

## GIBSONTON COMMUNITY PLAN

### Location

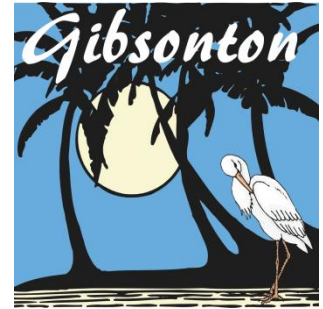
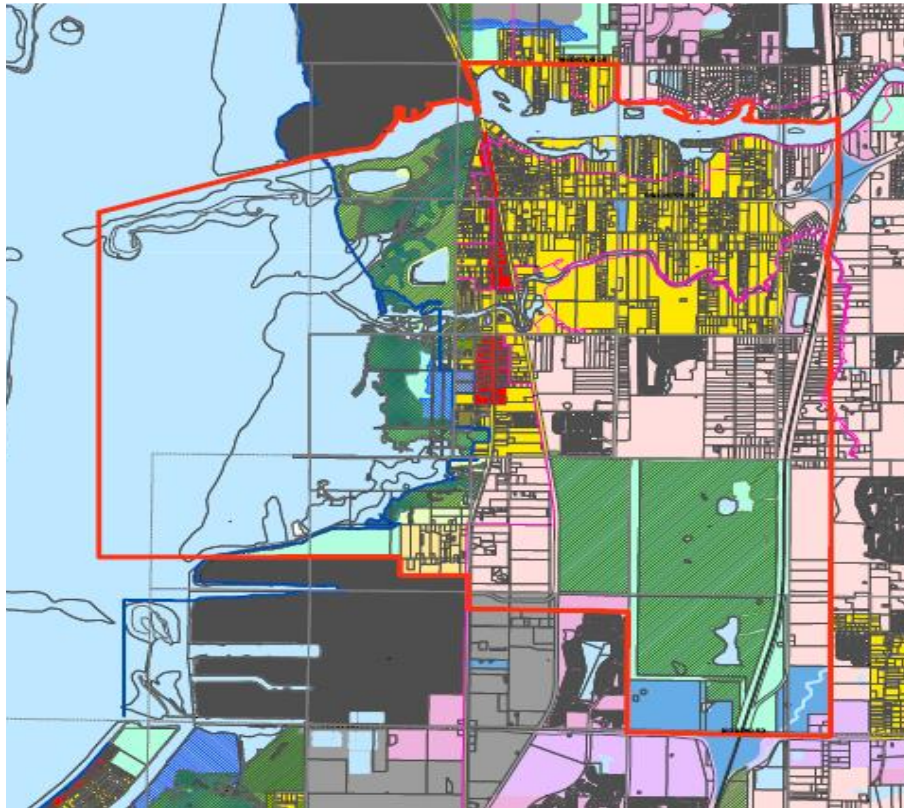


Figure 14-Gibsonton Community Plan Boundary Map

### I. Introduction

The Gibsonton Community Plan area lies in the southwest portion of unincorporated Hillsborough County and is within the “SouthShore Areawide Systems Plan” boundary. The Gibsonton area is estimated to be approximately 9,154 acres (14.3 sq. mi.), or 1.3% of Hillsborough County. The estimated population in February 2003 was 9,675, or less than 1% of Hillsborough County. By 2025, the population is projected to reach 13,891, a 63% increase from 2000. Socially, it is a readily identifiable community, featuring schools, services, and infrastructure; however, it has no town center. The Gibsonton community is in transition, a rapidly suburbanizing, no longer rural community but with some agricultural landscapes. Residents involved in show business in the form of touring carnivals are a unique segment of Gibsonton. The International Independent Showmen’s Association headquarters are located in the area.

## II. Community Plan Boundaries

The Gibsonton Community Plan area is bounded on the north by Riverview Drive. It's bounded on the east, from north to south along I-75 and Fern Hill Drive;; on the south by Big Bend Road, (excluding the Kings Lake subdivision and the industrial area at the US 41/Big Bend Rd. intersection), and on the west by Tampa Bay. See attached Gibsonton Community Plan Boundary Map.



## III. Vision Statement

### *Our Concept for the Future*

#### **Enhanced Streets and Gateways**

Gibsonton's major road grid, consisting of U. S. 41, East Bay Road, and Gibsonton Drive, Symmes Road, and Rhodine Road (extended westward) includes landscaping and other aesthetic treatment. Gateways, consisting of identification and information signs, lighting and landscaping are at all entry points, such as U. S. 41 at Riverside and Big Bend Roads on the west, and near the two I-75 interchanges on the east. There is an additional gateway at the Rhodine Road extension and East Bay Road.

Gibsonton Drive has additional treatment as Gibsonton's "Signature Corridor" to identify it as our "Main Street", not U. S. 41. The center bi-directional turning lane has been converted to a landscaped median with turn lanes. At Gibsonton Elementary, special paving and landscaping make it and the associated north-south trail connection an identifiable community space.

#### **Open Space System with Accessible Low-Impact Recreation**

Greenways with trails connect the Golden Aster Scrub Nature Preserve to the Shultz property, and then northward on the west side of U. S. 41 to the Davis Land Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP) site. The Tampa Electric Company (TECO) power line right-of-way is now a north-south trail connecting Apollo Beach to the Alafia River. This links the East Bay High School area, Golden Aster Scrub Nature Preserve, Ekker ELAPP site, Gibsonton Elementary School and the Alafia River. A pedestrian bridge can be seen over Bullfrog Creek. The use of the TECO right-of-way is a feature of the Hillsborough County Greenways Plan.

Another trail links along Riverview Drive, U.S. 41 and Lula Street. This connects the Showmen's Museum, the Giant's Camp and Bullfrog Creek. An eastward link from U.S. 41 along the south shore of the Alafia River connects our special Riverfront Revitalization area.

The Alafia River and Bullfrog Creek have become blueways, thereby providing

recreational and environmental education with enhanced access and protection policies. Kayak/canoe access points have been added on Bullfrog Creek, at U. S. 41 and at the new pedestrian bridge. Since the successful adoption of a special master plan to safeguard natural resources the community enjoys additional access and low impact recreation along the Tampa Bay shoreline.

### **Infrastructure**

Sewer and water was extended along Gibsonton Drive, Nundy Avenue and Symmes Road. This improved services and reduced the reliance on septic tanks and private well systems. Improved stormwater management and detailed improvements in street lighting and traffic signals to increase safety at key locations and intersections was also implemented as part of the concept.

### **Land Uses**

Our vision retained all aspects of the current Residential Show Business (RSB) zoning and overlay policies.

A Riverfront Revitalization Area is developing at the southeast quadrant of U. S. 41 and Gibsonton Drive fronting on the Alafia River. This is an area of mixed housing, as well as marine repair services. This riverfront area retained existing marine-oriented businesses and single family homes within a community park setting. The proposal was implemented concurrent with development of alternative workforce housing.

Residential areas include existing neighborhoods and new development areas between Bullfrog Creek and the Rhodine Road extension. The latter are inclusive of single-family homes and rental units aimed at a full range of housing types and pricing, with pedestrian-friendly features.

Agricultural uses including tropical fish farms continue to the extent that their owners benefit from a sustainable market for their products. If not, the conversion to residential is consistent with the policies the Community Plan.

A large retail development is incorporated on the south side of Gibsonton Drive and East Bay Road. Mixed use developed north of this site, with special provisions for Riverfront Mixed Use along the Alafia River. The existing marina remained an important part of that area.

Two other commercial areas are retained to the north and south of Bullfrog Creek along U.S. 41. These enterprises are smaller-scale, perhaps family-owned businesses, that can compete with the presence of the large retail site by providing other types of products and services. The aesthetic enhancements for this area were an important part of its revitalization.

Gibsonton Drive, the “Signature Corridor”, promotes home-based and specialty retail businesses and offices within “Main Street” design guidelines.

### **Cultural Facilities and Special Civic Places**

Existing community facilities including Gibsonton Elementary, East Bay High School and Eisenhower Middle School were embraced and enhanced. The Gardenville Recreation Center, International Independent Showmens Association (IISA) headquarters and museum, Williams-Cargill Alafia-Vance Vogel Parks and Alafia River marinas are still key features. A concentration of community services including County programs and support for seniors is now located in the expansion to the Gardenville Recreation Center and revitalization of the Old Gardenville School. We provide “one-stop access” for such services.

A new library in association with the Gibsonton Elementary School, was included with the enhanced Gibsonton Drive and related civic space improvements. A Trail Head is included at the existing entry to the Golden Aster Scrub Nature Preserve where East Bay Road and the future Rhodine Road extension intersect. This facility provides access to the Nature Preserve and open space system.

## **IV. and V. Themes, Goals and Strategies**

The following themes are intended to implement the community vision and are listed in order of priority. Theme 1 outlines our local community organization, and acts as a foundation for all the remaining themes.

### **1. COMMUNITY-BUILDING**

**Goal 1: Gibsonton residents shall become active participants in influencing the area’s future quality by:**

- Creating a formal citizen-based organization (CBO); and
- Applying our own talents and skills through leadership and volunteering in partnership with the public, private and non-profit sectors.

*Strategies:*

#### **Community-Based Organization (CBO) with Early Victories Strategy**

- Inventory local skills and talents, recruit leaders and volunteers and formalize a non-profit community organization to take the lead in implementing Community Plan Strategies. Consider making it a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).

- Demonstrate organization and leadership with some “early victories” on selected, smaller-scale but highly visible projects.
- Seek partnering support from all three sectors in developing more extensive specific strategies over time.
- Maintain a high visibility, facilitative presence within collaborative teams in every forum that counts, such as capital improvement plans, Comprehensive Plan updates, new development (rezonings) negotiations, grant applications, conservation projects, and other civic programs. Praise participants in successful collaborations.

## 2. NEIGHBORHOODS

**Goal 2: Gibsonton will improve and enhance its neighborhoods by:**

- Revitalizing older residential areas;
- Revitalizing outdated mobile home parks; and
- Incorporating new single-family and rental units offering a range of housing choices.

*Strategies:*

### **Code Enforcement Strategy**

- Citizen-Based Organization to establish desired results for a Code Enforcement Plan, taking into account such factors as low income workers who cannot afford rent increases, roadside littering/dumping, outdated mobile home park revitalization and other local factors.
- Citizen-Based Organization to collaborate with County to carry out the Gibsonton-specific code enforcement approach, including working with County and franchise contractors to provide monthly pickup of furniture, appliances, etc.

### **Workforce Housing and Revitalization Strategy**

- Work with the County, churches and other housing organizations to inventory substandard housing.
- Examine workforce income levels and set targets (e.g. % of annual income) for housing costs and the number of units required. Liaise with County Housing and Community Code Enforcement.
- Team with partners to develop both required and incentive-based actions to achieve workforce housing targets. Maximize the use of

County's State Housing Initiatives Program (SHIP), Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), and First Time Home Buyers programs.

- Assist low income property owners with code related repairs via community grants, etc.

### **Walkability Strategy**

- Ensure incorporation of sidewalks in new housing projects, with connections to adjacent greenways by collaborating with County staff, developers and homebuilders.
- Provide sidewalks along Symmes Road and along all roadways fronting new developments.
- Provide sidewalks before other site construction begins, not at the end of new development projects.

### **3. INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Extending sewer and water lines in selected areas; and
- Managing stormwater;
- Creating safer intersections.

**Goal 3: The availability of public water and wastewater services to reduce reliance on septic tank and well systems, utilizing the excess capacity built into current and future development pipelines will be expanded by:**

*Strategies:*

#### **Sewer and Water Extension Strategy**

- Extend sewer and water lines along Gibsonton Drive, Symmes Road and Nundy Avenue to reduce reliance on septic tank and well systems, through new development activity and/or as a County public works project.

#### **Stormwater Management Strategy**

- Carry out the County's Stormwater Management Plan related to Gibsonton that reduces flooding and mitigates water quality impacts on Bullfrog Creek and the Alafia River.
- Ensure that the Stormwater Management Plan prohibits new developments from causing adverse impacts on neighboring properties.

### Transportation Strategy

- Identify unsafe intersections and collaborate with State and County transportation agencies in resolving dangerous locations as part of capital improvement plans. Include I-75 interchange with Gibsonton Drive; and traffic lights at U.S. 41 at Symmes Road and U.S. 41 at Nundy Avenue, and street lights on U.S. 41 from Ohio St to Symmes Rd.
- The future Rhodine Road extension will respect all land uses (nature preserve, residential, agriculture, etc.) in existence to prevent future use adversely impacting uses in place now.
- Work with County and FDOT to improve southbound I-75 exit (#250) to Gibsonton Drive with additional lanes, and add traffic signal for northbound I-75 (exit #250) at Gibsonton Drive.
- Work with the County, HARTline and the private sector to ensure people can commute to and from the area with affordable public transit.

This Community Plan was prepared by the citizens of Gibsonton in an era of constrained government funding. Today, it takes far more than government to improve a community. Improvements start with the residents themselves, requiring local organization and leadership in defining needs, priorities and actions. Our Gibsonton Community Plan is our first and major step in this process.

We are just one of many unincorporated areas competing for County attention and resources. Our people cannot accomplish everything themselves. We must rely on assistance and support not only from the County, but also from the private and non-profit sectors in achieving our goals.

The following projects are listed in order of broad community priority and shall be funded either through developer projects, through partnerships with the Community-Based Organization and developers or the following priorities may be utilized by Hillsborough County as a guide in identifying capital improvement projects for the Five-year schedule of projects as desired by the Board of County Commissioners.

1. Relocate and centralize community services at a revitalized Gardenville Recreation Center, including a gymnasium.
2. Identify unsafe road intersections and add to the Capital Improvement Plan.
3. Co-locate a new library with Gibsonton elementary School.
4. Plan and carry out conservation projects on Tampa Bay, Bullfrog Creek and the Alafia River.

5. Extend sewer and water services along Gibsonton Drive, Symmes Road and Nundy Avenue.
6. Store and exhibit documents and artifacts about Gibsonton's history in the new library or at the Showman's Museum.
7. Develop an access road to the Schultz Property on Tampa Bay.
8. Develop canoe and kayak launching facilities and a pedestrian bridge at Bullfrog Creek.
9. Provide north, south and east gateways (tie).
10. Provide a landscaped median along Gibsonton Drive (tie).
11. Provide a landscaped median along U. S. 41 (tie).
12. Provide a north-south greenway along the TECO right-of-way (tie).
13. Develop civic space at intersection of Gibsonton Elementary School, Gibsonton Drive and above north-south greenway (tie).
14. Establish easement and trail connecting Golden Aster Scrub Nature Preserve and U. S. 41 at Schultz Property (tie).

#### 4. ECONOMY

**Goal 4a: Gibsonton will enjoy appropriately-scaled commercial development by:**

- Working with developers and the County to amplify the positive aspects of a large retail center at Gibsonton Drive and East Bay Road; and
- Enhancing the opportunities for small professional, businesses and specialty neighborhood retail along Gibsonton Drive and U.S. 41.

**Goal 4b: Gibsonton and the County will take steps to ensure that sustainable agriculture and residential show business-zoned areas are protected from incompatible adjacent development, and to allow conversion to other land uses only when the land owner wishes to cease farm, ranch or RSB operations.**

*Strategies:*

##### **Riverfront Revitalization and Mixed Use Area Strategies**

- Designate appropriate properties along the Alafia River as Riverfront Revitalization and Mixed Use areas, to attract waterfront-related uses and to incorporate new or revitalized housing and parks.
- Eliminate No Impact Fee Zones in Gibsonton.

##### **Signature Corridor Strategy**



- Designate Gibsonton Drive as a “signature corridor” to encourage small scale business development and beautification.
- Prepare and carry-out a redevelopment plan for residential properties having frontage along Gibsonton Drive to allow small business, professional office and specialty neighborhood retail uses. Develop a special zoning district and/or specific criteria that support rather than obstruct small businesses and offices along Gibsonton Drive. Incorporate a minimum standard of landscaping consistent with Gibsonton Drive’s “signature corridor” status for office and special retail-oriented development.

### **Agriculture and Residential Show Business Protection Strategy**

- Avoid the placement of incompatible land uses adjacent to agricultural operations.
- Where avoidance or buffering is not possible, ensure that the residents or operators of such adjacent uses are advised in advance of the existence of and type of agricultural and residential show business operations and the potential for conditions or nuisances that may not be resolved in maintaining agriculture or residential show business as the priority land use.

## **5. NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Goal 5: Gibsonton will protect and enhance its public lands for conservation and recreation purposes by:**

- Planning its public lands as an open space system rather than a collection of individual sites; and
- Increasing the connectivity of public lands through trails and canoe/kayak/boat routes.



*Strategies:*

### **Open Space, Recreation and Interpretive System Strategy**

- Prepare and carry out a master plan for public access and recreation, offering low-impact recreational facilities compatible with the natural resource characteristics and capacity. Integrate access and recreation with the open space system as well as local community parks and river walks.

- Acquire or negotiate an easement for connecting Golden Aster Scrub Nature Preserve to Shultz Park, and work with County and Tampa Electric Company (TECO) to develop a major north-south greenway trail connection along TECO power line corridor, from East Bay High School to the Alafia River.
- Provide a pedestrian bridge over Bullfrog Creek at/near Ekker ELAPP site, with a kayak/canoe launching facility.
- Work with agencies and other organizations to develop and promote blueways along the Alafia River, Tampa Bay Shoreline and Bullfrog Creek. Carry out conservation projects throughout this system to protect, restore and enhance natural resources.
- Require new developments along Bullfrog Creek and the Alafia River to provide open public access to the waterfront via public riverfront parks.
- Require all waterfront development to install “softened shorelines”.
- Enhance facilities at Gardenville Recreation Center with gymnasium and fitness trail.

## 6. CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Goal 6: Gibsonton will interpret its cultural history, expand civic awareness and improve access to community services by:**

- Adding a library and creating other civic places; and
- Consolidating most or all government and non-profit services in one location.

*Strategies:*

### **Library and Special Civic Places Strategy**

- Design and develop special civic spaces in key locations of Gibsonton, including:
  - A new library co-located with Gibsonton Elementary School and related Civic Space;
  - A Riverfront Revitalization area of homes and parks at Gibsonton Drive and U.S. 41.
  - A Riverfront Mixed Use area along Alafia River north of the large retail commercial site south of Gibsonton Drive and East Bay Road; and

- Store and exhibit documents and artifacts about Gibsonton's history in the new library or at the Showman's Museum.

### **Consolidated Community Services Strategy**

- Work with agencies and institutions to relocate most community services to the Gardenville area.
- Develop a collaborative plan and funding for revitalization of the old Gardenville School as a central facility for such community services.

## **7. IMAGE**

### **Goal 7: Gibsonton will enhance its image in two ways by:**

- Demonstrating an active citizenry in civic affairs, and a high profile of community accomplishment; and
- Enhancing the visual quality of its key streets and gateway entry points.

#### *Strategies*

### **Gateway and Street Enhancement**

- Prepare and carry out a master gateway plan for; signing, lighting and landscaping at U.S. 41 north, U. S. 41 south, Gibsonton Drive east at East Bay Road and Rhodine Road extension east at East Bay Road. Work with County and developers to ensure landscape compatibility with Gibsonton Drive gateway and landscaping.
- Convert two major roadway medians to enhanced landscapes:
  - Convert center dual turning lane on Gibsonton Drive into a landscaped median, developing and carrying out a landscaping concept including special paving and identity at the north-south greenway crossing at Gibsonton Elementary School; and
  - Develop and carryout a landscaping concept for the grassed median along U. S. 41 between the proposed north and south gateways.

