

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

**THROUGH:** Stan Boling, AICP  
Community Development Director

**FROM:** Sasan Rohani, AICP  
Chief, Long-Range Planning

**DATE:** November 21, 2016

**RE:** Consideration of the Gifford Neighborhood Plan Annual Report Card for 2016

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It is requested that the following information be given formal consideration by the Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting of December 13, 2016.

**DESCRIPTION AND CONDITIONS**

From May 2013 through July 2014, the county performed an update of the 2002 Gifford Neighborhood Plan. The updated plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on July 15, 2014. That plan was the culmination of a grass roots effort by the Progressive Civic League of Gifford, Gifford residents, and Indian River County to improve the quality of life and economic conditions for Gifford residents. Through considerable interaction with residents of Gifford at community meetings, county staff prepared the neighborhood plan which presents a strategy and a series of actions to address issues, concerns, and opportunities identified by Gifford residents. Approval of the plan committed the Board (as well as other responsible parties) to undertake specific actions identified in the “action plan” section of the overall neighborhood plan.

Action 1.5 of the plan states the following:

“Each year, through 2020, the County Planning Division will provide a Gifford Neighborhood Plan 2014 action plan/implementation plan “report card” to the Progressive Civic League of Gifford and will present the report card to the Board of County Commissioners at a Board of County Commissioners meeting”.

This report and the attached implementation matrix “report card” constitute the third annual report card for the Gifford Neighborhood Plan 2014, and has been provided to the Progressive Civic League of Gifford. The Board is now to review the attached Gifford Neighborhood Plan annual report card for 2016.

**ANALYSIS**

The Gifford Neighborhood Plan 2014 is a 108 page plan that contains an introduction and

description of the planning process, data (existing conditions), analysis, action plan, implementation and funding sections, and appendices containing reference information including a history of Gifford. Following its July 15, 2014 approval, the plan has been implemented as specified in the plan's action plan and implementation sections.

- **Action Plan**

The action plan section (strategies, objectives, and actions) is “the heart” of the neighborhood plan (attachment # 2). As structured, the action plan contains 15 objectives that relate to major issues and topics identified during community meetings. Following is the list of the neighborhood plan objectives in the order presented in the plan:

1. Communication/Coordination
2. Housing Rehabilitation/Property Maintenance
3. Demolition/Repair of Dilapidated and Unsafe Structures
4. Housing Ownership
5. Economic Development/Employment/Technical Training
6. Illegal Uses, Non-conformities, and Land Use Compatibility
7. Sidewalk Improvements
8. Street Maintenance
9. 45th Street/ MLK Blvd “Main Street” Beautification and Improvements
10. Traffic/Safety Improvements
11. Drainage Improvements
12. Street Lighting
13. Park Improvements
14. Funding
15. Crime Prevention/ Law Enforcement.

Under each objective, there is a set of specific actions that contribute to meeting the objective. Each action item identifies a specific action, a responsible party or parties, and either a completion date (year) or an indication that the action is to be implemented on an on-going basis. Responsible parties identified in the action plan include: the Planning Division, the Public Works Department, the Parks Division, Code Enforcement, the Progressive Civic League of Gifford, the School Board, Indian River State College, Road and Bridge, Traffic Engineering, Indian River Farms Water Control District, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Health Department, the Sheriff's Office, the County Attorney's Office, and the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce. Overall, the plan contains 82 specific actions.

Community Development Department staff has coordinated with all responsible departments, entities, and the Progressive Civic League of Gifford to ensure implementation of the plan's actions. As shown on the attached “report card” matrix (attachment # 1), of the 82 actions in the plan, 26 had 2014, 2015, or 2016 due dates and 23 of those actions were completed or are in progress. Five actions with 2016 due dates that are either not completed or are in progress are listed below with reasons why they are not yet implemented and are assigned with new completion due dates.

***“Action 2.1 -- By 2016, the County will apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to rehabilitate 20 or more substandard housing units in the east Gifford area.”***

This action must be delayed because the county cannot apply for another CDBG at this time since the West Wabasso sewer project phase II/ East Gifford drainage project CDBG application is currently “open”. CDBG regulations allow for only one open CDBG project per jurisdiction at a time. An opportunity to apply for a housing rehabilitation grant will arise after the current CDBG project is completed and “closed”. Consequently, the implementation date of Action 2.1 will be changed from 2016 to 2019.

***“Action 8.5 – By 2016, the Progressive Civic League of Gifford will coordinate with property owners along 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue north of 43<sup>d</sup> Street, and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue north of 45<sup>th</sup> Street, to obtain commitments for right-of-way donations so that those roads can be considered for dedication to and acceptance by the County for improvement and maintenance.”***

This action is complete for now. The PCLG coordinated with county staff and did seek right-of-way donations from property owners but were not able to help obtain needed right-of-way at this time. New opportunities may arise in future. Consequently, the implementation date of Action 8.5 will be changed from 2016 to 2022.

***“Action 12.2 – By 2016, as requested by Gifford residents, the County’s Public Works Department will coordinate with street lighting providers to provide street lighting at 41<sup>st</sup> Street /32nd Avenue, along 49<sup>th</sup> Street from 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue to U.S. Highway #1, and any other street lighting improvements identified in the Action 12.1 street lighting plan for which adequate funding has been obtained.”***

This action is in progress. Public Works submitted requests for installation of street lights to both FPL and the City of Vero Beach. Currently, Public Works is waiting for actions by those two electricity providers for street lighting in Gifford. Consequently, the completion date of Action 12.2 will be changed from 2016 to 2017, to account for response time.

***“Action 14.1 – By 2016, the County will consider establishing a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) district or a tax increment financing mechanism in an area within Gifford to promote economic and community development.”***

This action has been reviewed by Community Development, the County Attorney, and community leaders, and is not being pursued at this time. Staff has found that establishing a CRA or tax increment financing mechanism requires forming a new taxing district; will result in additional taxes to residents; will impact revenues available to residents; and will require forming and running a special board. At this time, it appears that a CRA or tax increment financing mechanism would have a small benefit outweighed by significant set-up and operating efforts and costs. This action will be re-evaluated in the future. Consequently, the implementation date of Action 14.1 will be changed from 2016 to 2022.

***“Action 14.2 – By 2016, the County will consider establishing in Gifford a Safe Neighborhood Improvement District (state authorized program) to reduce crime through innovative design techniques and improvements, and to apply for associated funding.”***

This action is not being pursued at this time. Staff has found that establishing a Safe Neighborhood Improvement District requires forming a new taxing district; will result in additional taxes to residents and potentially compete for revenues available to residents; and requires property owners

to form and incorporate an association after obtaining consent of at least 75% of all property owners in the district by referendum or by a process that requires a government oversight board. At this time, it appears that a Safe Neighborhood Improvement District would have a small benefit outweighed by significant set-up and operating efforts and costs. Consequently, this action will be re-evaluated in the future. Implementation date of Action 14.2 will be changed from 2016 to 2022.

There are 42 ongoing actions in the plan that require periodic implementation. All 42 ongoing actions have been completed/implemented during 2016 (100%), including on-going communication between staff, community leaders, and community residents.

Finally, as indicated in the attached matrix, some actions due by 2017 have already been completed or partially implemented. Larger projects called for in the action plan, such as the 45<sup>th</sup> Street beautification project and east Gifford drainage improvements project, are moving forward and ahead of the schedule indicated in the action plan. With these projects, staff from several departments have “stepped up” to obtain funding, design projects, obtain easements, adjust or expand project scope, and implement construction of improvements.

## **FUNDING**

Implementation of the Gifford Neighborhood Plan 2014 will require use of various current and future funding sources. Funding sources will include the General Fund, gas taxes, sales taxes, the MSTU, grants, and other appropriate funding sources. Beginning in 2014, larger projects in Gifford were incorporated into the County’s Capital Improvements Element (CIE) and that practice continued in 2015 and 2016. An updated copy of the Gifford Neighborhood Plan Schedule of Capital Improvements 2016 is attached (attachment #3).

## **CONCLUSION**

The neighborhood plan’s “action plan” section contains a total of 82 actions; each action is related to an objective and is structured to identify a specific task, a responsible party or parties, and a completion date or indication that implementation is on-going. For the 2016 “report card” period, all actions with a 2014 or 2015 due date, most actions with a 2016 due date, some actions with due dates in 2017 and later, and all ongoing actions have been completed.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners review and accept the Gifford Neighborhood Plan 2016 implementation report card.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Implementation Matrix “Report Card”
2. Action Plan (strategies, objectives, and actions)
3. Gifford Neighborhood Plan Schedule of Capital Improvements 2016