STAFF REPORT  
COLLIER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  

FROM: GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT, ZONING DIVISION, COMMUNITY PLANNING SECTION  
HEARING DATE: July 19, 2018  
RE: PETITION PL20180000261, STAFF-PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE GOLDEN GATE AREA MASTER PLAN OF THE COLLIER COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN [TRANSMITTAL HEARING]  

INTRODUCTION  
The proposed Growth Management Plan (GMP) revisions found in Attachment A to this report (and Resolution, Exhibit A) are derived from the Golden Gate Area Master Plan (GGAMP) Restudy White Paper dated December 2017. These are presented to the Collier County Planning Commission (CCPC), in its capacity as the County’s Land Planning Agency and as convened as the County’s Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) for consideration of GMP amendments at Transmittal stage public hearings. Staff requests the CCPC and EAC forward these amendments to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) with a recommendation to Transmit to the FL Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).  

BACKGROUND  
On February 10, 2015 the Board directed staff to initiate GMP “restudies” of four GMP master plans in eastern Collier County: Rural Fringe Mixed Use District (RFMUD), Golden Gate Area Master Plan (GGAMP), Rural Lands Stewardship Area (RLSA), and Immokalee Area Master Plan (IAMP). The GGAMP restudy was undertaken beginning in April 2016. As with all restudies, through a public outreach effort, staff focused on complementary land uses, economic vitality, mobility and environmental sustainability.  

The Board appointed an ad hoc advisory committee, the Growth Management Oversight Committee (GMOC), which first convened in December 2015. The GMOC has directed the public engagement process of the restudies since inception. The GMOC reviews the restudy recommendations from a high level, non-granular perspective, emphasizing consistency among the restudies, sustainability and economic vitality. Unlike prior area restudies, however, the Board directed that staff, rather than appointed committees, provide recommendations to the Board covering each of the four areas.  

The White Paper, Attachment B, provides the data and analysis underlying the revisions to Goals, Objectives, Policies and Land Use Designation Descriptions within the GGAMP (Attachment A). The substantive discussion of the recommendations appears in Attachment B, Section 3. Meeting
summarizes and survey results provide the foundation for recommendations (Attachment B, Appendix A).

At its meeting on December 7, 2017, the GMOC found the White Paper and its recommendations consistent with public participation direction, supportive of sustainability and economic vitality and, so far as known, consistent with other restudy planning efforts. The White Paper was presented to the Board on January 23, 2018. At that time, the Board directed staff to initiate the GMP Amendment process for the proposed changes to the GGAMP.

The Golden Gate area is bordered on the west by the greater urban area of Collier County, on the north and south by the RFMUD and on the east by the RLSA. It includes three diverse geographic areas: the eastern or rural Estates (east of CR 951), the western or urban Estates (west of CR 951), and Golden Gate City, an unincorporated urban area. Outreach generally reflected these geographic areas. The outcomes of public participation and resulting recommendations resulted in re-organization of the Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) with the intent to better define GOPs associated with the Estates and GOPs associated with Golden Gate City. The reorganization is further explained in the following section.

The history and current conditions of the Golden Gate area are described in Section 2 of the White Paper. Residents and stakeholders have remained vigilant in protecting Golden Gate throughout its history. The County adopted its first Growth Management Plan in 1989, which included a recommendation to create a separate element in the GMP, based on the recognition of Golden Gate’s unique character. Importantly, the GGAMP was carefully reviewed and modified in 2004 under a Restudy Committee. There are no major departures in this restudy from the desires, visions and policies at that time. One might over-simplify the present recommended changes to the GGAMP as incremental changes favoring:

- (a) Economic development and redevelopment in Golden Gate City, and
- (b) Safety and environment in the Golden Gate Estates.

Comprehensive Plan changes alone rarely make these things happen. Rather, they foster the vision, communication and resources to allow the continued improvement of place-making, through future ordinances, budget expenditures and land use petition decisions. In some policies, interim measures such as feasibility studies and reports are called for. Additional comments on Golden Gate City and Golden Gate Estates follows:

- (a) Golden Gate City contains several commercial areas that are centrally located to the population. The available acreage for commercial development is sufficient to support the residents of Golden Gate City and the surrounding area; therefore, there is not a need to designate additional areas. Instead, focus and attention are needed within the current commercial areas. For the community vision of a vibrant, walkable community to be realized, redevelopment and renewal in specific areas is needed. The proposed areas to emphasize redevelopment efforts are the Mixed Use Activity Center Subdistrict and the Downtown Center Commercial Subdistrict along Golden Gate Parkway.

The key proposed amendments to support the vision include measures to increase job opportunities by adding several specific land uses to the Mixed Use Activity Center.
Staff Proposed Golden Gate Area Master Plan Amendments

designation. These uses support target industries such as, advanced manufacturing, call centers, software development, and data and information processing. By adding these uses, it is the intent to encourage economic development with a larger work force to support surrounding retail and entertainment. A zoning overlay may be considered to implement these uses within the Mixed Use Activity Center, along with development standards that provide greater support to a pedestrian environment.

Redevelopment tools for Golden Gate City have already been initiated. The Collier County Water-Sewer District’s assumption of services in Golden Gate City significantly improves expansion and reliability to commercial property owners and residents, eliminating constraints caused by limited service. In May, Golden Gate City received a federal Opportunity Zone designation. This is a significant redevelopment tool that offers tax incentives for private development. Property owners have expressed great enthusiasm for this designation. Additionally, a local Economic Development Ordinance is being drafted for the Board’s consideration. This ordinance will create tax increment financing (TIF) to provide a funding source for infrastructure and other incentives in the proposed redevelopment area.

(b) In many ways, residents of the Rural and Urban Residential Estates Subdistrict were satisfied with the status quo. They favor a low density, rural character with limited commercial and conditional uses, along with architectural and lighting standards supporting their unique identity. Citizens voiced most support in creating or bolstering safety and environmental considerations.

Reflecting the historic development pattern in the estates, lengthy streets and avenues typically end at canal locations. This factor raises safety concerns, both for emergency providers and for emergency evacuation. As documented in the previous study of the GGAMP, there is a strong desire for increased funding for and prioritization of bridge connections to foster mobility for safety reasons. Likewise, funding and coordination for wildfire prevention remains a high priority.

Citizens also feel a close connection to environmental issues, and display growing awareness of the difficult balance between flood protection and wetland conservation. New policies reflect this awareness by calling for feasibility studies related to dispersed water management and lot combination incentives, as additional conservation measures to those identified in the Collier County Watershed Management Plan.

REORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION FOR TRANSMITTAL
The existing Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) in the GGAMP are currently organized around Seven (7) Goal statements. Goal 4 deals exclusively with Golden Gate City. Goal 1 ties the GOPs to the Land Use Designation Description Section and to the larger concepts within the GMP. Goals 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 deal primarily with Golden Gate Estates, although there are Policies within these Goals and Objectives that apply to Golden Gate City as well.

To provide more clarity, the following organizational recommendations are incorporated into Attachment A and Exhibit A to the Resolution: Goal 1 continues to provide an organizational
framework, connecting the Plan concepts to Land Use Designation Descriptions, concurrency, aesthetics and natural resources. Golden Gate City Objectives and Policies now reside solely under Goal 2. Goals 3 through 7 now apply solely to Golden Gate Estates. Within Goals 3-7, some Objectives and Policies were reorganized.

The existing and recommended Goals are summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal #</th>
<th>Existing Goal</th>
<th>Recommended Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Relationship to Land Use Designation Description (LUDD) and global concepts</td>
<td>Same as Existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>South Blocks (GGE south of I-75)</td>
<td>Golden Gate City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Commercial Needs</td>
<td>Golden Gate Estates - South Blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Golden Gate City</td>
<td>Golden Gate Estates - Commercial Needs and NCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rural Character and Neighborhood Centers (NCs)</td>
<td>Golden Gate Estates - Rural Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Roadway Network</td>
<td>Golden Gate Estates - Roadway Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Emergency Services</td>
<td>Golden Gate Estates - Emergency Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the re-order of Goals, the following Objective and Policy re-ordering was also incorporated without substantive change:

- Recommended Policy 5.2.4, lighting standards, derives from current Objective 5.1.1.
- Recommended Objective 7.1, transportation planning coordination with Emergency Services, derives from current Objective 6.3.
- Recommended Objective 6.3, lime rock roads, was moved from current Policy 1.2.2.

While the proposed GOPs now separate Golden Gate City from Golden Gate Estates, the Land Use Designation Descriptions continue to do so. That is, by their nature these discrete designations are geographically oriented, and remain divided between Urban Designation (Golden Gate City), Estates Designation, and the Rural Settlement Area.

Exhibit A to the Resolution contains the proposed changes in a format required for transmittal and adoption, striking the entire GGAMP and replacing (underlined) with new text. To facilitate review of the substantive changes to the GGAMP, Attachment A to this memo is also provided: Material that is updated to reflect the recommendations derived from the White Paper appears as strikethrough/underlined in red font. It is hoped that this format will allow greater ease in public and CCPC review.
Finally, for purposes of tracking the White Paper recommendations (in list form), the “List of Initial Recommendations” is repeated as Attachment C (labeled simply List of Recommendations) with cross-references to the locations of the language within proposed GGAMP.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER GMP ELEMENTS:
An evaluation of the recommended changes resulted in a need to amend other GMP elements for consistency and clear communication to the reader. Accordingly, there are several recommended amendments that are also packaged under Exhibit A, “Other GMP Amendments”. These Objectives, Policies or Land Use Designation Descriptions mirror the GGAMP recommended text. Each will require a separate Ordinance at adoption because they are separate elements within the GMP:

(a) Conservation and Coastal Management Element (CCME). Single-family preserve standards, appearing in GGAMP Policy 1.3.2; also at CCME Policy 6.1.1.
(b) Future Land Use Element (FLUE). Uses within Activity Center #15, appearing in GGAMP, Land Use Designation Description 1.B.1; also in FLUE Designation Description Section, Urban, C.1.2.
(c) Public Facilities Element, Solid Waste Disposal Sub-element (SWD): Septage disposal system improvements, appearing in GGAMP Policy 5.3.8; also in SWD Policy 2.15.
(d) Public Facilities Element, Stormwater Sub-element: Dispersed water management study, education and canal level of service in Policies 5.3.5, 5.3.6 and 5.3.7; also in Stormwater Sub-element Policies 5.4, 5.3 and 2.3.
(e) Transportation Element. Everglades Blvd. maximum number of lanes, appearing in GGAMP Policy 6.1.3; also in Transportation Element Policy 10.3.

RECONCILIATION WITH WHITE PAPER RECOMMENDATIONS:
A list of recommendations made in the White Paper with references to proposed GGAMP changes is included as Attachment C. Some recommendations are directives, some are aspirational, and others direct the County to initiate studies within 2 years of adoption. A few were not carried over into the text or were further clarified for a variety of reasons. A list of those White Paper recommendations altered or excluded follows:

1. “Rightsizing” Neighborhood Centers (White Paper, pages 33-35). The community valued an avenue to add acreage to existing Neighborhood Centers to provide better function and economic viability, particularly where future road development, septic treatment or stormwater capture creates space constraints. The Golden Gate Estates Area Civic Association (GGEACA) had recommended a maximum of 80 acres within 4 quadrants, equating to 20 acres per quadrant. After further staff analysis, the maximum acreage was removed from the Master Plan language, in favor of criteria for consideration. Further, the reach of this amendment is confined to 2 quadrants at the intersection of Wilson and Golden Gate Boulevards, since those have established development footprints. The concern is that public might assume that 20 acres is a recommendation or safe harbor for a zoning application.

2. Immokalee Rd./Oaks Estates Interface (White Paper, page 35). Along this 16-parcel corridor, only five parcels are currently limited to residential use. The community had expressed general agreement with allowing C-1 uses as a future land use for these parcels. After additional staff analysis, it was determined that urban Estates residents were not polled regarding Conditional Uses at these locations, and there may have been insufficient attendance from residents in the immediate vicinity. Although applicants would
still need public hearings to secure Conditional or C-1 uses, staff believes that GMP amendments should also be required, to assure market need and community support for linear CU and C-1 uses.

3. **Transitional Conditional Use Acreage** (White Paper, page 40). Similar to the site constraints at Neighborhood Centers, there were concerns expressed regarding buffers, roadway needs, septic drainfields, stormwater and ingress/egress. The White Paper recommended a maximum request, based on these factors, of 10 acres (from the current 5-acre maximum), but not as a guarantee. Staff reflects on the fact that previous restudies emphasized limited sized, rural establishments not exceeding 5-acres. Note, however, that a 75’ buffer adjacent to Estates Residential uses was added as a recommendation.

4. **Conservation Collier Acquisitions** (White Paper, page 66) Recommendations were made by the GGEACA to prioritize hydrological benefit as a review criterion on any Conservation Collier purchase within Golden Gate Estates. Staff defers this policy consideration to a more thorough review of the Conservation Collier mission and ordinance.

5. **Adjacent Future Land Use Districts** (White Paper, pages 41-42). One of the Board directives in studying the four area Subdistricts was coordination among them, including complementary land uses in adjoining areas. The public embraced the idea of special consideration in the LDC to create appropriate buffers between the Rural Fringe Mixed Use District (RFMUD), the Rural Lands Stewardship Area (RLSA) and Golden Gate Estates. Staff will bring that concept forward, but believes the appropriate place for the LDC directive is within the RFMUD and RLSA provisions in the Future Land Use Element (FLUE).

6. **Lime Rock Roads** (White Paper, pages 49-50). Staff had recommended that the County provide a study on the acceleration of paving lime rock roads. The Master Plan language shifts away from a study to simply an annual budget determination, based on cost/benefit analysis. This is consistent with the Board’s recent efforts to increase budgeting based on these factors.

**LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:**
The Board should consider the following criteria in making its decision: “plan amendments shall be based on relevant and appropriate data and an analysis by the local government that may include but not be limited to, surveys, studies, community goals and vision, and other data available at the time of adoption of the plan amendment. To be based on data means to react to it in an appropriate way and to the extent necessary indicated by the data available on that particular subject at the time of adoption of the plan or plan amendment at issue.” 163.3177(1)(f), FS  The County Attorney’s office reviewed the staff report on June 22, 2018.  [HFAC]

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**
That the Collier County Planning Commission, acting as the Land Planning Agency and the Environmental Advisory Council, forward the proposed GGAMP restudy amendments to the Board of County Commissioners with a recommendation to Transmit to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

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PETITION NO. PL20180000261
Staff Report for the July 19, 2018, CCPC Meeting.