

CPA2023-00004

**Building Height and
Resiliency**

SUMMARY SHEET
CPA2023-00004 – BUILDING HEIGHT AND RESILIENCY
TRANSMITTAL HEARING

BOARD DIRECTION:

The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) directed staff to identify regulatory constraints when seeking redevelopment to accommodate increased resiliency to future natural disasters at the January 17, 2023, regular Board meeting. Based on this direction, staff analyzed the entire Lee Plan to identify restrictions that may create problems with rebuilding and found two provisions that met the criteria.

SUMMARY:

The proposed amendments are to Amend Goal 23 and Policy 23.2.3 to remove language that prevents redevelopment of existing structures to base flood elevation while maintaining previous usable space.

LPA PUBLIC HEARING:

Staff provided a brief presentation addressing Board of County Commissioners’ direction, reasons for and impacts of the amendments, consistency with the Lee Plan, and staff recommendation.

The LPA discussed the proposed amendments and various merits of the case, including the community meeting requirements for county-initiated amendments.

LPA PUBLIC INPUT:

There was no public comment concerning the proposed amendments at the LPA Hearing.

LPA MOTIONS: A motion was made to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners ***transmit*** CPA2023-00004. The motion passed 4 to 0.

RAYMOND BLACKSMITH	AYE
KEITH DEAN	AYE
DUSTIN GARDNER	ABSENT
DAWN RUSSELL	ABSENT
DON SCHROTENBOER	AYE
STAN STOUDE	AYE
HENRY ZUBA	ABSENT

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the BoCC **transmit** the proposed amendment as provided in Attachment 1.

STAFF REPORT FOR CPA2023-00004: BUILDING HEIGHT AND RESILIENCY



County Initiated Text Amendments to the Lee Plan

Amendment Type:

County Initiated
Direction: 01/17/2023

Recommendation:

Transmit

Amended Element(s):

Future Land Use

Hearing Dates:

LPA: 05/22/23
BoCC #1: 06/21/23
BoCC #2: TBD

Attachment(s):

1: Text Amendments

REQUEST

Amend Lee Plan Goal 23 and Policy 23.2.3 to remove requirements that restrict the ability to redevelop or rebuild structures in a way that reduces potential flooding threats by accommodating required minimum flood elevations.

SUMMARY

Staff reviewed the Lee Plan and identified two provisions, Goal 23 and Policy 23.2.3, which do not accommodate increased height due to increases of minimum flood elevations over time. The intent of the amendments is to accommodate increased resiliency to flooding, while minimizing changes to height that would be inconsistent with the character of the surrounding community.

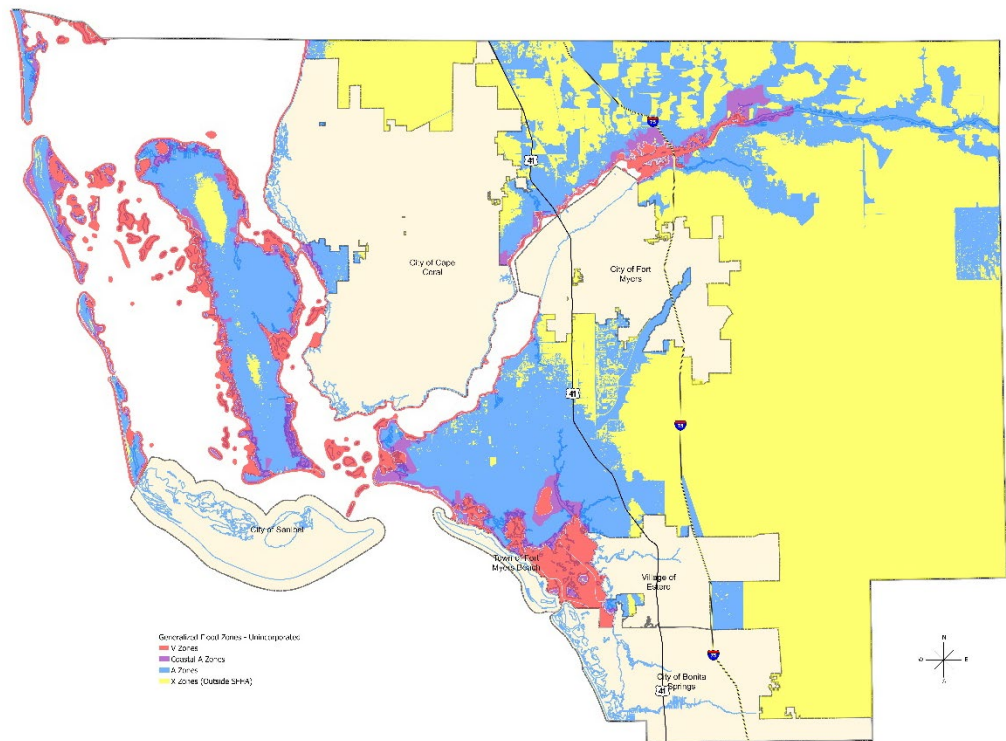


Figure 1: Generalized Flood Zones - Unincorporated Lee County

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners **transmit** the requested amendments based on the analysis and findings provided in this staff report.

PART 1
STAFF DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND

In the wake of Hurricane Ian, residents and business of Lee County have encountered conflicting federal, state, and county regulations during the process of rebuilding or redeveloping lawfully existing structures. In Lee County one of the most frequently identified concerns is meeting current minimum flood elevation requirements while also meeting local height requirements.

Adding to this concern, on November 17, 2022, the Federal Emergency Management Agency released updated flood maps which generally increased required base flood elevations from the previously effective flood maps.

On January 17, 2023, the Board of County Commissioners directed staff to identify regulatory constraints when seeking redevelopment to accommodate increased resiliency to flood events. Based on this direction staff analyzed the entire Lee Plan to identify restrictions that may create problems with rebuilding in accordance with state and federal building regulations. Staff identified one goal and one policy within the Lee Plan that limit maximum height without allowing for increases to state and federal minimum flood elevations. Both of these provisions relate to height within the Captiva Community Plan Area.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

The Captiva Community Plan was adopted into the Lee Plan by Ordinance 03-01, the adopting ordinance of CPA2001-00010: Pertaining to the Captiva Island Community Plan, on January 9, 2003. The staff report of CPA2001-00010 states that “The Community expressed a desire to implement a stronger community approach to land use and zoning issues to proactively address community character, density, natural resources, public participation and transportation.”

Goal 23 intends to “protect the coastal barrier island community’s natural resources such as beaches, waterways, wildlife, vegetation, water quality, dark skies and history.” The goal of the Captiva Community Plan is accomplished through various environmental protections and limits on development. The full Goal 23, including proposed amendments, is identified below:

GOAL 23: CAPTIVA COMMUNITY PLAN. The goal of the Captiva Community Plan is to protect the coastal barrier island community’s natural resources such as beaches, waterways, wildlife, vegetation, water quality, dark skies and history. This goal will be achieved through environmental protections and land use regulations that preserve shoreline and natural habitats, enhance water quality, encourage the use of native vegetation, maintain the mangrove fringe, limit noise, light, water, and air pollution, create mixed use development of traditionally commercial properties, and enforce development standards that maintain ~~one and two story building heights and~~ the historic low-density residential development pattern of Captiva.

The generality with which the current Goal 23 is written, concerning building heights, is vague but still limiting. The wording is ambiguous because it does not define a starting point for the “one and two story building heights,” nor does it clarify if areas within a structure but below the base flood elevation, which may include storage or parking, would be considered one of the allowable two stories. Without a clear

definition of “one and two story building heights”, land owners seeking to make their properties more resilient are left with limited ability to rebuild their properties while retaining the same amount of useable living space within the structure. Community character will continue to be enforced through specific height limitations within the Land Development Code.

Policy 23.2.3 as currently written, ties land owners to past regulations on building height and restricts property owners’ ability to adapt to dynamic regulations and coastal environments. While this policy does aid in protecting the character of the island, it also prevents residents and business owners who had structures damaged by Hurricane Ian from rebuilding within federal and state flood regulations while maintaining previously approved usable living space. The full Policy 23.2.3, including proposed amendments, is as follows:

POLICY 23.2.3: Building Heights. Maintain building height regulations established as of March 23, 2018 that account for barrier island conditions, such as mandatory flood elevation and mean-high sea level, for measuring height of buildings and structures

The original Captiva Plan provided guidance for heights allowed in the Community Plan Area with the purpose of limiting density on the island that provided a maximum height of 35 feet above grade or 42 feet above sea level, whichever was lower. This guidance was later updated by Ordinance 11-19 (CPA2010-00015), which added an option to have a maximum height of “28 feet above the lowest horizontal member at or below the lawful base flood elevation.” These specific heights were later removed from the Lee Plan and relocated to the Land Development Code, where they are more appropriate, through Ordinance 18-4 (CPA2015-00009). At that time the specific language was replaced by the language currently in Policy 23.2.3 which commits to maintaining LDC regulations that appropriately regulate height. Subsequently, the Captiva Plan Goal was renumbered from Goal 13 to its current Goal 23 in 2018 by Ordinance 18-18 (CPA2017-00010).

The proposed amendment to Policy 23.2.3 is to delete a specific date that does not allow for updates to state or federal requirements. Captiva’s community character and low density will continue to be maintained by **Policy 23.2.4** and **Policy 23.2.5**. Policy 23.2.4 states that development on Captiva is limited to the historic development pattern, which is “comprised of low-density residential dwelling units.” Policy 23.2.5 prohibits certain rezonings that reduce the minimum lot size per unit, aiding in the protection of the low-density character of the island. Staff finds the potential change in character resulting from the proposed amendments is minimal and is consistent with the intent of the Policy.

Policy 17.3.2 requires all privately-initiated amendments within a community plan area to conduct one or more public meetings within the boundary of the community plan area in question. Since the proposed text amendments are county-initiated, there is no requirement to hold a meeting within the boundaries of the Captiva community plan area per Policy 17.3.2.

OTHER LEE PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed amendments remove potential inconsistencies with **Policy 5.1.2** by allowing for design of residential structures to be adjusted accordingly where physical hazards such as flooding exists.

Objective 72.2 requires the county to “maintain land development regulations that reduce the vulnerability of development from the threats of natural and man-made hazards”. The proposed text

amendments are consistent with this policy by clarifying and allowing development standards that will reduce risk of damage to life and property from storm water.

The proposed amendments take into account Lee Plan **Chapter XII. Property Rights Element** by clarifying the ways in which property owners in Lee County can rebuild their property to the standards necessary to minimize future risk of property damage.

The proposed amendment does not change the number of residential dwelling units or the types of non-residential development that may be approved within the Captiva Community Plan Area. Appropriate uses within the Captiva Community Plan Area will continue to be determined by the Future Land Use Map as well as the objectives and policies within Goal 23.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABILITY ANALYSIS

The proposed amendments will not increase density in the Community Plan Area, therefore there will be no significant impacts to public facilities and services.

CONCLUSIONS

The Lee Plan, with the proposed amendments, will provide for greater resiliency by allowing structures to minimize flood hazards through design and construction. The proposed amendments will impact the Captiva Community Plan Area by providing for consistent treatment of structures that require elevation and removing ambiguous language from the community plan. These amendments will not impact the community plan's intent to retain low-density development. The amendments are internally consistent with the Captiva plan and the Lee Plan as a whole, including Policy 5.1.2, Objective 72.2, and Chapter XII.

For the reasons discussed in this staff report, staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners ***transmit*** the proposed amendment as shown in Attachment 1.

**PART 2
LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY
REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION**

DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: May 22, 2023

A. LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY REVIEW

Staff provided a brief presentation addressing Board of County Commissioners' direction, reasons for and impacts of the amendment, consistency with the Lee Plan, and staff recommendation.

The LPA discussed the proposed amendments and various merits of the case, including the community meeting requirements for county-initiated amendments.

There was no public comment concerning the proposed amendment at the LPA Hearing.

B. LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY RECOMMENDATION

A motion was made to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners ***transmit*** CPA2023-00004. The motion passed 4 to 0.

RAYMOND BLACKSMITH	AYE
KEITH DEAN	AYE
DUSTIN GARDNER	ABSENT
DAWN RUSSELL	ABSENT
DON SCHROTENBOER	AYE
STAN STOUDE	AYE
HENRY ZUBA	ABSENT

C. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the BoCC ***transmit*** the proposed amendment as provided in Attachment 1.

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS

FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT

GOAL 23: CAPTIVA COMMUNITY PLAN. The goal of the Captiva Community Plan is to protect the coastal barrier island community's natural resources such as beaches, waterways, wildlife, vegetation, water quality, dark skies and history. This goal will be achieved through environmental protections and land use regulations that preserve shoreline and natural habitats, enhance water quality, encourage the use of native vegetation, maintain the mangrove fringe, limit noise, light, water, and air pollution, create mixed use development of traditionally commercial properties, and enforce development standards that maintain ~~one and two story building heights~~ and the historic low-density residential development pattern of Captiva.

Objective 23 through Policy 23.2.2 unchanged.

POLICY 23.2.3: Building Heights. Maintain building height regulations ~~established as of March 23, 2018~~ that account for barrier island conditions, such as mandatory flood elevation and mean-high sea level, for measuring height of buildings and structures.