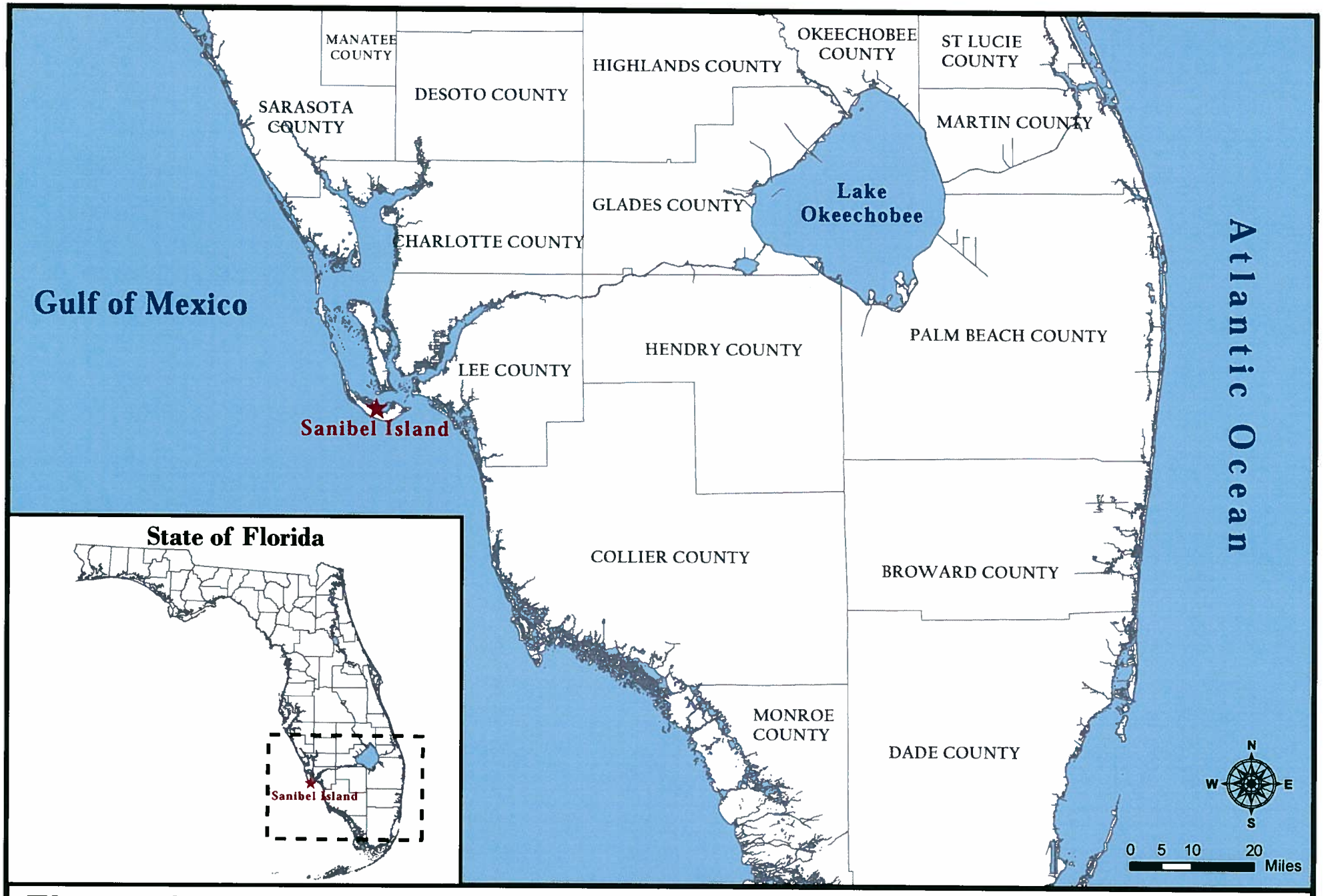

Figure 1.2: View of Southwest Florida

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

This map is for illustrative purposes only

Sources:
Lee County GIS Department
Florida Department of Transportation

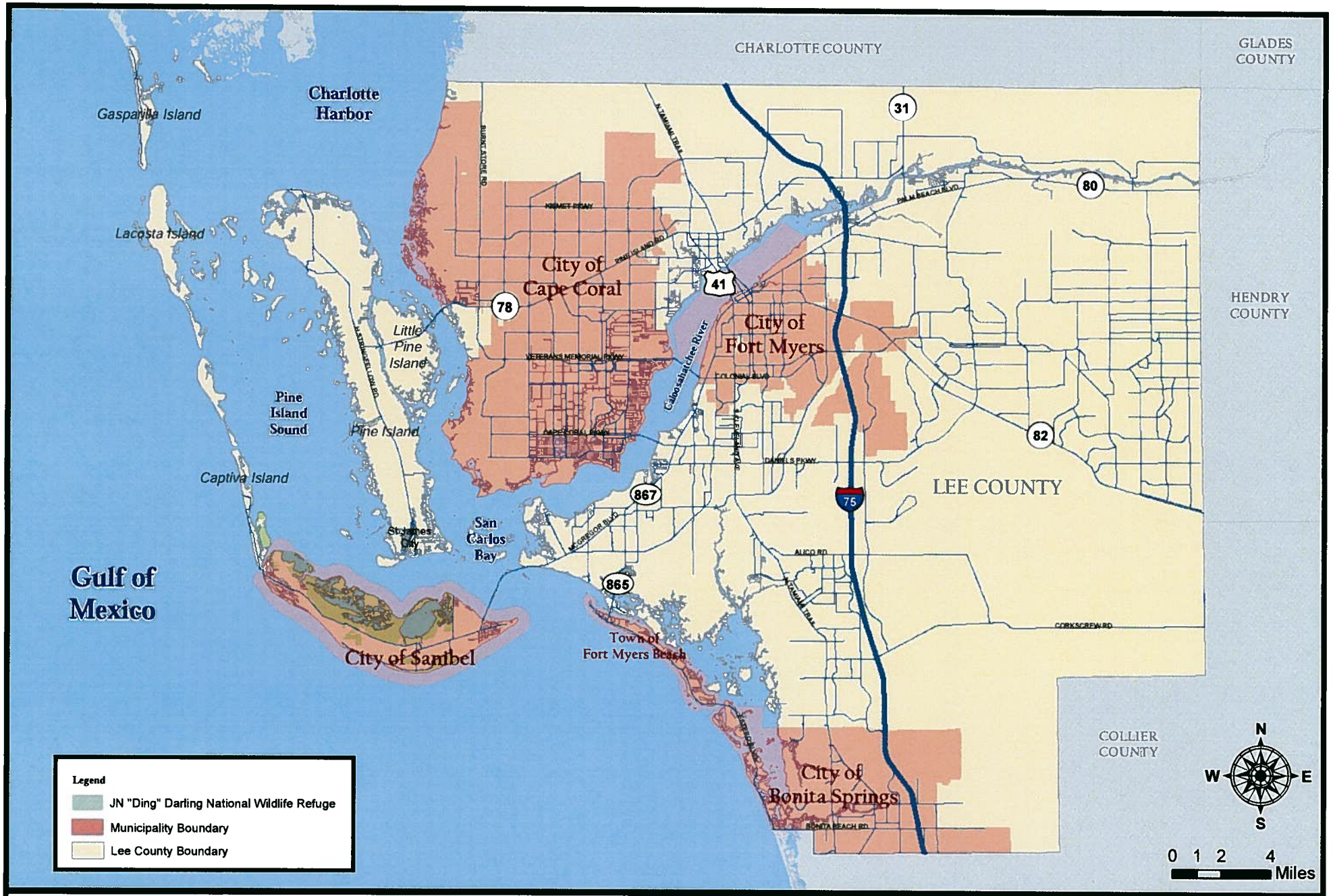

Figure 1.3: Lee County

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

This map is for illustrative purposes only

Sources:
Lee County GIS Department (Municipalities)
Florida Department of Transportation (Roads)

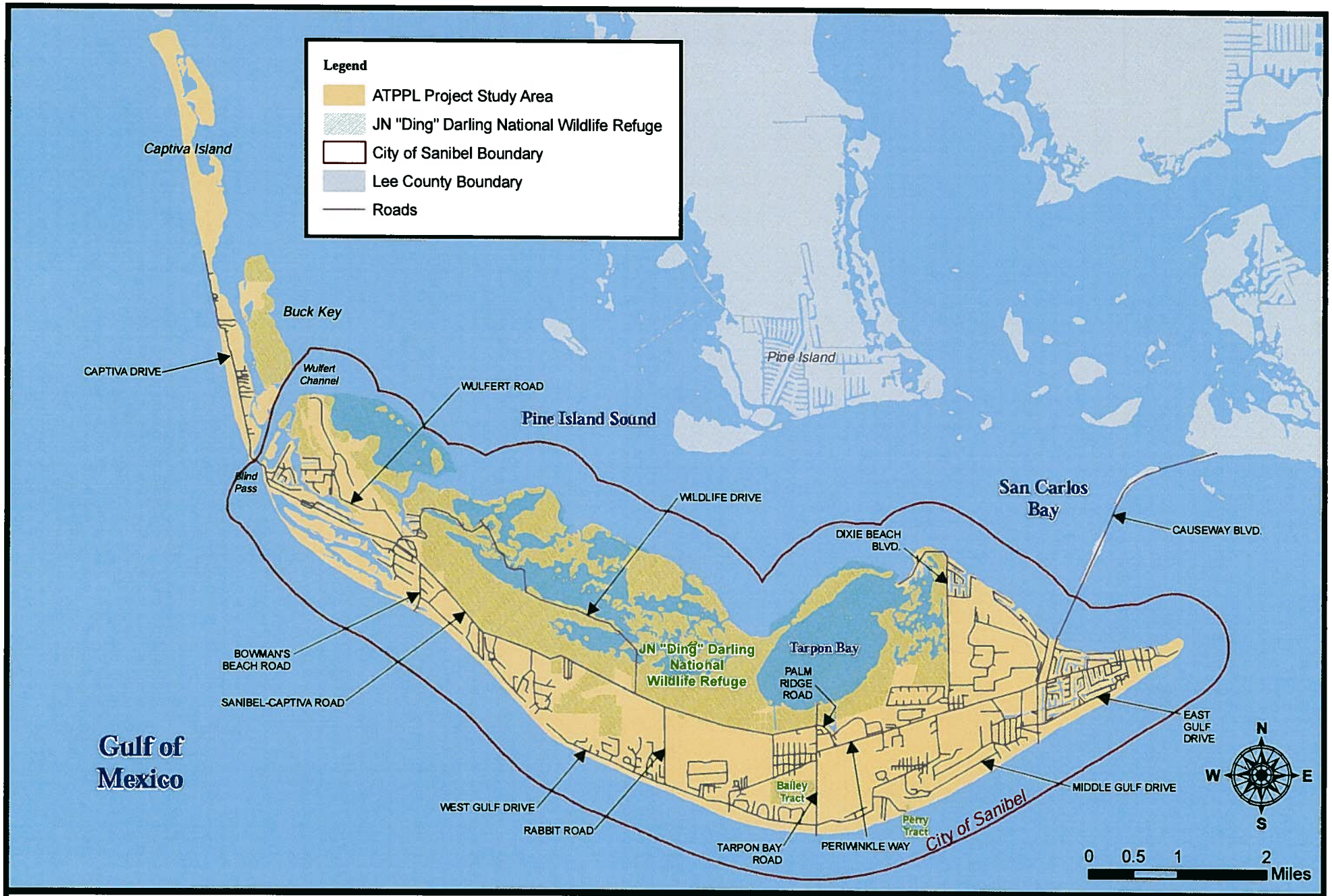

Figure 1.4: Study Area

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

This map is for illustrative purposes only

Sources:
Florida Department of Transportation (Roads)

2. Summary of Existing Conditions

The purpose of this existing conditions report is to highlight current issues and opportunities present within the Study Area. It is these findings that will frame the preliminary carrying capacity thresholds and related transportation needs for the Refuge and the City. These findings will also provide a base for the development of alternative transportation scenarios for evaluation by project partners and the public. The summaries below can be found in greater detail under their respective sections (**Sections 3.0** thru **6.0**). This document is organized into four major topic areas: carrying capacity definition, the existing natural environment, the existing human environment, and the existing transportation environment.

2.1. Key Opportunities and Issues

2.1.1. Carrying Capacity Definition

Carrying capacity definitions provide a foundation for examining interactions between indicators such as the supply or demand of a resource and the perceived quality of that resource. Strength of this project will come from the opportunity to collect candid input from project partners, stakeholders, and the public on thresholds unique to the Refuge and the City. These thresholds will be developed in parallel to the transportation alternatives and will be used to measure the performance of each project alternative.

At all times, it should be remembered that carrying capacity is a management concept, not a scientific theory. It will be the responsibility of project partners to decide appropriate limits (thresholds), define acceptable impacts to a desired condition, and lay the foundation for future policies that will be used in implementing alternative transportation decisions.

2.1.2. Natural Environment

The Study Area is composed of fragile barrier island habitats that are subject to many different natural processes. It is these natural amenities that attract visitors to the City and are vital to the City's economic prosperity.

The island of Sanibel is home to seagrass beds, tidal flats, mangroves, hardwood hammocks, and coastal marsh, bays and inlets. These habitats support many types of flora and fauna. Estuarine habitats provide escape, feeding, breeding/spawning sites for fish and shellfish species, hardwood hammocks provide important habitat for migrant and over wintering songbirds, and mangroves provide nesting areas for colonial nesting birds. The Refuge provides diverse habitat for hundreds of animal species many of which are listed as endangered or threatened.

The greatest challenges posed to the wildlife present on Sanibel Island are the consequences of human development and intense seasonal tourism activities. These activities interfere with the natural processes, disrupting and altering the balance of the natural system.

As an example, surface water quality of freshwater wetlands including the Sanibel River been adversely affected by runoff from impervious surfaces, leaking septic tanks and fertilizers inappropriately or excessively applied to landscaped yards around homes, business, and resorts.

2.1.3. Human Environment

The City and its residents have clearly defined their vision for Sanibel Island. Specifically, the Sanibel Plan's Vision Statement asserts, "Sanibel is and shall remain a small town community whose members choose to live in harmony with one another and with nature; creating a human settlement distinguished by its diversity, beauty, uniqueness, character and stewardship." To achieve this vision the City's citizens must plan environmentally sensitive development within the finite supply of available land.

The finite supply of developable land has, until recently, resulted in greater real-estate demands with ever increasing property prices. These higher property prices limit the amount of affordable housing stock available to year-round residents. The challenge to the Study Area is to develop "sustainably," focusing on strictly managed redevelopment rather than new development. This point is further reinforced by the Sanibel Plan's 2004/2005 Evaluation and Appraisal Report which adopts higher building heights and reaffirms the City's commitment to ensuring redevelopment that is compatible with the overall fabric of the community.

The primary challenge to the Study Area's human environment is to develop in concert and balance with the natural systems of Sanibel Island, while continuing to provide a wealth of amenities and for the safety of its residents (year-round and seasonal).

2.1.4. Transportation Environment

The Study Area's transportation environment is composed of a network of two-lane, rural roads providing motor-vehicle access to most parts of the Study Area. This network also includes limited access to the Refuge. Primary access to Sanibel Island is provided by the Sanibel Causeway, a toll facility from mainland Lee County. The primary modes of transportation used on this roadway network include automobiles, mopeds/scooters, trucks, and tour buses (See **Figure 1.4**).

The City has implemented the most extensive shared use path system in Florida per capita and per area.[7] This shared use path system provides residents and visitors a safe corridor for walking, bicycling, and other pedestrian activities while providing alternate options to the automobile for travel.

There are many challenges inherent to a transportation network with only one point of access (Sanibel Causeway) to the region. The demand put on entering and exiting this single "chokepoint" stresses an already limited capacity rural roadway network which is further aggravated by increased seasonal visitation and emergency evacuation needs. The City has made a strong commitment to preserve the community character of the island by not adding capacity to the roadway network, as indicated in the Sanibel Plan—

> *"This Transportation Element is founded on the City's belief that ever-increasing volumes of automobile traffic are not something like rainfall that has to be accepted."* (Sanibel Plan, 2007)

As a result, there are very few options to improve or alleviate any existing or forecasted automobile congestion. The extensive shared use path system does provide residents and visitors with an alternative to the congested roadway network. During stakeholder interviews in September 2008, participants indicated that even these shared use paths are experiencing pedestrian forms of congestion and that alternatives to the single occupant vehicles is needed.

[7] City of Sanibel Comprehensive Shared Use Path Plan, DRAFT (2007)

For more information or for the Complete Existing Conditions Document please visit:

http://www.dingdarlingtransportation.com/

DRAFT – Second Public Workshop (April 2, 2009 @ 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM) – DRAFT

A. Introduction to ATPPL Study (Presentation)

   a. Purpose & Need

      i. Description of study area (Refuge, Islands, & Islands + Punta Rassa)

   b. Goals & Objectives of the ATPPL Program

   c. Brief review of the history of project

   d. Project efforts to date & Upcoming Schedule

B. Preliminary Findings (Presentation)

   a. Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

   b. Summary of First Public Workshop

   c. Summary Seasonal Surveys

C. Preliminary Themes* (Presentation)

   a. Description & Summary

   *Emphasize that Themes are not "Alternatives"

D. Description of Break-out Session (Presentation)

E. Breakout session for Q & A following the Presentation

   a. Review & Comment on Preliminary Themes

   b. Identify Preliminary Alternatives

   c. Develop Thresholds (Using Sanibel Plan as starting point)

F. Summary of Comments Heard (Presentation)

G. Next Steps/Current Schedule (Presentation)

a. Spring 2009

i. Continued outreach of Stakeholders and Public

ii. Third Public Workshop

1. Goal: Identify Preferred Alternative(s) for Testing

b. Summer 2009

i. Continued outreach of Stakeholders and Public

ii. Alternatives Testing and Impact Analysis

c. Fall 2009

i. Continued outreach of Stakeholders and Public

ii. Alternative(s) Testing Results and Recommendations

iii. Alternative(s) Costs and Implementation Strategies

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands (ATPPL)

Lee County Transit
J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge
City of Sanibel

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Report Compiled by:
Cella Molnar & Associates, Inc.,

November 20, 2008

Table of Contents

1. *Introduction*
2. *Interview Process*
3. *Interview Outcomes (Synopsis)*
4. *Conclusion*

Appendix

1. Introduction

Lee County Transit (LeeTran) in cooperation with its partners, the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and the City of Sanibel, Florida (City), was awarded a grant through the Federal Transit Administration under the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program (ATPPL). The program is designed to assist national parks and public lands including wildlife Refuges manage their visitation while meeting the primary goal of providing sanctuary habitats for various wildlife. The goals of the ATPPL program are to:

- Conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources;
- Reduce congestion and pollution;
- Improve visitor mobility and accessibility;
- Enhance the visitor experience; and
- Ensure access to all, including persons with disabilities.

As one of the most visited Refuges in the system, the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge experiences high traffic volumes. This study is designed to explore appropriate and environmentally sensitive solutions for managing the volume of visitors and their transportation needs in order to achieve an appropriate balance between an enjoyable visitor experience and the potential resultant disturbance of wildlife.

The Public Engagement Plan engages the public in a meaningful dialogue about all elements of the study. The public will drive the development and revision of alternatives as the process moves forward. Stakeholder interviews were held to help the project team understand the distinct differences in opinions across key interest groups, as well as the commonalities. Stakeholders are groups or organizations that may have a particular insight to the habits, needs and sentiments of people who utilize transportation on Sanibel Island and/or J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. This exercise was to open the lines of communication and let the residents, environmental groups, community organizations, civic organizations and businesses know that it is a priority to include them in the study. The interviews also assisted the project team in developing surveys.

2. Interview Process

The stakeholder list was developed by the project steering committee which is comprised of representatives of the partnering agencies on the project. The list of stakeholders is attached as Appendix A. The stakeholders received a letter explaining the interview process, the questions to be asked in the interviews and information about the project. The interview package is attached as Appendix B. The interviews were

conducted September 16 through 18 and October 7 and 8, 2008. The first group of 21 stakeholders was interviewed at the Refuge Visitors' Center and the second group of 5 stakeholders was interviewed at their place of business. All interviews were conducted informally, using the questions developed for the interviews as a guideline.

This is the first of many opportunities for public involvement. We urge those identified as stakeholders, as well as the general public, to participate in the project. We are always accepting comments and questions through the project Web site at www.dingdarlingtransportation.com, public information workshops and conducting surveys in the coming months.

3. Interview Outcomes (Synopsis)

A summary of answers to the questions follows each question, with various quotes from these discussions. Some quotes are representative of the majority of stakeholders and others are unique and are deserving of attention. Some stakeholders did not answer any of the questions that were presented, but the information provided is important to document for the project. Copies of written comments that were received will be a part of the final Public Engagement Program Report.

1. **How familiar are you with this project?**

   Most stakeholders had read the information that was sent to them. Some were familiar with the project through newspaper articles and the project Web site. Others had attended City Council meetings where island transportation was a topic. The following quotes are representative of the comments received back from the interviewees:

   - "I have read the documents sent by the survey team and read information in the newspapers. I have distributed the information you sent to our members, condominium board members and owners, so they could participate in our answers to you."
   - "We have been following it since last December."
   - "I am happy to see that you are looking at this."

2. **How would you describe this project?**

   Most stakeholders believed that the purpose of this project is to reduce the number of vehicles travelling through Ding Darling and Sanibel so not to damage the habitat or the visitor experience of Sanibel. It was also stated that this was an opportunity to investigate to learn if there really were transportation issues on Sanibel and within the refuge. The following representative comments were collected:

- To explore different environmentally sensitive transportation alternatives
- "We are concerned, however, that the desire to identify and promote solutions might get ahead of problem identification. We point out that whatever problems there may be are highly seasonal, occurring during a peak period from mid January to mid April."
- It seems likely that many mass transit alternatives aimed at serving visitors could entail infrastructure investments on both the mainland and the Island. Cost justifying these investments for use three months out of the year could be a formidable hurdle.

3. **How much support and awareness of the refuge is in the community? In your group? Is it viewed as a vital element of Sanibel Island?**

   Every stakeholder agreed that the Refuge is a vital element of Sanibel. It is the "jewel in the crown" that is Sanibel. There is a "symbiotic relationship" between the island and the Refuge.

   - "Residents respect the island's natural eco-system and want to protect what is native to this island. The refuge draws people to the island because the refuge enhances, educates, and inspires visitors to care about our environment. Without the refuge, Sanibel Island would not be a world-class destination."
   - "The presence of the Refuge has set the tone for the planned development and preservation philosophy of the island and the unique Sanibel Vision."
   - Partnership between businesses, refuge & environment. Businesses wouldn't survive without the natural environment here. "Naturally...You'll love it here" is the Chamber's motto.
   - Traffic in the area is only troublesome a few times out of the year. Even for the Sunset Cruise we don't have trouble getting people here. Seems like there are fewer cars on the Causeway now.

4. **Is transportation to and from the island as well as to, from and within the refuge a significant item of concern in the community? With your group? If so, how significant?**

   Stakeholders believe that transportation off the island, during season in the afternoon is the only time there is an issue. Much of the congestion is created by service and maintenance workers, many who need their own vehicles/supplies and day trippers. With the construction of the new bridge, traffic leaving island in the afternoon during season is not as congested as it used to be. This traffic is not perceived to be a problem most of the year. However, it is important to provide for evacuation. Also, elderly residents often need to go off-island to

appointments and do not have a means of transportation. The following was said by interviewees:

- "Traffic on island is only bad about 400 hrs/yr so it is ridiculous to base all transportation on only 400 hours."
- The four-way stop is not the culprit (modeled capacity actually less than what is there because traffic cop faster than a stop light). A traffic light would not help.
- "Need traffic help really badly, on Periwinkle in peak season responses can be difficult. Traffic also backs up on Tarpon Bay Road. "
- "Transportation to the island is not something that we should consider with this project. Day trippers don't spend money here, don't understand the shelling rules and would just put more stress on the environment."
- "The City has already addressed traffic and transportation issues and, should problems arise in the future, will consider implementing solutions suggested by the group of Sanibel citizens that comprised that committee or other, newer options."
- There is no problem getting here, the problem is leaving in afternoon during season.
- The problem is not the mode on the bike path, but the speed.
- Also could use some striping on the path

Discussions regarding concern about transportation through the refuge:

Only a few stakeholders stated specifically that they believed that transportation through the refuge was a problem, except for during season. Some said that parking was the biggest issue during season. Another possibility discussed was that possibly it would be better for wildlife if private cars were no longer permitted. However, some mentioned that those who use the refuge need access to private vehicles for equipment (cameras, fishing tackle, etc.). It was stated that the condition of the pavement and the length of Wildlife Drive are inhibiting factors to walking or biking through the refuge.

- "Movement inside the refuge seems ok as it is."
- Cars on Wildlife Drive are the worst thing.

5. **How do you and your group perceive the local balance of the environment, human activity and transportation? How do you think the community perceives the local balance of the environment, human activity and transportation?**

The majority of stakeholders agree that currently there is a good balance but the increase in human activity and private vehicle usage will have a negative effect

on the island and the environment. Because of Sanibel's high percentage of conservation lands, the stakeholders believe the community feels the same way. It is agreed that the community is environmentally focused and people deliberately come to Sanibel for the environment. Any measures that are taken must be environmentally focused. The following comments were captured:

- Increasing human activity and greater dependence on automobile transportation threatens to upset the current balance that has been maintained in the past. In the future, the balance can only be maintained with environmentally sensitive alternative transportation.
- "We regard the current balance as acceptable, but precarious."
- Environment first – people are guests. Transportation should fit within that idea to protect environment
- Currently there is concern within our group due to decimation of wildlife population. Motorists follow too close and the second car hits the wildlife. Speed enforcement definitely helps with protecting the wildlife. 35 mph appears to be a good speed for everyone. Can't have speed limits too slow or else people will pass and that defeats the slower limit. Trash on roadsides creates more problems for wildlife.
- Alligators have become more defensive, possibly since they don't have as much of their own environment anymore. We must consider human activity and its role in the environment.

6. How do we protect the natural environment with the increase of human activity?

One of the most common suggestions was education. No matter how the transportation issues are addressed, they must include education about Sanibel and the natural ecosystem and how to "enjoy not destroy." The islands are nearing full build out, which should help limit the increase of people. The toll to enter the island was identified as a factor that helps to limit the number of guests to the island. Comments pertaining to protection of the natural environment include:

- It starts with education among the residents, visitors and employees on the island. Everyone must make a conscious effort to create solutions for a better and cleaner future. Also, it may benefit the community to have an organization of citizens to help guide the community in balancing human activity with nature. This organization could act as a source of information for all citizens and businesses, take a strong leadership role in organizing efforts, and continually build an environment where humanity, wildlife, and natural habitats can coexist together.
- Limit cars (vehicles that use gasoline). Use electric or human powered and make applicable to everyone

- Need more efficient ways to get around island such as transit/trolley that ties to community.
- Day trippers should not have private gasoline vehicles on island. They bring what they need and don't spend money. Need DVD presentation about how to be on a sanctuary island and not harm it
- Must co-exist with the critters here.
- Carrying Capacity for beaches needs to be kept in mind, especially with snowy plover habitat
- Many more trolleys and trams, on & off island with stops at restaurants, shopping, etc.
- Greener vehicles. Electric vehicles aren't big enough for whole family
- Increase the speed limit during the day on San-Cap Road and decrease it during the nighttime hours.
- No cars in refuge
- Would be nice to have a more pedestrian friendly center/town center.
- Improve bike paths to include library and down Dunlop.
- Workers could use trolley from off island from 7 a.m.-10 a.m. and again from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Cleaning people, maintenance & retail workers could use.

7. What should be the transportation goals of the refuge and the city?

City goals:

Stakeholders agree that the City's transportation goals should include reducing traffic congestion and encouraging alternate forms of transportation. The City should ensure that their goals do not negatively affect lifestyle and environment. If something new is introduced, it should be contextually correct for Sanibel.

Other ideas include:

- There should be a density/maximum capacity on Sanibel.
- No pollution, clean energy, no noise
- Make bike paths safer, especially on Periwinkle.
- During season having an alternate way to get around.
- Goal for transportation for refuge and City: growth in visitation, but not with cars
- Making sure that existing shared paths are in shape to safely handle the traffic that uses them.
- Providing directional signage to facilitate shared path traffic.
- Upgrade and maintain Sanibel's shared-use path system so it can serve as an effective alternative to vehicular transportation on the island.

Refuge goals:

Fewer stakeholders could comment on what they felt the Refuge should have as its goals. Those who commented believe the Refuge needs to reduce the traffic and noise that the Refuge currently experiences. However, it was suggested that residents would be unlikely to use transit (fishermen, photographers, and people who come in to sit and relax) through the Refuge. It was also suggested that there is a conflict between the refuge wanting more visitors and the city not wanting more people on the island.

Other suggestions include:

- "There should be a long term strategy to eliminate traffic in Ding Darling altogether."
- "Refuge is for animals, not a park for people."
- Take cars off of Wildlife Drive.
- Use frequent electric trams (guided) to learn.
- Needs to be quiet.

8. **Is there a need for alternatives to the way residents and visitors travel within the refuge and the city?**

City:

Stakeholders have differing perspectives on this question. Most believe that current traffic congestion on the island places a tremendous strain on the natural resources and that the City should seek alternative transportation options. Improvements to the shared use paths, such as striping and signage, are options that various stakeholders brought up.

- "Because everything is within a 10-mile radius, it makes it almost effortless to travel without leaving a carbon footprint."
- In regards to the shared use path, "We cannot legislate common sense or courtesy."
- Yes, bike paths are dangerous at night due to wildlife.

Refuge:

Stakeholders seem to agree that the more travel alternatives available to visitors through the Refuge, the better. On the whole, stakeholders stated that they didn't believe that the Refuge has many transportation issues. The main focus was often the island as a whole. The tram operating through the Refuge seems to be working well. The tram appears to be a good step to getting more private vehicles off of Wildlife Drive and it is educational. The following alternatives transportation opinions were mentioned by the interviewees:

- Many visitors to the Refuge bike to and through the refuge or use bike-surreys.
- The new Tarpon Bay Center offers a very full and affordable range of transportation modes within the Refuge - bikes, kayaks, canoes.
- Tarpon Bay explorers has trams but they aren't full & trailers aren't used. Have not added to fleet since 1989
- People are married to cars; drive through refuge often coincides with low tide.
- Within refuge, bikes are good, but some people need trolley availability.
- There have not been wildlife injuries along Wildlife Drive due to vehicles.
- Don't take the tram off of Wildlife Drive. People enjoy it.
- Segway would be good, but possible problem with surface.
- Most people are more concerned with wildlife. If you didn't allow private vehicles, allow trams, walking & biking. Could use golf carts, but would need to limit the number in there at one time.
- An alternative could be a mini-rail at intervals where people could get out and walk. Small that would fit on one side of the road. Establish time frames for vehicular access because not everyone wants a guided tour.

9. **Are you and your group open to all transportation options (alternatives) in the refuge and on the island? Do you think the community is open to all transportation options (alternatives) in the refuge and on the island?**

   It appears that stakeholders are very open to transportation options. It was mentioned that
   Island residents and guests fully embrace and many prefer transportation options other than cars. Statements that support this include:

   - "Our residents already enthusiastically bike, kayak, canoe and walk."
   - "Sanibel's shared use paths are wonderful and are continually being improved."
   - "We promote environmentally friendly options enthusiastically. Guests often rent and enjoy bike-surreys."
   - Bike paths have been the success on Sanibel.
   - Widen the bike paths.
   - A messenger service, whether on Segway or bike, might alleviate a lot of traffic from island businesses (going to the bank, etc.) We are open to all alternatives.
   - "It would be ideal to have vehicular traffic restricted to residents."
   - In Boca Grande the golf carts work great – could use small motorized vehicles if the speed limit were enforced.
   - The Segway makes it easy, effortless, and cost effective to transport oneself.

- Bicycles are also an easy, effortless, and cost effective way to transport oneself. There are many different styles to choose from according to your age and/or physical condition. There are recumbent bikes, trikes, electric bikes, and step-through bikes.
- Motor devices, such as motor scooters, get around 95 miles to the gallon. It makes it easy to save on gas, pollution, and the environment.
- Larger vehicles now interrupt community since there is no weight limit on bridge. Set hours for commercial trucks OK if enforceable
- Free bicycles throughout island. Make them so no one would want to steal them.

Off-island Alternatives:

- We would welcome public transportation for day trippers with off-island parking. However our employees would not use it because they need their cars.
- Tourists could park off-island and there could be a permit situation for residents and workers.
- Would be great to have options to bring people over – especially with the high tolls. Electric buses are cool – here it would be particularly appropriate due to the noise reduction and the emissions reductions
- Tastefully done transit. Make connectivity in the community. Out of 78 head of households only 11 do not drive. They would probably take transport.
- Ferry could provide economic boost for island. We would support offsite parking with a shuttle.
- Establish a remote parking facility and reception point on the mainland where visitors can leave their cars and use bikes or some form of low-pollution mass transit (such as trams) to visit the island.
- Would need parking for an alternative that included off-island stops
- Need to look at the average age of those who live here and amenities that are off island, there is no system to help people on or off island to services
- A tram would be wonderful to keep visitor vehicles off the island. Ferries were used until 1964. If trams are used, visitors should be able to enter and leave the trams at strategically located points along the route so they can visit Sanibel shops and restaurants before or after their visit to Ding Darling. If possible, trams should be equipped with bike racks.
- Don't want to take away ability to stop for calming experience. Islanders could get access to golf carts (with locking area for equipment) with their yearly dues. More people bicycle during season
- Workers could use to get to employment, 'Tween Waters, South Seas, etc. Workers will work as many hours as you give them, so have one early in the morning and later at night for workers. A number of staff do not have a drivers' license.

- Some people really don't want people off island to come over. I can see the point but we should have access for everyone too.

Trams:

- Must not be obtrusive.
- Internal system would be much better
- On-island only to shopping areas, west gulf resorts
- Off-line stops only for merchants
- Could help FISH and affordable housing with transportation accessibility
- Give people in hotels/condos the ability to use interconnected system.
- Need two separate loops. One for interisland and one for refuge.
- Sanibel and Captiva combined is too long
- Cannot have transit directly to refuge without stopping at retail/restaurants on island.
- Open air trolley okay. Nothing too commercialized. Anything that fits in with the island would be acceptable.
- A blend for residents and tourists. Need retail stops. A trolley system that doesn't use gas is environmentally friendly, 30-40 passenger, blends in with island.
- Does a trolley or bus really make sense when you run the numbers of people /car and the amount of impact vs. the people in a trolley and the amount of impact? Is it a neutral gain/loss?
- The trolleys we use now hold 49 passengers

On island:

- Free, frequent, go everywhere. Not really opposed to any mode. Environmentally friendly would be nice, but not mandatory.
- Condos with bookings & parking could be stops.
- Whatever it is should be interisland
- Should have smaller trolley / tram around island and larger for refuge.
- Need gravel (permeable) lots at strategic locations & stops at critical places of interest.
- You need some cars on the island because of the kayaks, photographers. How would these people use a tram?

Refuge:

- What about closing wildlife drive to traffic and just have buses with the narrative.
- Electric vehicles, hydrogen engines, try alternating days with tram days and car days.
- The current tram is too steep a price.

- People need to be able to drive through refuge.
- I think trams keep people too far away from the experience in Ding Darling.
- If you limit days where people can drive those days would be too jammed. Maybe need to think of a bigger plan e.g. ferry or rail.
- We think that trolley, bike, hike through the refuge is a good idea, but the numbers will drop and that probably isn't what the refuge wants. There would also be parking issues since cars couldn't go through drive.
- bicycles, walkers and electric tram
- Ferry to the refuge could be fun.
- A ferry would take at least 40 minutes to get from Tarpon Bay Explorers to open water due to idle zones, if there were to be enough dock space, and the dock was public, and if the channel was dredged more. Only about 3 ½ - 4 feet in low tide. About 1 hour, 10 minutes to get to mainland. Too difficult to combine ferry with trolley and other islands.

10. Is there a transportation option (alternative) that you or your group perceives to not be palatable? Is there a transportation option (alternative) that the community perceives to not be palatable? What is the greatest challenge to transportation solutions at the refuge and on the island?

Stakeholders were consistent in saying that there should not be any busses on the islands. Mass transit is not supported by the stakeholders. High cost is not acceptable. Stakeholders did not want a trolley like Fort Myers Beach where frequent in-line stops hold up traffic. Stops would have to be off-line and perhaps would be limited to specific areas and not service the entire island. The carrying capacities of the beach were discussed and with limited parking now, the City has control over numbers. One stakeholder did not like the option of scooters as transportation.

<u>Concerning off-island alternatives:</u>

- No off-island parking and bringing people on.
- Don't need to take people off island. Need too much parking and other facilities to accommodate this type of transit.
- "Any plan to bring people to the island to "play" if they don't understand or appreciate the sensitive needs of our environment would obviously be counterproductive and disastrous. It will destroy the very thing you say you're trying to protect - Sanibel and the Refuge."
- "Implementing free or cheap transportation to get people to the islands who will find it "boring" or "lacking action and fun" will kill the golden goose."
- The systems need to connect to the rest of the county or you exclude social groups. Some people are concerned about more people – we may have more people but you will have fewer cars.

- Land not available to support off-island visitors (includes parking, shelter, restaurants, restrooms) coming by mass transit.

Inter-island alternatives:

- If I were a visitor and it didn't stop on demand I would want them to and shouldn't miss businesses – I see it as part of the experience
- Don't want advertising, megaphones, double-decker, no big buses with diesel. Not sure people would want it to go by their homes, but would be important to have full island service.
- Do not increase capacity on Periwinkle Way
- NO off-island transit system. Don't want to take away ability to stop for calming experience.
- Unacceptable options include poorly scheduled, or cost a lot as the unlimited pass is available now.
- Do not shuttle people from mainland and dump them here.
- Worst idea: one that would require staff to use to get on & off island. Hard enough to retain teachers.
- No traffic lights
- No total elimination of vehicles for a long while
- One-way pairs would not work here
- There should not be big buses but maybe a trolley system or a 40 ft Lee Tran bus.
- Four-way stops are much better than traffic lights

Greatest Challenges:

- Providing enough frequency in stops to reduce wait times
- Would need more than one trolley
- Motivating people to use it
- Community buy-in
- The challenge is that time is more valuable than money
- When you have small children, you can't sit around and wait for a trolley
- Probably can't accomplish all goals with one system
- If bringing people on island, would also need adequate off-island parking

11. What would encourage people to use other modes than automobiles?

Stakeholders generally agreed that to get people to use other modes of transportation, they must be frequent, flexible and free. If other modes became inconvenient or more expensive to use personal automobiles, then more people would choose to use the alternate transportation. Also, by educating people and building awareness on the negative impacts from vehicle pollutants will encourage people to find other sources of transportation. Stakeholders generally

agreed that most permanent residents would not use alternative transportation but visitors would. Residents/long term visitors seem least likely candidates for sacrificing the convenience of the automobile for any other alternative. Other comments included:

- People need to know and understand the many different sources of alternative transportation.
- Encourage day-trip visitors to park off-island (or on one of the causeway islands) and use bicycles to reach Sanibel and Ding Darling.
- Place designated bike lanes or improved breakdown lanes along Summerlin Road and McGregor Boulevard to facilitate bicycle travel to the Sanibel Causeway.
- Refine the Causeway breakdown lanes to insure a continuous, safe passage of bicycles across all bridges and causeways. This should include the toll booth area, where cyclists are currently forced to merge with vehicles in the traffic lanes.
- Consider replacing the current breakdown lanes with designated bike lanes. This could be achieved rather easily by selecting an existing parking lot on Sanibel near the causeway and designating it as a **"trailhead"** for the island. This would require: a) clearly and formally labeling the designated lot as a "trailhead" and directing visitors to it; and b) installing an island directional map showing roads and pathways that would help guide visitors on their way. Two possible locations would seem to be candidates for serving as a trailhead: An obvious candidate is the parking lot next to the Sanibel-Captiva Visitors Center on Causeway Boulevard, which is ideally located at the entrance to the island. Another is the current "Roadside Park" facility on Periwinkle Way near Donax Street, which is adjacent to the shared-use path and close to major road intersections that lead to different parts of the island.
- Incorporate the ferry into marketing for the refuge on Sanibel.
- "Maybe you should provide an incentive for people to take special transport."
- Something that is unique, like a trolley but with hydrogen fuel, maybe an electric car with fins!
- Make more fun than a car
- Ability to put bikes on it

12. Are you involved in any statewide, county, city, etc. planning efforts that might impact this planning effort?

Many stakeholders attend City Council meetings and a few of them participate on various committees and boards that involve transportation issues. Some of these include: Lee County Pedestrian Committee, working on the City of Sanibel Shared Use Path Master Plan, Inter-local agreement for Sanibel's participation in

the Lee County Transit Authority, Chamber of Commerce Board, Lee County Tourism Development Council and other transit research on island.

13. How has energy costs influenced the need for alternative transportation options?

Stakeholders on the average believed that the rising energy costs didn't affect residents' travel interisland as much as it affected the tourists who had to come from somewhere else to the Island. We were told that some residents have made changes such as patronizing island businesses instead of going to the mainland due to gas prices, but if people needed to go somewhere, it didn't stop them. On a whole though, throughout the country, stakeholders believed that energy prices were instrumental in changing people's habits, especially in transportation. There is a desire for greener options. Comments supporting greener options include:

- "With the spike in gas prices, more people want to use conscience solutions for transportation that preserve and protect our island's alternative transportation to become more cost effective while feeling environmentally friendly."
- "Energy costs have not influenced much of the island population."
- "We would speculate that the greatest cost sensitivity will be found in short term visitors. Here the impact may be whether the out-of-area visitors come to Southwest Florida at all, rather than whether they ride the few extra miles to Sanibel."
- People are still coming into stores, but not spending as much, if any.

14. What do you think it will take for this project to be successful?

Stakeholders agree that it may be a difficult task to get people to change their habits. However, if the program is branded to be better for Sanibel and the environment, and for the good of the Refuge, people may be more open to accepting it. The suggestion of a "trial period" or "pilot program" is thought to make the project more palatable. Public outreach and education was again suggested as a major component of the project. The more ownership people have, in it the more successful it could be. It needs to be "Sanibel specific." Must show that there is a need for it. Requests included the following:

- "Maybe the Island papers could do a series on transportation alternatives used throughout country."
- "Community and City must be on board. The public education component very important."
- "Requirement is the big question."

- Needs to be separate through Ding Darling. Something that would not impact community.
- Needs to be higher class, frequent, inexpensive.
- Can't be open Air in the summer. People don't want to sweat before going to dinner.
- "Well considered and documented solutions will probably achieve wide acceptance; ill considered or bad ideas will face a chilly reception."

15. Have you been involved in any past transportation or planning efforts on Sanibel?

Stakeholders had participated in various efforts on Sanibel that involved alternative transportation. Many were involved in the Shared Use Path Plan, some worked with other organizations to share transportation for events, and some were involved in trolley services that were available on the island in the past. There was also a transportation study completed at the Refuge approximately ten years ago that some had participated in. Another stakeholder has had discussions with Lee Tran about getting transportation to/from Captiva Island.

16. As a commercial operator, are there any specific economic concerns you may have?

Stakeholders that fit the category of "commercial operator" were asked this question directly.

- Difficult to get people to work out here. During season even harder. Off-island transit may help that.
- Don't want to increase crime on the island and the environment needs to be preserved
- With the city's assistance, we have been able to provide limited alternative transportation options. We have been trying to bring more transportation options to the island and refuge, but there are limitations according to city, state, and federal laws. Our business would like to be a part of leading the community in seeking alternative transportation options.
- Don't want to lose contract with FWC. Just renewed for 5 years. Currently we are the concessionaire for the Refuge and would like to stay that way. We don't want anyone to come in and compete with us.
- Commercial center here is remote to the beach unlike Fort Myers Beach.
- Keep in mind that Captiva has a liquor license until 2 a.m. and Sanibel is until 1 a.m. BIG Arts often has events that continue until 10 p.m.

17. Do you have any questions?

Stakeholders were very interested in the timeline of the project and when and if they would have more opportunities for input. They were interested in what other types of information we would be gathering and if the project team was aware of information that has been collected in the past. Stakeholders also wondered why Lee Tran was involved.

- What is the next phase of the study?
- Are you looking at other unique places around the country?

Other Useful Information from Stakeholder Interviews

In addition, to providing responses to the questions developed for the interviews, many interviewees had additional ideas, comments and history that warrant presenting in this report.

Possible User Groups:

- Affordable housing would mean that fewer workers would have to commute to island.
- Other modes may be difficult for the elderly.
- Need to keep in mind transit of kids, after school programs and the recreation system.
- At a minimum, we need to distinguish workers, residents/long term visitors and short term visitors. They have different needs out of transit.
- On a typical peak work day, some 4000 workers use the causeway from the mainland. Within this group there is an important subdivision for contractors. These individuals, whether self-employed or employed by others, typically arrive alone and- carrying tools or supplies it seems unlikely that very many of them can be tempted away from their trucks.
- The other workers are largely employees of condominiums or retailers, with restaurants as a significant subcategory. This group of travelers has long been the focus of thinking about carpooling or mass transit, but thus far with no results.
- That leaves short term visitors, about whom we know relatively little aside from the information provided by the Kittleson Report (2002). There would also be the question of how much behavior change could be induced even if the alternative became available - how many of these people would actually use mass transit whatever form it took?
- Transportation for the students could possibly be included in these options if it would be supervised and blocked out for school children only. Need to meet safety requirements for children. Children are now prohibited from riding the trolleys while under school supervision.
- Shouldn't expect much usage of public transit by residents. If you had a tram, you would need stops within walking distance. The problem is if someone sees

something in Ding Darling and they want to stay they can't because they are with a group. Must reduce emission and be interpretive

Shared Use Paths:

- Captiva should be paved and a designated bike lane put on the road.
- The multi-uses allowed on the bike path crowd it.
- A speed limit on the bike path may keep cyclists off of it and put them on the road to alleviate the speed and congestion on path.
- Biking through the toll booth leaving the island is an area of great concern.
- Make sure there are paths in place to connect residents and visitors with the facilities they need to reach. As one example, the complex of municipal buildings along Dunlop Road (City Hall, Police Department, BIG Arts, & Library) is a major destination for many islanders but is currently not served by a shared-use path.
- This includes factors such as path width, paving condition, vegetation encroachment, visibility at intersections, safety signage, etc. As an example, the Rabbit Road path could be a major artery for moving visitors from the beach area to the Wildlife Refuge, but it is currently too narrow to carry much traffic.
- Since Sanibel's path users are often visitors who are unfamiliar with the island, path directional signage could be very helpful.

Funding Alternatives:

- Possibly a sponsorship system?

History of Transportation Options and Additional Resources:

- There had been a trolley around 1981 on Sanibel that did run to Captiva
- We had a trolley from six South Seas Resort properties to Periwinkle but we stopped after September 11th due to the economy. Currently we bring people from the island to our location on the mainland for tours or guided fishing trips so that people don't have to pay the toll.
- 10 years ago were involved in a study to see how to get people through the refuge. Should contact Lou Hinds, former refuge director to see DVD, training manual (Sanibel & Ding were a case study). Can see historical visitor patters. Info now at National Conservation Training Center.
- We asked the city for permission for a tram for a historical trolley tour but it was turned down. Was decided a trolley for historical purposes is not viable, but maybe for other purposes.
- City has denied them the possibility of a historical tour that would start from Royal Shell welcome center.
- Consult the Sanibel Report, 1975 with John Clark

- Get recent O+D surveys, especially one from Kittleson Associates. (contact John "Jack" Freeman in Orlando)
- City Traffic Committee Report, may not be as valuable
- You should speak with Jack Shelton with Lee County School District Transportation. Now using elaborate system to balance loads and track buses. Currently buses are not stored or maintained on island. Buses often get stuck in congestion getting off island.
- Docents at refuge have huge insight
- Stop by and talk with Jimmy Anholt at the Fire Station on Palm Ridge. He used to run trolley on Island.
- We are partnered with Ding Darling this year and we share school trips so instead of bringing two school buses over the school children can visit both the Refuge and the Shell Factory.

Miscellaneous comments:

- "With events, there is sort of adequate parking (on island). At the Community Center, for the shell fair, there are only about 144 parking spots. We use a police officer to get people across the street. Could use outlets for off-island parking.
- Don't landscape too close to road because then wildlife is close to road
- Anytime you can keep traffic down on island is a good thing.
- We have been approached by CROW to add in as a stop after Ding Darling and have done in the past, but people didn't like the idea of being dropped off somewhere for a certain amount of time.

4. Conclusion

The feedback provided by the stakeholders clearly demonstrates wide support for the Refuge. Most stakeholders acknowledged that traffic congestion occurs while leaving the island in the afternoon and that congestion is a problem that is further exacerbated during season. There appears to be a consensus on one element, stakeholders do not want transit buses to be introduced, but are amenable some other type of tram (trolley) that is energy efficient. Should some type of transit mode of transportation be provided, it needs to be reliable, have a cost incentive, and a high level of frequency that would encourage people to use the system.

Stakeholders believe that reducing automobile traffic in the Refuge would be beneficial to the environment and that alternative types of transportation could accommodate visitors and reduce congestion.

The stakeholders will continue their involvement with the project by attending public workshops and providing feedback as alternatives are developed.

Appendix A
Stakeholder List

	AGENCIES				
	Sanibel School	3840 Sanibel-Captiva Road	Sanibel	FL	33957
	CHR	2401 Library Way	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Sanibel Historic Village and Museum	950 Dunlop Rd.	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Captiva Fire Control District	P.O. Box 477	Captiva	FL	33924
	Sanibel Police Department	800 Dunlop Road	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Sanibel Fire & Rescue District	2351 Palm Ridge Rd.	Sanibel	FL	33957
	ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS				
	Clinic for Rehabilitation of Wildlife	3883 Sanibel Captiva Road	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation	3333 Sanibel-Captiva Rd.	Sanibel	FL	33957
	BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS				
	Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce	1159 Causeway Rd.	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum	3075 Sanibel-Captiva Road	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Sanibel Bicycle Club	P.O. Box 951	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Billy's Bikes	1509 Periwinkle Way	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Sanibel Taxi	695 Tarpon Bay Road	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Island Water Association	3651 Sanibel-Captiva Road	Sanibel	FL	33957
	CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS				
	Captiva Civic Association	11550 Chapin Lane	Captiva	FL	33934
	Sanibel Community Association	2173 Periwinkle Way	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Zonta Club of Sanibel & Captiva	P.O. Box 1244	Sanibel	FL	33957
	BIG (Barrier Island Group for the) Arts	900 Dunlop Road	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Committee of the Islands (COTI)	P.O. Box 88	Sanibel	FL	33957
	FISH (Friends in Service Here) of Sanibel	P.O. Box 854	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Condominium Association of Sanibel	P.O. Box 1041	Sanibel	FL	33957
	COMMERCIAL OPERATORS				
	RLR Investments	695 Tarpon Bay Road, Suite #2	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Adventures in Paradise	14341 Port Comfort Road	Fort Myers	FL	33908
	West Wind Inn	3345 West Gulf Drive	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Tarpon Bay Explorers	900 Tarpon Bay Road	Sanibel	FL	33957
	Stilwell Enterprises	11509 Andy Rosse Lane	Captiva	FL	33924

Appendix B
Stakeholder Interview Package

LEE COUNTY
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Bob Janes
District One

Brian Bigelow
District Two

Ray Judah
District Three

Tammy Hall
District Four

Frank Mann
District Five

Donald D. Stilwell
County Manager

David M. Owen
County Attorney

Diana M. Parker
County Hearing Examiner

August 6, 2008

Interested Stakeholders

Subject: J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Alternative Transportation in Parks & Public Lands Study

Dear Stakeholders:

You were recently contacted about participating in an interview for the referenced study and are receiving this letter and a list of questions to prepare for the interview. Public input is a very important element of this project. An overview of the project is provided below. The interview questions are attached for your consideration prior to a scheduled interview. The thoughts and ideas of your organization will be very helpful to the project team. There will be many opportunities for public input throughout the project process such as public workshops and participation in surveys. Your organization will be notified of any upcoming public events. For additional information visit the project web site at www.DingDarlingTransportation.com

Project Overview

Lee County Transit (LeeTran) in cooperation with its partners, the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge and the City of Sanibel, Florida, was awarded a grant through the Federal Transit Administration under the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program (ATPPL). The program is designed to assist national parks and public lands (including wildlife refuges) in managing their visitation, while meeting the primary goal of providing sanctuary habitats for various wildlife. The goals of the ATPPL program are to:

- Conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources
- Reduce congestion and pollution
- Improve visitor mobility and accessibility
- Enhance the visitor experience

As one of the most visited refuges in the system, the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge experiences high traffic volumes. This study is designed to explore appropriate and environmentally sensitive solutions for managing the volume of visitors and their transportation needs in order to achieve an appropriate balance between an enjoyable visitor experience and the potential resultant disturbance of wildlife.

Traffic Studies, Capacity Studies and Alternatives
An inventory of all available information will lay the foundation for the development of feasible and implementable alternatives and analysis of the environmental consequences of those alternatives. The inventory will include information such as recreation use data, vegetative inventories, wildlife management plans, species recovery plans, recent project plans, GIS data, mailing lists, and other relevant information.

The project team will collect and analyze available crash data related to refuge access on Sanibel island to assist with the development of engineering alternatives that improve access, safety, and a multi-modal transportation environment. In addition, an origin-destination survey will be conducted of traffic entering/exiting Sanibel Island via Sanibel Causeway.

Data collected during the public involvement process will be instrumental in identifying recreational opportunities and desired outcomes. The evaluation of data will provide the needed information to identify desirable, as well as undesirable, recreational opportunities that currently exist or may be desirable in the future. This information will be used to assist recreation management in the allocation of specific areas of Sanibel Island to address recreation opportunities while also providing protection for the environment.

Environmental Analysis & Resource Management
Any project in a sensitive habitat area requires recognition of the potential impacts of a project's actions on all natural resources.

To ensure that this complex natural environment is fully understood, the capacity analysis and resource studies will encompass the full context of the sensitive habitats on Sanibel Island and incorporate them into the alternatives development. Resource capacity data and analysis will focus on the limits of human interaction with:

- Threatened and endangered species protected under the Endangered Species Act (federally listed species), state listed species, and other species of special concern
- All species (avian, mammalian, reptilian, amphibian, aquatic, etc.) with special breeding and reproduction needs on the island and refuge
- Sensitive habitat
- Natural processes
- Encroachment of non-native species
- Beaches (breeding/nesting habitat, protection, condition, restoration and erosion)
- Noise and air quality thresholds

The consultant will examine existing and desired capacities for automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, and waterborne traffic, in addition to parking through public interaction and technical analysis. The identification of shared use path facilities needs and recommendations will build upon those outlined in the Comprehensive Shared Use Path Plan, such as, but not limited to:

- Identification of new paths
- Locations of path amenities,
- Mid-block crossing needs
- Safety and security
- Usage and maintenance

Thank you for your participation in the referenced study. If you have any questions, please contact the project's public involvement consultant, Kris Cella, Cella Molnar & Associates, Inc. at 239-337-1071 or by email at kcella@cella.cc.

Sincerely,

Steve Myers CEO Lee County Transit	Paul Tritaik Refuge Manager J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge	Robert J. Duffy, AICP Planning Director City of Sanibel, Florida

J.N. Ding Darling Wildlife Refuge
Alternative Transportation in Parks & Public Lands Study
Stakeholders' Questions
August 6, 2008

1. How familiar are you with this project?
2. How would you describe this project?
3. How much support and awareness of the refuge is in the community? In your group? Is it viewed as a vital element of Sanibel Island?
4. Is transportation to and from the island as well as to, from and within the refuge a significant item of concern in the community? With your group? If so, how significant?
5. How do you and your group perceive the local balance of the environment, human activity and transportation? How do you think the community perceives the local balance of the environment, human activity and transportation?
6. How do we protect the natural environment with the increase of human activity?
7. What should be the transportation goals of the refuge and the city?
8. Is there a need for alternatives to the way residents and visitors travel within the refuge and the city?
9. Are you and your group open to all transportation options (alternatives) in the refuge and on the island? Do you think the community is open to all transportation options (alternatives) in the refuge and on the island?
10. Is there a transportation option (alternative) that you or your group perceives to not be palatable? Is there a transportation option (alternative) that the community perceives to not be palatable? What is the greatest challenge to transportation solutions at the refuge and on the island?
11. What would encourage people to use other modes than automobiles?
12. Are you involved in any statewide, county, city, etc. planning efforts that might impact this planning effort?

13. How has energy costs influenced the need for alternative transportation options?

14. What do you think it will take for this project to be successful?

15. Have you been involved in any past transportation or planning efforts on Sanibel?

16. Do you have any questions?

Lee County Transit (LeeTran)
6035 Landing View Road
Fort Myers, FL 33907

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Kris Cella, Cella Molnar & Associates, Inc.
239-337-1071 FAX: 239-337-1076
kcella@cella.cc

Local Agencies Partner on $750,000 Alternative Transportation Study for J.N. "Ding" Darling, National Wildlife Refuge

Visit the project web site to learn more and GET INVOLVED!

Fort Myers, FL, July 24, 2008 – Lee County Transit (LeeTran) in cooperation with its partners, the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge and the City of Sanibel, Florida, was awarded a $750,000 grant through the Federal Transit Administration under the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program (ATPPL). The program is designed to assist national parks and public lands (including wildlife refuges) in managing their visitation, while meeting the primary goal of providing sanctuary habitats for various wildlife. The goals of the ATPPL program are to:

- Conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources
- Reduce congestion and pollution
- Improve visitor mobility and accessibility
- Enhance the visitor experience

The J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most visited refuges in the country. With over 800,000 visitors annually, the refuge experiences high traffic volumes. This 22-month-long study is designed to explore appropriate and environmentally sensitive solutions for managing the volume of visitors and their transportation needs. In the coming months, the project team will be conducting interviews and surveys on Sanibel with stakeholders, residents, businesses, workers and visitors to obtain public insight and thoughts about transportation strategies.

For more information about Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands as it relates to J.N. "Ding" Darling, visit the new project website at www.dingdarlingtransportation.com. This web site will be updated throughout the study and will have links to public questionnaires, upcoming project events throughout the City of Sanibel, as well as post project results and efforts completed to date. We encourage everyone to check it out!

For more information contact Kris Cella, Cella Molnar & Associates, Inc., 1631 Hendry Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901, call 239-337-1071, 1-877-496-1076 (toll-free) or email kcella@cella.cc

-30-