

Gifford Neighborhood Plan Update Kick-off Meeting
July 22, 2013 (6pm – 8pm)
Responses to Questions Asked During Meeting Discussion

**LAND USE/ZONING/DEVELOPMENT/ILLEGAL AND NONCONFORMING USES/
COMMUNICATION**

1. Is there enough land available for future residential development?

Answer: Yes, there are about 459 acres of vacant residential land within the Gifford Plan area. According to the Property Appraiser's office, there are 2,011 acres of land in the Gifford Plan area. Of that 2,011 acres, 853 acres are developed residential land, 42 acres are active agricultural land, 68 acres are developed commercial land, 179 acres are developed industrial land, 104 acres are developed institutional land, 219 acres are developed governmental land, and 546 acres are vacant. Of the 546 vacant acres, approximately 87 acres are commercial and industrial land, while the remaining is residential land. According to the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) vacant land analysis report, there is a build out potential of an additional 2,520 residential units within Gifford Plan Area.

2. Why is Gifford Dock Road not included in the planning area? Why does the planning area extend west to 66th Avenue?

Answer: The Gifford Neighborhood Plan (GNP) area was determined in 2000 by residents when the initial plan was developed. Gifford Dock park will be included in the revised plan.

3. Can the land at the river and Gifford Dock Road be made into a park? And can the vendors from Gifford set up at the park?

Answer: This is an issue that will be discussed during the process of preparing the Gifford Neighborhood Plan.

4. Can we get an update of land use today in comparison to 2002? How much development has occurred since 2002 and what is the development potential today?

Answer: Since adoption of the Gifford Neighborhood plan in 2002, 531 single-family residential building permits have been issued for Gifford. Other developments since 2002 include 11 residential subdivisions containing 620 lots on 288 acres, 13 commercial/industrial developments on 48.19 acres, 8 churches or church additions on 11.8 acres, 4 duplexes on 1 acre, 2 medical facilities on 4.69 acres, and 5 governmental facilities on 37.83.

With 87 acres of vacant commercial/ industrial land, there is potential for more commercial and industrial development in Gifford. Also, there is potential for redevelopment of some of the existing 247 acres of commercial and industrial land within Gifford.

5. Timing of West Gifford Industrial regulation changes: when is WGIC (West Gifford Industrial/Commerce District) initiative going to go forward?

Kick-off Meeting Comments (Cont'd)

Answer: WGIC will be included as one of the issues to be addressed in the revised Gifford Neighborhood Plan.

6. Can acreage used for government facilities (eg along 43rd Avenue/41st Street) be replaced with same (industrial) zoning elsewhere if plan area boundaries are increased?

Since all of the land adjacent to Gifford is already developed, there is no area where the plan boundary can be expanded to include vacant land. Consequently, the industrial zoning occupied by government buildings could not be replaced elsewhere without reducing residential zoning.

7. Will any additional residential property be rezoned or converted to industrial use resulting in less residential area?

Answer: No. There are no plans to change residential zoning in Gifford to Industrial.

INFRASTRUCTURE/TRANSPORTATION/DRAINAGE/RECREATION

1. Will the 49th Street sidewalk be extended to connect to US 1?

Answer: The County has no current plans to extend the existing sections of sidewalk (near 51st Court, Waterway Village; near the fire station) along 49th Street toward US1. As development along 49th Street increases and right-of-way and construction funds become available in the future, the sidewalk will be extended.

2. 35th Avenue south of 45th Street: bad condition, how did it rate in yearly road condition analysis? Also has drainage problems

Answer: 35th Avenue, south of 45th Street, received a better- than average surface rating in the latest annual road review

3. Why is it that Gifford improvements need a “grant”?

Answer: The county always attempts to obtain grants so that its limited funds can go further. Because the county recently received a \$25,000 grant to design streetscape improvements for 45th Street, the entire \$200,000 allocated for that project can be spent on constructing the streetscape improvements, since none of the funds will need to be used for design work.

4. Will there be street lighting along 49th Street?

Answer: Street lighting was recently installed along 49th Street at locations identified by the Gifford Progressive Civic League and the Gifford Community.

5. Can the roadways along 33rd Street and 34th Avenue be widened?

Answer: 33rd Street is not in the Gifford area. 34th Avenue is a 2- lane local street that carries residential traffic. There are no traffic safety problems that would warrant widening the roadway.

Kick-off Meeting Comments (Cont'd)

6. Can the county improve drainage to retention areas east of 28th Avenue between 42nd and 45th Streets?

Answer: The county has closed culverts, drainage ditches, swales and constructed a large storm water pond on the north side of 41st Street west of the FECRR, to improve drainage in this area. Unfortunately, many of the homes are 50+ years old and are low-lying.

7. Can street lights along 45th, 49th, and other main streets be brighter?

Answer: FPL and the City of Vero Beach Electric do not offer "brighter" luminaries, only standard- cobra- style lamps for street lighting. County staff coordinates with the Gifford Progressive Civic League, however, to provide additional street lights within the Gifford Street Light MSTU District where needed.

8. Where did the money that was allocated to Gifford go to?

Answer: Several years ago, the county allocated \$200,000 for Gifford streetscape improvements. That money is still in the budget, and its use is restricted to streetscape improvements in Gifford. Since the county recently obtained a grant to design those improvements, it is likely that those funds will be spent on a streetscape improvement project in the near future.

CODE ENFORCEMENT/SAFETY/CRIME PREVENTION/LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. There is a negative image of African-American males regarding crime and driving violations. How does Gifford compare to the rest of the county?

Answer: In terms of crime, Gifford, with 6% of the unincorporated county population, had 1.8% of all incidents reported in the unincorporated county in 2012. As for traffic citations, Gifford, with 6% of the unincorporated county population, had 10% of the citations issued in the unincorporated county for calendar year 2013 through the last part of August. Of the citations issued in Gifford, most were given for seat belt violations, operating with a suspended license, and unlawful speed.

2. Sherriff Loar meets with Gifford residents on a monthly basis. Can Code Enforcement also attend these meetings?

Answer: Code enforcement staff will periodically attend COPE meetings.

3. Are there any laws that punish property owners who allow criminal activity to occur within their property?

Answer: Yes, there are such laws. According to Florida Statutes, a continuing pattern and course of criminal conduct at a property constitutes a nuisance. While general nuisances are misdemeanors, others involving drugs and controlled substances are felonies. Since any person who willfully keeps or maintains a nuisance or willfully aids or abets another in keeping or maintaining a nuisance commits a felony, a property owner who is aware of criminal activity on his property could be guilty of a felony and punished accordingly.

Kick-off Meeting Comments (Cont'd)

HOUSING/PROPERTY MAINTENANCE/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ EMPLOYMENT/ EDUCATION/VOCATIONAL TRAINING

1. Where is SHIP money being spent? How can someone participate in SHIP?

Answer: SHIP funds are utilized throughout Indian River County. Since the SHIP program started, more than 24% of all SHIP funds, about \$3.2 million, have been spent in the Gifford area. For someone to participate in the SHIP program, he must obtain a copy of the SHIP application form from the Indian River County Community Development Department located at 1801 27th Street, Vero Beach, FL 32960 or online at www.irccd.com/planning_division/ship/index.htm. A completed application and supporting documents must be submitted to the Community Development Department.

2. Can there be a local housing trust fund?

Answer: The county has a local housing trust fund. SHIP funds are deposited in the Local Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

3. What training and enrichment programs are provided by the county, school district, and the alternative school for the children?

Answer: Vero Beach High School and Sebastian River High School offer 14 career programs that lead to industry certification. The Alternative Center for Education offers a culinary arts program that also leads to industry certification. The alternative programs that were offered in the past, such as the Piper Program, cannot be replaced due to the requirements from DOE, i.e. end-of-course exams and teacher certification. Over the years that the Piper Program was in existence, 26 graduates of that program were hired by Piper. In the Adult and Community Education program, 10 career programs are offered that lead to industry certification.

In addition to the career programs, a Gifted Program is offered from elementary through high school, with the following programs being offered at the secondary schools: Advanced Courses, Honors Courses, Advanced Placement Program (AP), and International Baccalaureate Program (IB).

4. What is the high school drop out rate for Gifford residents? How many Gifford residents are in vocational programs? How many Gifford high school students are prepared for higher level education?

Answer: Students are not tracked by community, but the statistics below give information on dropout and graduation rates by race/ethnicity for the 2011-12 school year for the School District of Indian River County and the State:

Kick-off Meeting Comments (Cont'd)

Table 11: 9th - 12th Grade Single-Year Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2011-12*

District	White	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Two or More Races	Native Hawaiian Or Other Pacific Islander	Total
Indian River	0.2%	1.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	#	0.4%
Florida	1.4%	3.1%	1.9%	0.6%	2.4%	1.3%	2.2%	1.9%

*Source: 2011-12 Florida Department of Education (FL DOE) dropout data as of 10/16/12. A pound sign (#) replaces data when the cohort is fewer than ten students.

Table 9: Federal Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2011-12*

District	White	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Two or More Races	Native Hawaiian Or Other Pacific Islander	Total
Indian River	83.7%	65.9%	77.3%	100.0%	#	95.8%	NA	80.9%
Florida	79.4%	63.7%	72.9%	88.4%	69.7%	78.6%	62.5%	74.5%

*Source: 2011-12 Florida Department of Education (FL DOE) cohort graduation data as of 10/16/12. A pound sign (#) replaces data when the cohort is fewer than ten students.

OTHER

- How will plan address issues identified? What are next steps? Need answers to develop a plan; need bench marks and implementation accountability

The July 22nd initial kickoff meeting was the first step in obtaining community input to identify issues. That process of identifying issues will continue throughout the Gifford Neighborhood Plan preparation process.

As the plan preparation process continues, the next step will involve county staff compiling and analyzing input received at the kickoff meeting. That information will be incorporated into written material that will be distributed to kickoff meeting attendees and posted on the county's website.

Several additional community meetings will be held in the near future. The format of these meetings will probably involve small group breakout sessions. With that format, the community can provide better input on issues, expectations, needed improvements, and future actions.

Based on community input obtained from future meetings, county staff will draft the Gifford Neighborhood plan. That document will include benchmarks and implementation responsibilities. Once that plan is reviewed at a community meeting, revised as necessary, and endorsed by the community, the plan will be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

Kick-off Meeting Comments (Cont'd)

2. Funds for Gifford; need easy availability of accounting information: where are funds spent? Compare to Wabasso

County Budget staff periodically provides a report to various Gifford community leaders regarding capital and operating expenses in the Gifford area. That report, which considers only expenses and projects that can be definitively tied to the Gifford community (e.g. ball field improvements at Gifford Park, support of the Gifford Progressive Civic League operations, etc.), shows that from fiscal year 2003/04 through 2012/13 almost \$24 million was spent in Gifford. The report does not consider all of the resources expended on Gifford residents, as it is difficult to assign most County expenditures to a particular area.

County staff fields questions similar to this from various taxpayers individually or as groups. Taxpayers frequently want to know if they are receiving adequate services for the taxes that they pay to government. This is a very difficult question to answer quantitatively due largely to the nature of most government services. Unlike most other services, government services are provided to the general public rather than a specific individual. For example, the Recreation Department provides programs and operates facilities throughout the County. The Gifford Aquatic Center (GAC) is located in the Gifford neighborhood; however, residents throughout the County use this facility. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to specify operating costs at the GAC as funds expended for Gifford. Conversely, facilities located in other parts of the County are available to all residents as well. That same concept applies to most services governments provide (law enforcement, road maintenance, libraries, etc.).

The County's single largest expenditure is for the Sheriff's Department, which provides law enforcement principally in the unincorporated areas, as well as corrections and court services for the entire County. Because those services provide a benefit to all citizens (and visitors) throughout the service area, it is difficult to assign the correct portion of the Sheriff's budget to a certain neighborhood. If Sheriff's expenses were allocated to Gifford based upon population, those expenses would equal about \$3.4 million. The total property taxes paid within Gifford to the General Fund and M.S.T.U. this fiscal year was about \$410,000.

For the reasons detailed above, staff does not track expenses for Wabasso or other neighborhoods or municipalities.

3. Can Gifford become a Township? If yes, what's the tax base for Gifford and estimated receipts for the year?

No. Gifford could not become an incorporated municipality. According to state law, a new municipality may not be created within two miles of an existing municipality. Because Gifford abuts the city of Vero Beach, it does not meet the two mile standard and may not be incorporated as a new city or town.

Kick-off Meeting Comments (Cont'd)

The taxable value of Gifford is \$98,435,812 for the current fiscal year. For the current fiscal year, that area paid approximately \$520,000 in property taxes to the General Fund, M.S.T.U., and Emergency Services District.

4. What is the budget or dollar amount for Gifford community?

For Fiscal Year 2012/13, the capital and operating budget expenses for Gifford were \$690,858. For the past 10 Fiscal years, the average capital and operating expenditure for Gifford area was \$2.35 million per year. As stated above in question 2, most county expenditures are not easily allocated to any one area.

5. Which county commissioners are designated for the Gifford area and what is their contact information?

Answer: Commissioner Joseph Flescher (772-226-1493, jflescher@ircgov.com)

6. With Habitat for Humanity homes, who owns the land and who owns the homes? Need program details?

Answer: Habitat for Humanity is like a bank. As such, Habitat lends money to buyers of Habitat houses and holds a first mortgage on each property sold. Homeowners own both the land and the home. If a homeowner wants to sell his property, Habitat has the first right of refusal to purchase the property back from the owner.