

Greater Pine Island Community Plan — Current Protections vs. Proposed Changes

A community-by-community review of Lee County's proposed Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code changes

CURRENT COMMUNITY PLAN / EXISTING PROTECTION	PROPOSED LEE PLAN / LDC CHANGE	STATUS	LIKELY EFFECT
Goal 24 directs Lee County to manage growth to protect Greater Pine Island's natural resources, rural character, coastal environment, agriculture, local businesses, and hurricane safety.	Goal 24 is deleted as a stand-alone Greater Pine Island Community Plan. Selected provisions are relocated elsewhere in the Lee Plan.	REMOVED / RESTRUCTURED	Loss of the integrated Pine Island-specific policy framework. Future decisions rely more heavily on countywide policies and scattered provisions.
Certain Greater Pine Island zoning and development applications require a publicly advertised informational session before approval or a finding of sufficiency.	Chapter 33 is deleted in full. No equivalent Pine Island public-information-session requirement has been identified in the proposed replacement LDC.	NO EQUIVALENT REPLACEMENT IDENTIFIED	Residents appear to lose a guaranteed early opportunity to meet with applicants, ask questions, and raise concerns before projects advance. Formal hearings are not equivalent, and some development orders do not receive a public hearing.
Policy 24.4.4 limits Coastal Rural commercial development, including planned-development review, a generally applicable 5,000-square-foot building-area limit, a two-acre impervious-area cap, and locally appropriate uses.	Planned-development review is retained, but equivalent replacements for the 5,000-square-foot limit and two-acre impervious-area cap have not been identified in the proposed LDC.	PARTIALLY PRESERVED	Potential for larger or more intensive commercial development in Coastal Rural areas even if residential density does not increase.
Policy 24.2.2 establishes an 18-hour out-of-county Category 5 hurricane evacuation standard/goal for Greater Pine Island.	The Pine Island-specific 18-hour standard is deleted, and no equivalent 18-hour provision has been identified in the proposed LDC.	NO EQUIVALENT REPLACEMENT IDENTIFIED	Loss of a Pine Island-specific evacuation benchmark tied to growth and constrained road access. General hurricane-planning requirements remain.
Goal 24 contains Pine Island-specific transportation policies recognizing limited mainland access and seasonal traffic demands.	These policies are deleted as duplicative of broader countywide transportation and hurricane policies.	PARTIALLY PRESERVED	Less explicit Comprehensive Plan recognition that Pine Island's access constraints warrant special treatment.
Greater Pine Island requires 50-foot native vegetated buffers in specified circumstances adjoining aquatic preserves, wetlands, and natural tributaries, including agricultural clearing requirements.	Substantial agricultural 50-foot buffer requirements are relocated into Chapter 14.	RELOCATED / PRESERVED	Largely preserved. This should not be characterized as eliminated.
Goal 24 contains Pine Island-specific protections concerning canals, artificial channels, dredging, seagrasses, mangroves, and water quality.	Some provisions are relocated; others are deleted because staff considers countywide policies or state law sufficient.	PARTIALLY PRESERVED	Some protections remain, but Pine Island-specific language and certain local/cumulative safeguards are reduced.
Goal 24 expressly states that Greater Pine Island's unique characteristics justify different treatment of residential development from mainland Lee County.	The stand-alone Goal 24 residential objective is deleted; selected density and TDU provisions are relocated elsewhere.	PARTIALLY PRESERVED	The numerical density framework largely survives, but the Plan-level rationale for special Pine Island treatment is weakened.
Coastal Rural adjusted maximum density is subject to preservation/agricultural commitments and specialized development standards.	Definitions and detailed Coastal Rural residential standards are relocated into Chapter 34, including planned-development review and conservation/open-space requirements.	RELOCATED / PRESERVED	Largely preserved. Core adjusted-density safeguards remain in the proposed LDC.
Greater Pine Island has a dedicated TDU program that limits where transferred development rights may be used; Pine Island Center is the principal Pine Island receiving area.	TDU provisions are relocated to new Goal 129 and Chapter 2 of the LDC.	RELOCATED / PRESERVED	Preserved. This is a strong example of true reorganization rather than elimination.
Greater Pine Island has a special 33-foot building-height limit with tightly constrained deviations.	The 33-foot height limit is relocated into Section 34-2175.	RELOCATED / PRESERVED	Preserved, including restrictive deviation/variance treatment.
Chapter 33 provides a dedicated Greater Pine Island regulatory layer in addition to the general Land Development Code.	Chapter 33 is deleted in full, with selected regulations dispersed into Chapters 2, 10, 14, and 34.	REMOVED / RESTRUCTURED	Pine Island no longer has one dedicated regulatory chapter. Some rules survive, but the framework is fragmented and some protections are not carried forward.
Pine Island-specific commercial design policies support community character and traditional 'Old Florida' design in Bokeelia, Pineland, Matlacha, and St. James City.	Goal 24 design-policy language is deleted; some underlying development standards may remain elsewhere in the LDC.	PARTIALLY PRESERVED	Potential weakening of the Plan-level requirement that development reflect the distinct character of Pine Island communities.

NET CHANGE / LONG-TERM STRUCTURAL ISSUE

The immediate density or intensity numbers may remain in many areas, but eliminating the stand-alone Greater Pine Island Community Plan and moving selected protections into general LDC provisions reduces the number of Pine Island-specific Comprehensive Plan policies that future LDC changes must remain consistent with. Regulations retained only in the LDC can generally be amended through the ordinance process without a comprehensive-plan amendment, making protections for Pine Island's rural, coastal and community character more vulnerable to future change.

Prepared from the August 21, 2026 Lee Plan and companion Land Development Code amendment materials. Status labels distinguish genuine relocation from substantive loss, modification, or partial preservation.