Save the Estates
Presented by: Aaron Zwiefel and Jill Rosenfeld

Save the Estates, a grassroots movement, associated with the Golden Gate Estates Area Civic Association, is proposing the incorporation of the Town of Golden Gate Estates.

We enclose the following:

1) Feasibility Study
2) Draft Town Charter
3) Draft Local Bill language
4) Executive Summary

We request that the Collier County Legislative Delegation vote in favor of the Incorporation of the Town of Golden Gate Estates.

As you will note, the proposed Town meets the majority of the standards required under the statute:

1) It is compact, contiguous and amenable to separate municipal government; see figure 1 of the Feasibility Study.
2) The total population exceeds the 5000 minimum, currently 33,567 per the 2020 census;
3) It does not meet the average population density of 1.5 persons per acre. Currently, it is approximately 0.63 persons per acre and upon complete buildout, should approximate 1.1 persons per acre. However, one of the main goals of incorporation is to preserve the low density, rural character of Golden Gate Estates and like Southwest Ranches and Indiantown before us, we believe the proposed Town qualifies for a waiver of this particular criterion.
4) Minimum distance of at least 2 miles from the boundaries of an existing municipality. The closest municipality is the City of Naples and the straight-line distance between the nearest points on the 2 boundaries is approximately 5 miles.
   The Feasibility Study also shows that the cost to incorporate is very manageable and amenable. Currently, taxpayers in unincorporated Collier County (of which Golden Gate Estates is a part) pay a MSTD millage of 0.8069. Upon incorporation and once the Town starts collecting revenue,

the proposed millage rate would increase 0.6931 to 1.50 mills. The 1.50 millage rate is being proposed so that the Town can participate in revenue sharing as outlined in the Feasibility Study.

We must emphasize that the Feasibility Study is very conservative in its estimates for projected revenue and growth. Based on this, we believe that the Town of Golden Gate Estates can become even more prosperous at a minimum increased cost over what our taxpayers are already paying.

The draft Town Charter also contains provisions which deter increased costs, out of control spending and undue influence from special interests. We have caps on election spending, caps on bonding and debt referendums, restrictions on lobbying, etc.

The community will have a stronger voice in how revenue is spent and how our community will grow.

We have also included a draft local bill and are available to assist with any revisions that may be required before it is submitted to the appropriate House Committee.

For the foregoing reasons, we ask that the Legislative Delegation vote in favor of the incorporation of the Town of Golden Gate Estates.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Golden Gate Estates Incorporation Feasibility Study

Prepared for the

Golden Gate Estates Area Civic Association

Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

This municipal incorporation feasibility study focuses on the rural Golden Gate Estates area of unincorporated Collier County. The area proposed for incorporation is shown in Figure 1 below.

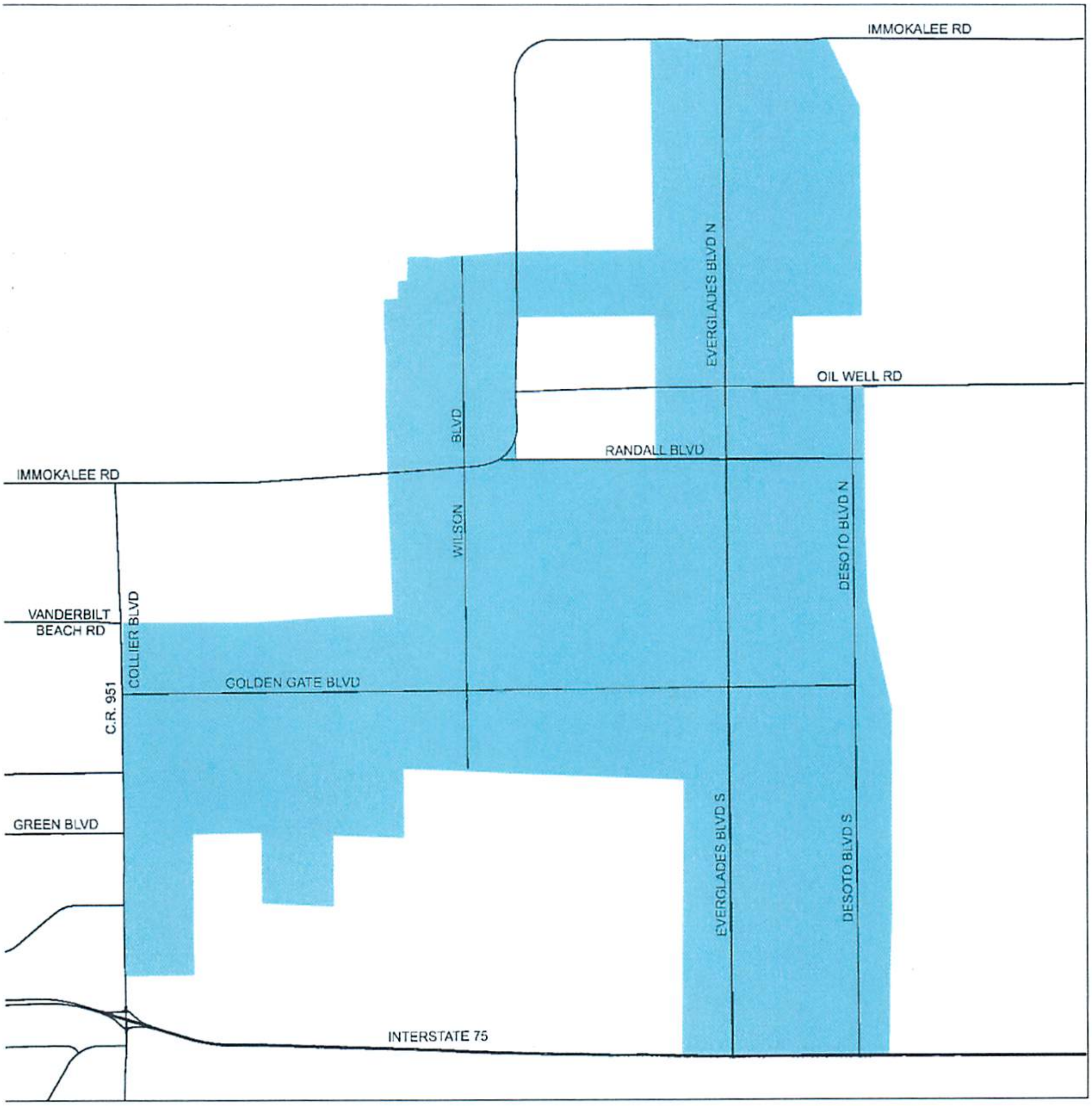


Figure 1. Proposed Golden Gate Estates municipal boundaries.

This area is similar to the Residential Estates Subdistrict shown in the Rural Golden Gate Estates Future Land Use Map (see Figure 3 below) with several modifications: (1) the Red Maple Swamp Preserve located west of 9th Street NW and south of Shady Hollow Boulevard W is excluded;

(2) the area north of Shady Hollow Boulevard W between 9th Street NW and Wilson Boulevard N is included; and (3) the commercial area at the southwest corner of Orangetree (at the intersection of Immokalee Road and Randall Boulevard) is included. The area proposed for incorporation excludes most of the Orangetree area (the donut hole in the northern part of the proposed municipality) as it has a very different pattern of development that is not subject to the same pressures as Golden Gate Estates. This is not meant to suggest that the Orangetree area could not choose to become a part of the new municipality at a later date.

The area proposed for incorporation consists of over 53,500 acres comprised of over 23,800 lots. A large majority of the lots are either occupied by single-family houses (55.5%) or are vacant properties intended for single-family use (42.3%). Most of the remaining properties are either government-owned or agricultural. At the 2020 pace of development, build-out would occur about 17 years later, in 2037.

Golden Gate Estates was initially subdivided into 1-1/4 to five-acre lots in the 1960s by the Gulf American Land Corporation. These lots were marketed as rural estates that could subsequently be subdivided and developed at a profit. Extensive drainage works were needed to make much of the land habitable. Development got off to a slow start, in part due to a lack of services and infrastructure, with fewer than 300 homes built prior to 1980 (Figure 2).

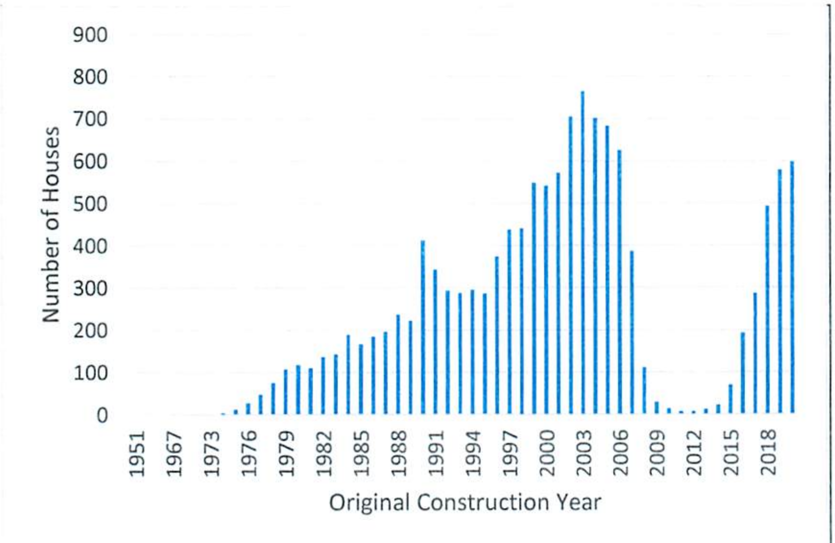


Figure 2. Original construction year for single-family homes. Source: Consultant's calculations based on Collier County Property Appraiser's 2021 property rolls ("NAL" file; available from Florida Department of Revenue, https://www.floridarevenue.com).

Subsequently, the part of the original Golden Gate Estates located south of Interstate 75 was acquired by the state government for conservation purposes. The pace of development in the area north of I-75 generally continued to grow through the early 2000s (with a small dip in the early 1990s), only to come to a halt due to the Great Recession (Figure 2). Development quickly rebounded in the latter half of the 2010s, with nearly 600 new houses completed in each of the two most recent years for which data are available, 2019 and 2020.

Today, the residents of Golden Gate Estates value their rural estate lifestyle and wish to protect it from pressure to intensify development in the area. Population growth in Collier County is spurring an expansion of development to the east of Golden Gate Estates, with access to these newly developing areas through the Estates. This means that Golden Gate Estates is increasingly a target for higher-density development. Direct control over land use and zoning is, consequently, a primary motivation for incorporation.

This feasibility study was completed for the Golden Gate Estates Area Civic Association and benefitted from discussions with that association's Steering Committee. It was also informed by discussions with officials of the Town of Southwest Ranches, which has a pattern of development similar to that of Golden Gate Estates. Collier County officials, including staff of the Collier County Property Appraiser's Office, provided helpful assistance.

This study is structured to conform to the specifications contained in *The Local Government Formation Manual, 2020-2022* (State Affairs Committee, Florida House of Representatives; available at https://www.myfloridahouse.gov), pp. 19-21. This study also relies heavily on the *2021 Local Government Financial Information Handbook* (Office of Economic and Demographic Research, Florida Legislature; available at http://edr.state.fl.us) for information about potential sources of revenue.

A proposed timeline for the incorporation process is in Appendix 1.

REASONS FOR PROPOSING INCORPORATION AND SWOT ANALYSIS

The consultant held a focus group meeting with the Golden Gate Estates Area Civic Association Steering Committee to identify reasons for incorporation as well as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Reasons for Incorporation

The following reasons for incorporation were identified:

- Obtain the benefits of Home Rule powers.
- Improve the quality of life—for many residents, this is their "oasis".
- Residents will have more visibility of local issues and input to municipal decisions, not diluted with county business.
- The new municipality's collective voice will have more influence at the county level.
- The new municipality will be able to focus on improving community services (i.e., library, parks, and recreation centers).

- The new municipality will be able to establish and maintain equestrian trails.
- The municipality will be able to restore and maintain canal access at the bridges along four-lane highways (Golden Gate Boulevard, Immokalee Road, Vanderbilt Beach Road, and Wilson Boulevard).
- The municipality will facilitate and focus infrastructure improvements (e.g., internet, cell towers, cable, fiber, roads, electric utility hurricane power mitigation plans, piped gas).
- Seek improvements in wildfire mitigation and prevention:
  - Develop a partnership with the forestry service to develop fire breaks with residents and conduct prescribed burns.
  - Build public awareness of the importance of mitigation.
- Control or eliminate wasteful spending (e.g., the high costs of constructing and maintaining irrigated median strips).
- Taxes and fees stay in the community.
- Discourage dense development within Golden Gate Estates and encourage such development to locate closer to the urban core of the county.
- Self-control of zoning, permitting, and code enforcement and especially control of rezoning.
- Greater influence over transportation through direct participation in Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization decision-making.
- Greater control over impacts of new development proposed to the east, which requires access through Golden Gate Estates.

SWOT Analysis

General Issues

Strengths:

- Well-defined physical identity.
- Well-established and active civic association (founded in 1978) with knowledgeable leaders.
- Community worked together to establish a master plan that designates three Neighborhood Activity Centers.
- Golden Gate Estates Land Trust is a source of funding to benefit the new municipality and may be particularly helpful when the municipality is first established.
- Funds managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (South District) may be available to support environmental projects.
- Land use pattern is well-established.
- The new municipality can function effectively with relatively few employees.
- The new municipality can rely on inter-governmental agreements or contracts with third parties for many public services.
- Initial staffing needs are minimal.

Weaknesses:

- Low population density does not meet the criteria for incorporation.

- Need to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan to replace the existing master plan.
- Does not have established relationships with relevant federal and state agencies.
- Will need to establish procedures for effectively managing inter-governmental agreements and controlling costs while ensuring high-quality services.
- Some streets are unpaved and in need of maintenance that has been deferred.
- Drainage continues to be an issue in some areas.
- Wildfires are an increasing threat to the community during dry periods.

Opportunities:

- Enhancement of a greater sense of community among Golden Gate Estate residents.
- Greater accessibility of local government, with greater responsiveness to community concerns.
- Incorporation would provide Home Rule powers to the new municipality to provide a means for the residents to protect their interests and plan for the future.
- Significantly improved transparency in local government.
- Ability to pursue focused economic development projects.

Threats:

- Possible opposition by Collier County officials.
- The new municipal commission will need to prove itself to residents.
- The impacts of surrounding developments, especially to the east, may have negative effects on Golden Gate Estates.
- Special interest groups may try to exercise undue influence on the new government.
- Initially, at least, the municipality will have unfunded natural disaster liability.
- The new municipal government may lead some residents to have unrealistic expectations about the scope of services that are or should be available.
- Possible opposition by Florida legislature due to concerns about adding extra layers of government.

Issues Related to Expenses

Strengths:

- Expenditure estimates (discussed later in this study) are conservative.
- Contingencies are addressed.
- Focus on the contractual provision of many services rather than hiring staff.

Weaknesses:

- Difficulties with contracting out of services may require some to be brought in-house at potentially greater cost; these difficulties could relate to cost, quality, and willingness of service agencies to enter into contractual agreements
- The extensive road network may be expensive to maintain in the long run.

Opportunities:

- The new municipality can design an efficient, cost-effective government focused on specific services.

- The new municipality can choose the services and level of service provision it wishes to contract for.

Threats:
- Inability to negotiate cost-effective agreements with service providers, resulting in a need to provide in-house services.
- Possible catastrophic events that deplete reserves for dealing with disasters.

Issues Related to Revenues

Strengths:
- Conservative revenue estimates.
- A variety of sources of revenues in addition to Ad Valorem (Property) Taxes, including Golden Gate Estates Land Trust funds.
- Small percentage of properties exempt from the Ad Valorem Tax.

Weaknesses:
- Heavy reliance on property tax revenue.
- Large percentage of Homestead properties.

Opportunities:
- Opportunity to receive revenue sharing one year earlier than normally allowed.
- Opportunity to work with other government agencies (e.g., the Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization) to secure funds needed for capital projects.

Threats:
- Reliance on property taxes could result in revenue shortfalls in a declining economy.
- Impacts of disasters and possible inability to fund adequately to prepare for them.
- Special interest groups could have undue influence in expanding services, resulting in greater needs for revenue than anticipated.
- Excessive expectations of the new government on the part of residents expecting expanded services.

Issues Related to Contractual Services

Strengths:
- Ability to benefit from established service providers with experience and economies of scale.
- Greater flexibility with respect to levels of contracted services and personnel than if those services were provided in-house with municipal staff.
- Ability to avoid large capital expenditures that would otherwise be needed.

Weaknesses:
- Priorities and policies of service providers may conflict with those of the new municipality.

- The municipality will not have direct control over service providers.

Opportunities:

- Costs of government can be kept low, which will be especially important in the early years of the new municipality.
- The new municipality can take the time to develop some experience with local government service provision before making expensive capital and personnel commitments.
- Direct service provision and related staffing can always be added in the future if desired.
- For some services the new municipality may be able to explore different service providers.

Threats:

- Outside agencies may decline to provide services on a contractual basis or may seek excessive reimbursement, especially if the sole available provider of a given service.
- Contracting delays may result in gaps in service provision.

CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS

The *Golden Gate Area Master Plan: Rural Golden Gate Estates Sub-Element*, approved in 2019 and amended in 2021, includes a future land use map (Figure 3, next page) that is in effect both a land-use plan and a zoning regulation. It puts most of the land in the proposed municipality in a Mixed Use Residential Estates Subdistrict (depicted in gold on the map). This subdistrict limits residential density to one unit per 2.25 gross acres or one unit per legal non-conforming lot (i.e., less than 2.25 acres), excluding guesthouses. Certain non-residential and group housing uses are allowed under specified circumstances.

Small areas within the proposed municipal boundaries are designated for commercial uses (colored light green, light blue, or red on the map) or in conditional use subdistricts (dark green, dark blue, or outlined in red) intended for mixed or commercial uses. This plan is generally consistent with current and anticipated uses in the community but does not necessarily prevent more intensive redevelopment given that the decision-making authority for rezoning does not currently rest within the community itself. The commercial property at the southwestern corner of Orangetree that is proposed for inclusion in the new municipality is located within what is referred to as a Rural Settlement Area District (colored orange on the map, along with the rest of Orangetree).

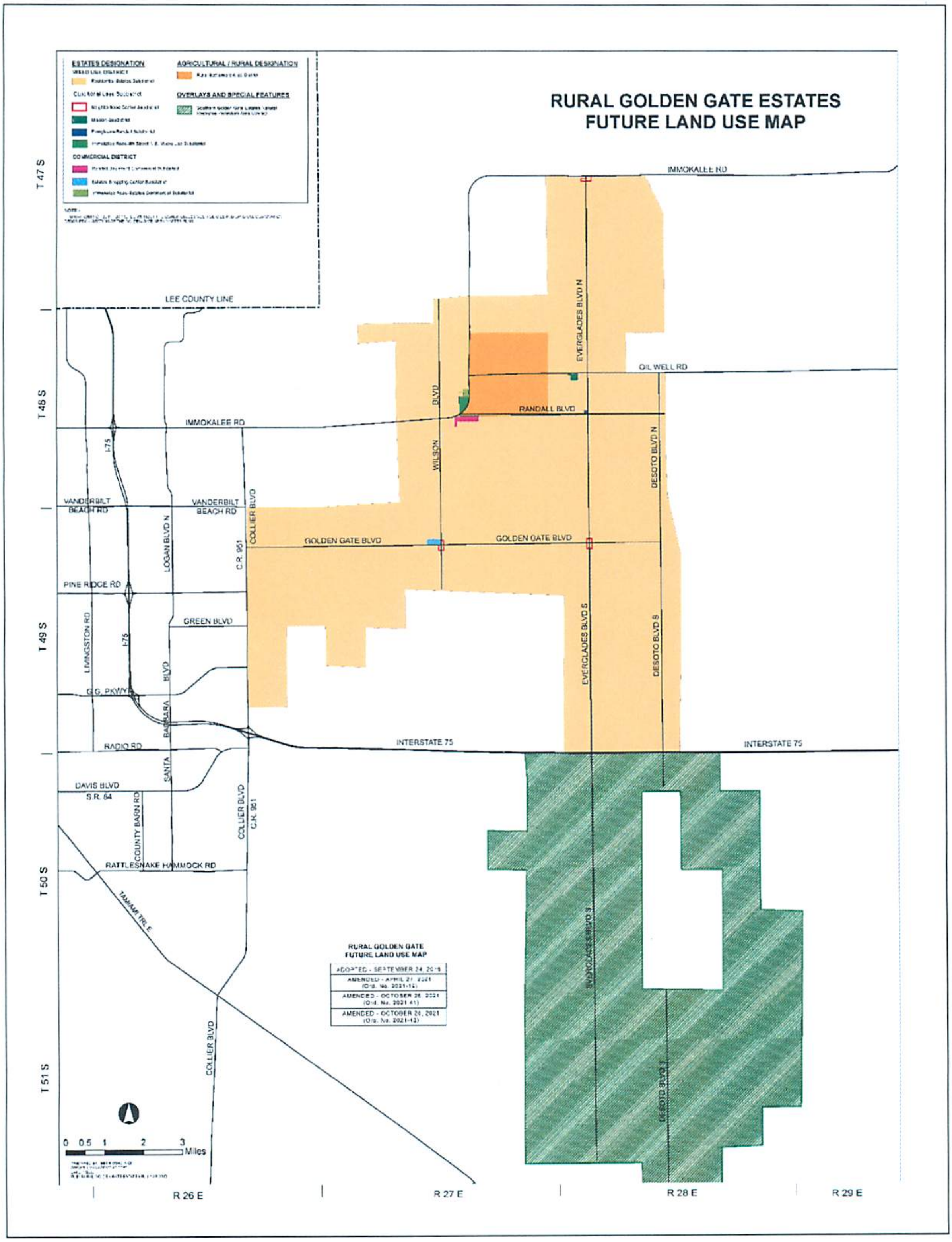


Figure 3. Rural Golden Gate Estates future land use map. Source: Golden Gate Area Master Plan: Rural Golden Gate Estates Sub-Element *(Collier County Zoning Division, 2019; available at https://www.colliercountyfl.gov).*

PRESENT LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

The vast majority of lots and acreage in Golden Gate Estates is either occupied by single-family houses or consists of vacant lots designated for single-family houses. As shown in Table 1, over 97% of lots and 95% of the acreage is devoted to one or the other of these uses. The median single-family lot is approximately 2-1/4 acres in size, consistent with the rural estate character of the area. The next largest use of land is state, county, or municipal government, occupying about 1,095 acres, or 2% of the total, followed by agriculture and public schools. Commercial and non-profit uses occupy a very small percentage of the area. Only a small percentage of the properties in the area are exempt from the Ad Valorem (Property) Tax, as shown in Figure 4 (tax-exempt properties are highlighted in red).

Table 1. Current land use acreage and number of lots by category.

Current land use	Mean acres per lot	Median acres per lot	Total acres	Percentage of acres	Number of lots	Percentage of lots
Vacant residential	2.28	2.27	22,871.0	42.70	10,016	42.02
Single-family	2.13	2.27	28,041.9	52.35	13,158	55.20
Multi-family	2.16	2.50	6.5	0.01	3	0.01
Other residential	2.95	2.54	76.6	0.14	26	0.11
Commercial	2.80	2.55	86.9	0.16	31	0.13
Open storage	4.01	4.01	4.0	0.01	1	0.00
Agricultural	4.08	2.73	416.4	0.78	102	0.43
Vacant institution	2.35	2.42	42.3	0.08	18	0.08
Church	4.68	4.77	42.1	0.08	9	0.04
Private school	13.39	13.39	13.4	0.02	1	0.00
Other non-profit institution	2.50	2.50	5.0	0.01	2	0.01
Public school	31.46	28.73	220.3	0.41	7	0.03
State, county, or municipal	3.92	2.34	1,094.9	2.04	280	1.17
Miscellaneous or unspecified	3.52	2.50	640.1	1.20	183	0.77
Total			*53,561.2*	*100.00*	*23,837.0*	*100.00*

Source: Consultant's calculations based on Collier County Property Appraiser's 2021 NAL file (available from Florida Department of Revenue, https://www.floridarevenue.com).

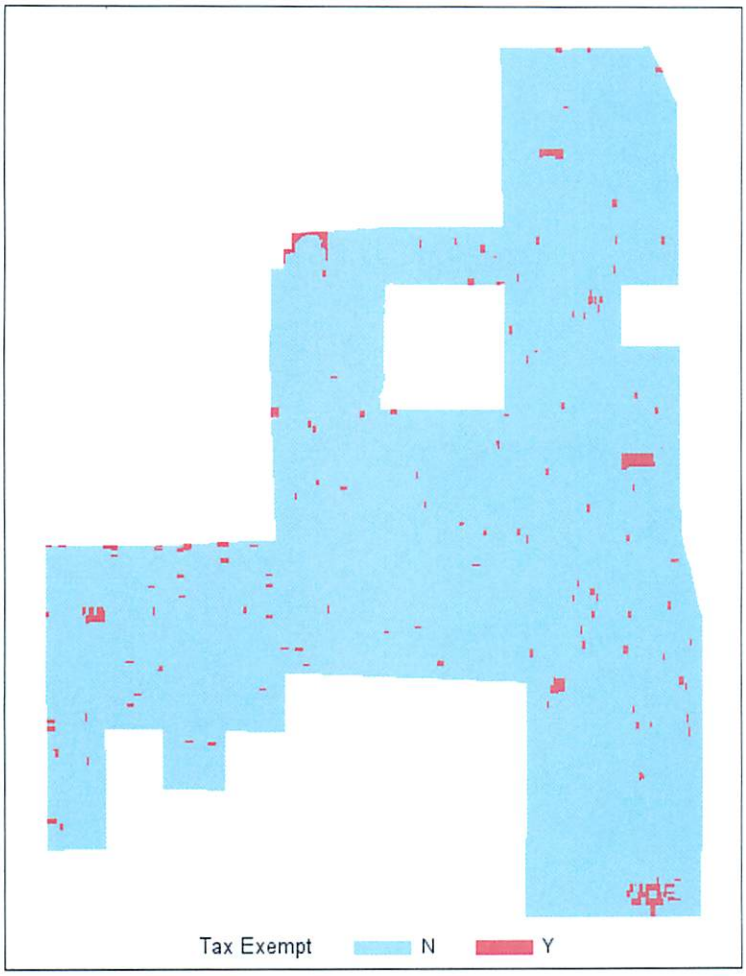


Figure 4. Properties that are exempt from the Ad Valorem Tax within the proposed Golden Gate Estates municipal boundaries. Source: Consultant's analysis based on Collier County Property Appraiser's 2021 NAL file (available from the Florida Department of Revenue, https://www.floridarevenue.com).

PUBLIC AGENCIES OPERATING WITHIN THE AREA AND CURRENT PUBLIC SERVICES

Local and regional services that benefit Golden Gate Estates are provided by a range of public and private organizations. In general, the service responsibilities that the new municipality would take on after incorporation are those that are now funded by the Municipal Services Taxing District (MSTD) which comprises the unincorporated area of Collier County. Other services provided by Collier County and other agencies would continue to be provided by those organizations as before.

The public agencies operating within the area and services provided include:

Collier County

Golden Gate Estates is located within the unincorporated area of Collier County and most local government services, including municipal services, are provided by the county government. The MSTD funds services such as public affairs, community development, planning and zoning, code enforcement, parks and recreation, road maintenance, landscape operations, and stormwater management. As noted above, these are the kinds of services that the new municipality would be responsible for after incorporation. At that time, the MSTD millage rate would no longer be levied in the new municipality, which would begin to levy its own Ad Valorem Tax.

Other key services provided by Collier County include police (through the Collier County Sheriff's Office), property tax appraisal, tax assessment, pollution control, environmental conservation, water supply and sewerage, solid waste collection, libraries, and supervision of elections. These services would continue to be provided by the county. The new municipality would need to contract with the county government for services that go beyond current levels of provision.

Collier County School District

Public schools are provided by the Collier County School District.

North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District

Two independent fire districts provide fire protection and emergency services to the Golden Gate Estates area. The North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District covers the northern half of the area (see Figure 5).

Greater Naples Fire Rescue District

The Greater Naples Fire Rescue District provides fire protection and emergency services to the southern half of the Golden Gate Estates area (Figure 5).

Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO) was established in the early 1980s in response to Federal Highway Act requirements that metropolitan regions develop coordinated plans for transportation improvements as a condition of receiving federal transportation funding. It is governed by a board consisting of members of the Collier County Board of County Commissioners and representatives of Naples, Marco Island, and Everglades City. It is anticipated that the new municipality would have one or more representatives on the governing board of the CMPO.

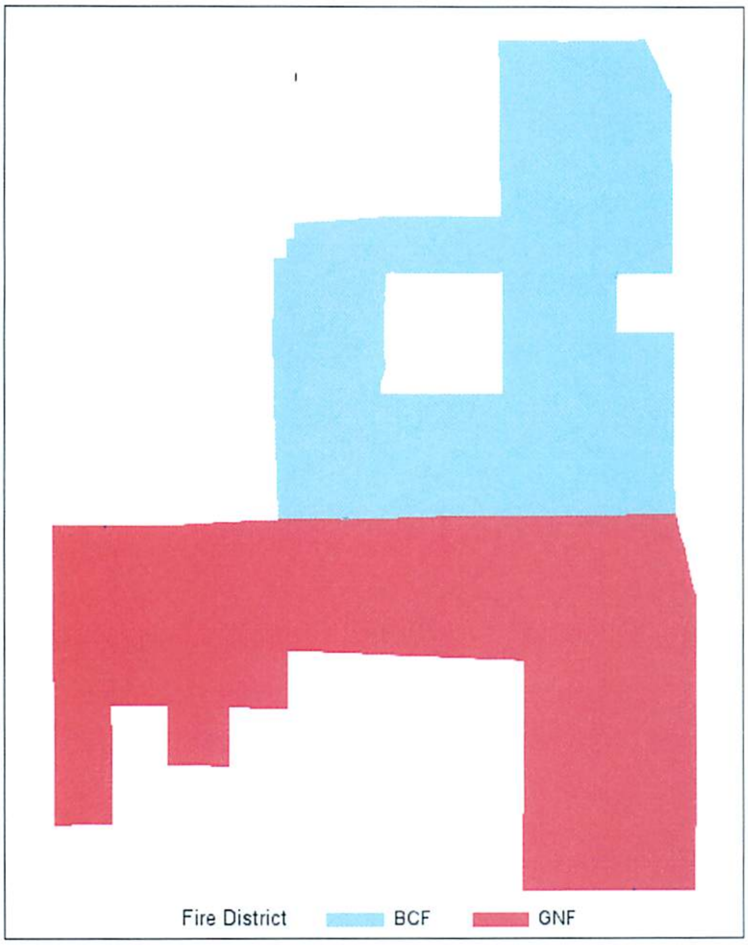


Figure 5. Fire district coverage within the proposed Golden Gate Estates municipal boundaries: North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District (BCF) and Greater Naples Fire Rescue District (GNF).

South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is one of five regional districts within the state of Florida and has responsibility for water quality improvement, flood control, and ecosystem restoration. In south Florida, the restoration of the Everglades is a major activity of the district.

Collier Mosquito Control District

The Collier Mosquito Control District is an independent special taxing district that provides mosquito monitoring and abatement services in much of the built-up part of Collier County, including Golden Gate Estates.

Privately Provided Services

Electricity and natural gas are provided by private companies. Electricity is provided by Florida Power and Light, which serves most of the area, and the Lee County Electric Cooperative, which serves just the northernmost part of Golden Gate Estates. Piped natural gas is provided by TECO Peoples Gas in a small part of the area.

PROPOSED PUBLIC SERVICES

As noted above, the new municipality would need to fund services such as public affairs, community development, planning and zoning, code enforcement, parks and recreation, road maintenance, landscape operations, and stormwater management. Most of these services would be covered, at least initially, through interlocal agreements with Collier County or via contracts with third parties, such as engineering or planning consulting firms. The forecast revenue streams should provide more than adequate funding for these activities, even if their cost exceeds the average per capita cost implied by the unincorporated area MSTD revenue.

POPULATION ANALYSIS

Population projections for the proposed municipality are based on the 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171; available at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/rdo.html) that were released in 2021. The 2020 population was calculated by identifying all Census Tracts or parts of Census Tracts (Block Groups or Blocks) located within the boundaries of the proposed municipality and summing the population counts for those units. This yielded a 2020 population of 33,567. This was then updated for subsequent years based on assumptions about growth in the area. High, moderate, and low projections were based on the development of 600 new houses (the 2020 growth rate), 400 houses, and 200 houses per year, respectively. These numbers were translated into population growth using the average household size for Collier County (from the American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates, available at https://data.census.gov). The projections are lagged one year (i.e., the number for fiscal year 2021 is the 2020 population) to reflect the fact that the revenue estimates are based on the prior, rather than the current, year's population projections. The lagged population estimates are shown in Table 2. Note that 2024 is the fiscal year during which incorporation would take place.

The 2020 Census counts indicate that the boundaries of the proposed Golden Gate Estates municipality contain 8.9% of Collier County's population (see Table 3). This percentage is used for some of the revenue calculations that involve the distribution of revenues across the municipalities. Note that Golden Gate Estates would be by far the largest municipality in Collier County in terms of population as well as land area.

Table 2. Population projections, fiscal years 2021 through 2028, lagged one year.

	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
High estimates								
Household growth		600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524
Population	33,567	35,091	36,615	38,139	39,663	41,187	42,711	44,235
Moderate estimates								
Household growth		400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016
Population	33,567	34,583	35,599	36,615	37,631	38,647	39,663	40,679
Low estimates								
Household growth		200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		508	508	508	508	508	508	508
Population	33,567	34,075	34,583	35,091	35,599	36,107	36,615	37,123

Note: Incorporation would take place during FY 2024. Source: Consultant's calculations based on 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data (for base population) and the American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates (for average household size).

Table 3. Distribution of 2020 population across municipalities and unincorporated area, Collier County.

Geographical area	Population in 2020	Percentage
Collier County	375,752	100.0%
Naples	19,115	5.1%
Marco Island	15,760	4.2%
Everglades City	352	0.1%
Unincorporated area including Golden Gate Estates	340,525	90.6%
Golden Gate Estates	33,567	8.9%
Unincorporated area excluding Golden Gate Estates	306,958	81.7%

Source: Collier County and municipal populations are from the 2020 U.S. Census (available at https://data.census.gov). The Golden Gate Estates population is based on the consultant's calculations using 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data.

FISCAL ANALYSIS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

Sources of Revenue

This subsection of the feasibility study focuses on the primary sources of revenue for the new municipality. Revenue sources that are likely to yield only small amounts of revenue, as well as revenues that are difficult to forecast (e.g., possible revenues from grants or franchise fees), are excluded. The five main sources of revenue discussed here are the: Ad Valorem (Property) Tax; Municipal Revenue Sharing Program; Local Government Half-Cent Sales Tax; Public Service Tax; Local Option Fuel Tax; and Communications Services Tax. The Ad Valorem Tax and the Local

Government Half-Cent Sales Tax are the most important of these. The Ad Valorem Tax is the one local government revenue source that is specifically authorized by the state constitution. The Municipal Revenue Sharing Program and the Local Government Half-Cent Sales Tax both involve state-imposed taxes that are shared with local governments. The Local Option Fuel Tax is a county tax that is shared with municipalities, while the Public Service Tax and the Communications Services Tax are both optional taxes for municipalities.

The following paragraphs discuss each of these sources of revenue and the methods used to project revenues. These are not the only potential sources of revenue for the new municipality, but they are the most important ones and the ones most likely to be implemented. Further details about these and other revenue sources can be found in the *2021 Local Government Financial Information Handbook*. The reasons for excluding two of the other potential sources of revenue (Planning, Zoning, and Permitting Fees and the Local Option Infrastructure Sales Tax) from the revenue projections are discussed below.

Ad Valorem Tax

The unincorporated area of Collier County is currently subject to a 0.8069 mill Ad Valorem (Property) Tax used to cover the cost of services funded by the MSTD (mills are dollars of tax per $1,000 of assessed taxable value). Based on the Collier County Property Appraiser's 2021 property tax roll ("NAL" file), the total taxable property value within the proposed municipality (for purposes other than funding the school district) was $2.839 billion. Applying the standard 5% discount for early payment and non-payment of taxes reduces the tax base to $2.697 billion. At the MSTD millage rate, this yields revenue of $2,176,207, or $65 per capita. For the entire unincorporated area, MSTD revenue is estimated by Collier County (in the fiscal year 2022 budget) to be $55,178,500, or $156 per capita.

The MSTD millage rate would no longer apply to Golden Gate Estates after incorporation. The new municipality would need to set its own millage rate to cover at least part of the cost of municipal services previously covered by Collier County. Some of the costs of these services can be covered by other revenue sources that will be available to the new municipality. The primary consideration in setting a millage rate is to make certain that the municipality qualifies for state revenue sharing, which requires a minimum rate of 3 mills or equivalent in specified types of revenues (s. 218.23, F.S.). In the case of Golden Gate Estates, this can be achieved by setting a rate of 1.5 mills, which in combination with the local fire district millage rates yields a minimum rate of 3 mills (the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District levies a rate of 1.5 mills and the North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District levies a rate of 3.75 mills). The proposed rate of 1.5 mills is higher than the current millage rate for Naples (see Table 4), which has a much larger tax base per capita, but lower than the current rate for Marco Island.

Table 4. Current unincorporated area (MSTD) and municipal millage rates and proposed rate for Golden Gate Estates.

Area	Millage rate
Unincorporated Collier County MSTD millage rate	0.8069
Naples	1.1500
Marco Island	1.7088
Everglades City	5.7694
Proposed Golden Gate Estates millage rate	1.5000

Ad Valorem Tax revenue for the new municipality is projected for future years using varying estimates of growth. The high estimate assumes that growth will continue at a rate of 600 new houses per year, which is approximately the rate of growth experienced in 2019 and 2020 (see Figure 2 above). The moderate and low estimates both assume more conservative growth rates of 400 or 200 houses per year, respectively. These numbers are translated into population growth estimates using the average household size for Collier County of 2.54 (from the American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates). The population estimates are multiplied by the assumed constant per capita revenue of $121 that would have been generated in 2020 if the millage rate had been 1.5. Note that this method conservatively does not assume that house prices will continue to grow, nor does it assume that house prices would fall; it simply relies upon growth in the number of houses to estimate revenue growth. This seems reasonable given the current expectations that house price growth may level off. Also, a large percentage of single-family houses in the proposed municipality (78%, based on Collier County Property Appraiser's property tax roll data) are Homestead properties, which limits annual increases in taxable assessed values. The projections assume that no Ad Valorem Tax revenue will be received in the first year of incorporation (fiscal year 2024). Details of the calculations can be found in Appendix 2.

Municipal Revenue Sharing Program

The Municipal Revenue Sharing Program (MRSP) distributes part of the net sales and use tax and the one-cent municipal fuel tax to qualified municipalities. As noted above, to qualify for revenue sharing, the municipality must levy a millage rate of at least 3 mills or generate an equivalent amount of revenue from certain other sources. Combining the proposed municipal millage rate with that for one or the other of the two fire districts (which levy taxes at rates of 1.5 and 3.75 mills) appears to satisfy this requirement.

The fuel tax portion of this revenue must be used for transportation-related expenditures. The distribution of the proceeds is based on an apportionment factor that averages the following: (1) municipal population adjusted by a population class adjustment factor; (2) the municipality's sales tax collections as a proportion of all municipalities' collections statewide; and (3) a measure of the municipality's relative ability to raise revenue from the property tax (for details, see the *2021 Local Government Financial Information Handbook*, pp. 80-81).

Due to the difficulty of accurately estimating the apportionment factor in advance, the projections used here are based in part on the per capita revenue expected to be received from this program by the City of Naples during fiscal year 2022. Based on population estimates for that fiscal year, Naples would have been in the same population class as the proposed new municipality and so subject to the same adjustment factor. The per capita MRSP distribution for Naples was $45. The high estimates assume that the new municipality will grow by 600 households per year and that per capita revenue will remain constant at $45. The moderate estimates assume that the municipality will grow by 400 households per year with constant per capita revenue. The low estimates assume that the total MRSP distribution to the municipality will remain constant over time, implying that the per capita revenue will decline. Revenues for the first year of incorporation are for six months. Details of the calculations are shown in Appendix 3.

Local Government Half-Cent Sales Tax Program

This program delivers shares of state sales tax to local governments. It also shares revenue from the state component of the Communications Services Tax (see below for a discussion of the local component). Recipients must qualify for revenue sharing as discussed above in regard to the MRSP. As stated in the *2021 Local Government Financial Information Handbook* (p. 57):

> The allocation factor for each municipal government is computed by dividing the municipality's total population by the sum of the county's total population plus two-thirds of the county's incorporated population. Each municipality's distribution is determined by multiplying the allocation factor by the sales tax monies earmarked for distribution within its respective county.

Applying this formula to the 2020 population data implies an allocation factor of 0.0796 (or 7.96%) for the proposed Golden Gate Estates municipality. For fiscal year 2022, the countywide total distribution for Collier County is estimated by the Florida Department of Revenue to be $57.1 million, implying that the proposed municipality would have received about $4.5 million had it been incorporated. In contrast, the Collier County fiscal year 2022 budget anticipates lower revenues from this source and records fluctuating levels of revenue in recent years. Hence, the revenues projected here assume $4.5 million per year as a high estimate, $4 million as a moderate estimate, and $3.5 million as a low estimate. These numbers are held constant throughout the forecasting period. Revenues for the first year of incorporation are for six months.

Public Service Tax

The Public Service Tax (PST) is essentially a sales tax on utilities, including: electricity; metered natural gas; metered or bottled liquefied petroleum or manufactured gas; fuel oil and kerosene; and water service. The tax rate can be up to 10% except that the tax on fuel oil cannot exceed four cents per gallon. Charter counties can levy a PST; however, Collier County is not a charter county. This means that this tax is not currently being levied in the unincorporated parts of Collier County. This feasibility study assumes that the new municipality will not want to introduce a new tax and so the revenue and expense projections reported here do not include this tax.

However, PST projections are provided in this feasibility study to give an idea of the potential revenue should the new municipality decide to introduce that tax in the future. The projections used are based in part on revenues received by Southwest Ranches, in Broward County, which has a similar rural estates type of land use and, presumably, a similar pattern of demand for utilities. Southwest Ranches taxes electricity and all three types of gas products at the maximum rate of 10% and, as is the case for Golden Gate Estates, few properties receive water service, and fuel oil and kerosene are not a significant source of energy. The projections reported in Appendix 4 assume that the new municipality could tax the same utilities and at the same rate as in Southwest Ranches. The bulk of the PST revenue (over 95%) in that municipality comes from the tax on electricity. For comparison purposes, Naples taxes the same set of utilities, but at a rate of 7%, Marco Island does not have a PST, and Everglades City taxes electricity, natural and liquefied petroleum gas, and water at a rate of 8%.

The revenues for Southwest Ranches were adjusted to account for the fact that the average house there is larger than the average house in the proposed municipality (3,902 versus 2,567 square feet, based on county property tax roll data), implying lower energy usage in Golden Gate Estates and, consequently, lower tax receipts. On a per-capita basis, PST revenue in Southwest Ranches was approximately $115; after adjusting for the smaller average house size in the proposed municipality, the estimated yield would be approximately $76 per capita. High, moderate, and low estimates are based on different assumptions about annual growth in the numbers of households: 600, 400, and 200, respectively. Revenues for fiscal year 2024 are assumed to be for six months. Details of the calculations are shown in Appendix 4.

Local Option Fuel Tax

The Local Option Fuel Tax has three components, two of which are required to be shared by counties with municipalities: the 1 to 6 Cents Local Option Fuel Tax and the 1 to 5 Cents Local Option Fuel Tax. In Collier County, these taxes are levied at the maximum allowable rates of 6 and 5 cents per gallon, respectively. The 1 to 6 Cents Tax must be used for transportation maintenance and operations, while the 1 to 5 Cents Tax must be used for transportation capital improvements.

The projections used here are based on the fiscal year 2021 percentage distributions to Naples and Marco Island reported in the *2021 Local Government Financial Information Handbook* (p. 212). These percentages are approximately 150% of the municipal population as a percentage of the county population; consequently, the distribution to the new municipality is assumed to be 150% of its population percentage (i.e., 8.9% x 1.5 = 13.4%). The total county revenues for fiscal years 2021 and 2022 for the two taxes are taken from the Collier County fiscal year 2022 budget. The high estimates assume that the total county revenues for the two taxes revert to the higher fiscal year 2021 level and then remain constant over the forecasting period. The moderate estimates remain constant at the fiscal year 2022 level throughout the forecasting period. The low estimates assume that revenues revert to the lower fiscal year 2020 level and then remain constant throughout the period. The revenue estimate for fiscal year 2024 is zero because revenues are not distributed until the first full fiscal year after incorporation (F.S. Ch. 336.025). Details of the calculations are shown in Appendix 5.

Communications Services Tax

The Communications Services Tax (CST) is a sales tax on communications services, broadly defined to include any voice, data, audio, video, or other communications. The CST has a Florida component and a local component. The local tax rate can be as high as 5.22% subject to certain conditions. Collier County currently levies CST in unincorporated areas at a rate of 2.1%, as does Marco Island. Naples and Everglades City levy CST at 5.22% and 3.9%, respectively. This feasibility study assumes that the current unincorporated area tax rate of 2.1% is retained by the new municipality. Marco Island's fiscal year 2022 CST revenue of approximately $20 per capita was used as the basis for projecting revenues for the new municipality. High, moderate, and low estimates are based on different assumptions about annual growth in the numbers of households: 600, 400, and 200, respectively. Revenues for fiscal year 2024 are assumed to be for six months. Details of the calculations are shown in Appendix 6.

Planning, Zoning, and Permitting Fees

Initially, the new municipality will have two options: (1) continuing to rely on Collier County for processing planning, zoning, and permitting applications or (2) contracting out this function to a third party, such as an engineering or planning firm. If the former, Collier County would continue to collect application fees to cover the cost of providing this service. If the latter, the new municipality would charge fees based on the cost of the services. Either way, these fees and associated expenses would have no impact on the financial bottom line of the municipality. Consequently, this study does not include projections of fee revenue or associated expenses.

Local Option Infrastructure Sales Tax

The Local Option Infrastructure Sales Tax was approved by voters in 2018 and went into effect at the beginning of 2019. It is a 1% sales surtax that can be used to fund all types of public infrastructure as well as energy-efficiency improvements on privately-owned property. The proceeds of the tax are shared between county and municipal governments. The tax is set to expire at the end of 2025 or when $490 million in revenue has been raised. Because revenues have accumulated faster than initially anticipated, it is likely that the tax will expire before the new municipality could take advantage of it; hence, it is not included in the revenue projections in this study. However, if the tax were to be renewed, it would be a major source of revenue to the new municipality, probably in excess of $10 million per year.

Organizational Plan and Administrative Costs

The proposed municipality will initially operate with minimal staff. Key services will be provided through interlocal agreements with Collier County or by contracting with third parties. Initial staffing needs and costs are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Administrative costs.

Position		Salary
Mayor and City Commission	$	63,000
City Manager	$	125,000
Assistant City Manager	$	100,000
Finance Director	$	90,000
City Clerk	$	60,000
Administrative Assistant	$	40,000
Total salaries	*$*	*478,000*
Expenses for elected officials	$	19,200
Benefits at 35% (appointed positions only)	$	145,250
Total salaries and benefits	*$*	*623,250*
Contracted professional services		**Cost**
Legal services	$	150,000
Planning and zoning services	$	100,000
Other professional services	$	120,000
Total contracted services	*$*	*370,000*
Miscellaneous administrative costs		**Cost**
Operating overhead (including leased space)	$	125,000
Insurance	$	75,000
Local elections (2024 only)	$	75,000
Miscellaneous expenses and contingency	$	200,000
Total miscellaneous costs	*$*	*475,000*
Total administrative costs	***$***	***1,468,250***

These administrative cost estimates are based on the following key assumptions:

1. Nominal salaries and limited reimbursement of expenses will be provided for the part-time Mayor and City Commissioners. No additional benefits will be provided for elected officials.
2. Initial staffing will be limited to a City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Finance Director, City Clerk, and Administrative Assistant.
3. The average cost of benefits for appointed staff positions (mainly retirement and health insurance) will be 35% of salaries.
4. Municipal Attorney, Planning and Zoning Director, and other professional service needs will be contracted out (alternatively, the Planning and Zoning Director could be a staff

member given the importance of that function). Note that the bulk of the cost of planning and zoning will be covered by fees, which are not included here (see discussion above).

5. Office space for municipal staff will be leased at going rates in the area (about $26 per square foot per year) and municipal commission and other public meetings will be held in an existing public space.
6. Collier County would initially cover the cost of the proposed March 2024 election (see Appendix 1) but may require subsequent reimbursement.

Costs of Municipal Services

This study assumes that the per capita cost of services in the new municipality would be equal to the per capita revenue for Collier County's MSTD, which is $156 (averaged across the entire unincorporated part of the county). However, the low density and high road frontage per lot in Golden Gate Estates suggest that the cost of certain services would be higher there than in other parts of the unincorporated county. On the other hand, it is likely that the new municipality would seek to reduce certain types of expenditures that are covered by the MSTD. For example, a large part of MSTD revenues (over $10 million) is used for landscaping expenses and the Golden Gate Estates leadership has indicated a desire to reduce certain landscaping expenditures, such as for costly irrigated median strips. On balance, it appears that the per capita revenue from the MSTD is a good estimate of the per capita municipal expenditures for the new municipality.

Because Collier County will continue to receive MSTD revenue for the first year of incorporation (fiscal year 2024), it is assumed that the county will continue to provide municipal services throughout that year. The new municipality will be responsible for providing services beginning the following fiscal year (i.e., starting October 1, 2024).

Five-Year Revenue and Expense Projections

High, moderate, and low revenue estimates are presented in Table 6 for fiscal years 2024 through 2028. The basis for these projections is discussed above and detailed calculations are provided in the Appendices. These estimates do not differ dramatically, and each scenario would provide more than adequate revenue for the proposed municipality.

Table 7 compares the moderate revenue estimates with expenses for the same period. Administrative expenses are assumed to increase by 3% per year. The cost of providing municipal services (through interlocal agreements with Collier County and contracts with third parties) is, as noted above, assumed to be equal on a per capita basis to the revenue earned from the MSTD throughout the unincorporated part of the county. A small bridge loan may be required to cover some expenses in fiscal year 2024 that are likely to arise before any revenues are received. Alternatively, Golden Gate Estates Land Trust funds may be available for this purpose.

Table 6. Golden Gate Estates five-year revenue projections.

		FY 2024		FY 2025		FY 2026		FY 2027		FY 2028
High estimates										
Ad Valorem Tax	$	-	$	4,780,186	$	4,963,858	$	5,147,531	$	5,331,203
Municipal Revenue Sharing Program	$	858,128	$	1,784,835	$	1,853,415	$	1,921,995	$	1,990,575
Local Government Half-Cent Sales Tax	$	2,250,000	$	4,500,000	$	4,500,000	$	4,500,000	$	4,500,000
Public Service Tax	$	-	$	-	$	-	$	-	$	-
Local Option Fuel Tax	$	-	$	1,942,145	$	1,942,145	$	1,942,145	$	1,942,145
Communications Services Tax	$	381,390	$	793,260	$	823,740	$	854,220	$	884,700
Total revenue	*$*	*3,489,518*	*$*	*13,800,425*	*$*	*14,083,158*	*$*	*14,365,890*	*$*	*14,648,623*
Moderate estimates										
Ad Valorem Tax	$	-	$	4,535,289	$	4,657,737	$	4,780,186	$	4,902,634
Municipal Revenue Sharing Program	$	823,838	$	1,693,395	$	1,739,115	$	1,784,835	$	1,830,555
Local Government Half-Cent Sales Tax	$	2,000,000	$	4,000,000	$	4,000,000	$	4,000,000	$	4,000,000
Public Service Tax	$	-	$	-	$	-	$	-	$	-
Local Option Fuel Tax	$	-	$	1,909,050	$	1,909,050	$	1,909,050	$	1,909,050
Communications Services Tax	$	366,150	$	752,620	$	772,940	$	793,260	$	813,580
Total revenue	*$*	*3,189,988*	*$*	*12,890,354*	*$*	*13,078,842*	*$*	*13,267,331*	*$*	*13,455,819*
Low estimates										
Ad Valorem Tax	$	-	$	4,290,392	$	4,351,617	$	4,412,841	$	4,474,065
Municipal Revenue Sharing Program	$	766,688	$	1,533,375	$	1,533,375	$	1,533,375	$	1,533,375
Local Government Half-Cent Sales Tax	$	1,750,000	$	3,500,000	$	3,500,000	$	3,500,000	$	3,500,000
Public Service Tax	$	-	$	-	$	-	$	-	$	-
Local Option Fuel Tax	$	-	$	1,772,012	$	1,772,012	$	1,772,012	$	1,772,012
Communications Services Tax	$	350,910	$	711,980	$	722,140	$	732,300	$	742,460
Total revenue	*$*	*2,867,598*	*$*	*11,807,760*	*$*	*11,879,144*	*$*	*11,950,528*	*$*	*12,021,912*

Notes:

1. Ad Valorem Tax and Local Option Fuel Tax revenue will not be received until the second year of incorporation (FY 2025); other revenues for the first year of incorporation are for only six months of that year.

2. The projections exclude the Local Option Infrastructure Sales Tax because that tax is likely to expire before the new municipality can take advantage of it and its renewal is uncertain.

3. Planning, zoning, and permitting fees are also excluded as they will either continue to be collected by the county or will be charged at cost and paid to a third party.

4. These projections assume that the new municipality will not initially adopt a Public Service Tax.

Table 7. Golden Gate Estates five-year revenue and expense projections (based on moderate revenue projections).

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenues (moderate estimates)					
Ad Valorem Tax	$ -	$ 4,535,289	$ 4,657,737	$ 4,780,186	$ 4,902,634
Municipal Revenue Sharing Program	$ 823,838	$ 1,693,395	$ 1,739,115	$ 1,784,835	$ 1,830,555
Local Government Half-Cent Sales Tax	$ 2,000,000	$ 4,000,000	$ 4,000,000	$ 4,000,000	$ 4,000,000
Public Service Tax	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Local Option Fuel Tax	$ -	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,909,050
Communications Services Tax	$ 366,150	$ 752,620	$ 772,940	$ 793,260	$ 813,580
Total revenue	*$ 3,189,988*	*$ 12,890,354*	*$ 13,078,842*	*$ 13,267,331*	*$ 13,455,819*
Expenses					
Salaries and benefits	$ 311,625	$ 641,948	$ 661,206	$ 681,042	$ 701,473
Contracted professional services	$ 185,000	$ 381,100	$ 392,533	$ 404,309	$ 416,438
Miscellaneous administrative costs	$ 275,000	$ 414,250	$ 426,678	$ 439,478	$ 452,662
Interlocal agreements and contracted services	$ -	$ 5,870,478	$ 6,028,975	$ 6,187,472	$ 6,345,970
Total expenses	*$ 771,625*	*$ 7,307,776*	*$ 7,509,392*	*$ 7,712,301*	*$ 7,916,543*
Reserves or (deficit)	***$ 2,418,363***	***$ 5,582,578***	***$ 5,569,451***	***$ 5,555,029***	***$ 5,539,276***
Cumulative reserves	***$ 2,418,363***	***$ 8,000,941***	***$ 13,570,392***	***$ 19,125,421***	***$ 24,664,697***

Notes:

1. FY 2024 administrative expenses are based on half of the annual costs listed in Table 5 except that the election costs are included in full.

2. It is assumed that Collier County will continue to cover the costs of municipal services throughout FY 2024.

3. An inflation rate of 3% per year is applied to administrative expenses.

4. The cost of interlocal agreements and contracted services is assumed to equal, on a per capita basis, the revenue earned by Collier County from the Unincorporated Area MSTD.

Table 7 shows significant reserves arising starting with the first year of incorporation. As these reserves grow, the new municipality could use them to build facilities (such as a municipal hall), add staff, and provide some services by the municipality itself rather than through interlocal agreements or contracting out. Additionally, reserves would give the municipality flexibility to provide or expand selected services considered to be particularly important by the community.

ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO MEET POLICY CONCERNS

This feasibility study is motivated by the conviction that Golden Gate Estates will best be able to meet to needs of its residents through incorporation, which will give the community direct control over land use planning and regulation and provision of other municipal services. Golden Gate Estates is a large, distinct community that has specific circumstances and needs that could best be addressed through self-government. Currently, the community does not believe that it has much influence with the Collier County government, and this situation does not seem likely to change in the foreseeable future.

EVIDENCE REGARDING STANDARDS FOR INCORPORATION

The standards for incorporation address the following criteria:

- *Compact, contiguous, and amenable to separate municipal government:* As shown in Figure 1, the proposed municipal boundaries enclose a relatively compact area that is contiguous and amenable to separate municipal government. The area contained within the proposed boundaries is essentially that part of the rural residential estates area (plus small areas designated for commercial use) that is either already developed or available for development.
- *Total population must be at least 5,000 persons:* As discussed above, the total population of the proposed municipality, according to the official 2020 U.S. Census, is 33,567 (see Table 3 above).
- *Average population density of 1.5 persons per acre:* The current density is approximately 0.63 persons per acre. When completely built out, the area is expected to have a population of approximately 59,000, with a density of about 1.1 persons per acre. As one of the main goals of incorporation is to give Golden Gate Estates the ability to maintain its low-density rural estates lifestyle, a waiver of this criterion seems justified. In comparison, the Village of Indiantown, in Martin County, had a nearly identical population density when it was approved for incorporation in 2017 (as reported in the *Village of Indiantown Incorporation Feasibility Study*). Also, the Town of Southwest Ranches in Broward County, which has a similar pattern of land use, had a population density of only about 0.91 persons per acre in 2020 (based on the 2020 U.S. Census population of 7,607 divided by 8,365 acres).

- *Minimum distance of at least two miles from the boundaries of an existing municipality:* The City of Naples has the closest boundary to the proposed municipality. The straight-line distance between the nearest points on the two boundaries is approximately five miles.

In summary, the area proposed for municipal incorporation satisfies three of the four standards for incorporation, and a waiver is requested for the remaining standard.

OFFICERS SUBMITTING THIS PROPOSAL

Michael R. Ramsey, President
Aaron Zwiefel, Vice President
Jill Rosenfeld, Treasurer

Golden Gate Estates Area Civic Association
2631 4th Street NW
Naples, FL 34120

ABOUT THE CONSULTANT

Steven C. Bourassa was recently appointed to the position of Chair of the Runstad Department of Real Estate at the University of Washington, Seattle. Most of the work on this feasibility study was completed while he was Chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida Atlantic University, where he worked for eight years. He also served simultaneously as Director of the School of Public Administration at FAU for five years. Prior to working at FAU, he was Chair of the Department of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of Louisville. He has over three decades of experience in applied urban research, including multiple studies involving the analysis of municipal data, such as property tax records. He has a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Timeline

Date	Activity
June 2022	GGE Area Civic Association discusses the idea of incorporation with the local delegation of the Florida Legislature
August 2022	Feasibility Study is completed
August 2022	Draft Charter is completed
September 2022	Feasibility Study and Draft Charter are presented to the Florida Legislature
December 2022	Local bill is presented and approved by the local delegation
March 2023	Local bill goes to Florida Legislature (and is passed)
Spring/Summer 2023	GGE residents discuss incorporation at one or more public meetings
November 2023	Incorporation referendum is held
December 2023	Municipality becomes a legal entity
March 2024	Elections for mayor and council
March 2024	Municipality begins to receive State Shared Revenue
April 2024	Municipality hires key staff
November 2024	Municipality begins to receive Ad Valorem Tax revenue
July 2025	Municipality begins to receive other revenues

Appendix 2: Ad Valorem (Property) Tax Revenue Projections

	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
High estimates								
Household growth		600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524
Population	33,567	35,091	36,615	38,139	39,663	41,187	42,711	44,235
Ad valorem tax revenue	$ 4,045,496	$ 4,229,168	$ 4,412,841	$ -	$ 4,780,186	$ 4,963,858	$ 5,147,531	$ 5,331,203
Moderate estimates								
Household growth		400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016
Population	33,567	34,583	35,599	36,615	37,631	38,647	39,663	40,679
Ad valorem tax revenue	$ 4,045,496	$ 4,167,944	$ 4,290,392	$ -	$ 4,535,289	$ 4,657,737	$ 4,780,186	$ 4,902,634
Low estimates								
Household growth		200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		508	508	508	508	508	508	508
Population	33,567	34,075	34,583	35,091	35,599	36,107	36,615	37,123
Ad valorem tax revenue	$ 4,045,496	$ 4,106,720	$ 4,167,944	$ -	$ 4,290,392	$ 4,351,617	$ 4,412,841	$ 4,474,065

Notes:

1. Household size is based on American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates for Collier County.

2. Population is lagged one year.

3. Revenues are discounted by 5% to account for early and non-payment of taxes.

4. Assumes a millage rate of 1.5.

5. Assumes that no revenues will be received during the first fiscal year of incorporation (FY 2024).

Appendix 3: Municipal Revenue Sharing Program Projections

	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
High estimates								
Household growth		600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524
Population	33,567	35,091	36,615	38,139	39,663	41,187	42,711	44,235
Per capita revenue estimate	$ -	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45
Municipal Revenue Sharing projection	$ -	$ 1,579,095	$ 1,647,675	$ 858,128	$ 1,784,835	$ 1,853,415	$ 1,921,995	$ 1,990,575
Moderate estimates								
Household growth		400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016
Population	33,567	34,583	35,599	36,615	37,631	38,647	39,663	40,679
Per capita revenue estimate	$ -	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45	$ 45
Municipal Revenue Sharing projection	$ -	$ 1,556,235	$ 1,601,955	$ 823,838	$ 1,693,395	$ 1,739,115	$ 1,784,835	$ 1,830,555
Low estimates								
Household growth		200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		508	508	508	508	508	508	508
Population	33,567	34,075	34,583	35,091	35,599	36,107	36,615	37,123
Per capita revenue estimate	$ -	$ 45	$ 44	$ 22	$ 43	$ 42	$ 42	$ 41
Municipal Revenue Sharing projection	$ -	$ 1,533,375	$ 1,533,375	$ 766,688	$ 1,533,375	$ 1,533,375	$ 1,533,375	$ 1,533,375

Notes:

1. High and moderate estimates assume that per capita revenue would have been approximately the same as that for Naples in FY 2022.

2. Low estimates assume that total revenue will remain constant.

3. Population is lagged one year.

4. FY 2024 revenues are assumed to be for 6 months.

Appendix 4: Public Service Tax Revenue Projections

	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
High estimates								
Household growth		600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524
Population	33,567	35,091	36,615	38,139	39,663	41,187	42,711	44,235
Southwest Ranches per capita revenue (@ 10%)	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115
Adjustment for relative size of houses	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%
Golden Gate Estates per capita revenue (@ 10%)	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76
Public Service Tax revenue	$ 2,539,504	$ 2,654,802	$ 2,770,100	$ 1,442,699	$ 3,000,696	$ 3,115,994	$ 3,231,292	$ 3,346,590
Moderate estimates								
Household growth		400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016
Population	33,567	34,583	35,599	36,615	37,631	38,647	39,663	40,679
Southwest Ranches per capita revenue (@ 10%)	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115
Adjustment for relative size of houses	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%
Golden Gate Estates per capita revenue (@ 10%)	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76
Public Service Tax revenue	$ 2,539,504	$ 2,616,370	$ 2,693,235	$ 1,385,050	$ 2,846,965	$ 2,923,831	$ 3,000,696	$ 3,077,561
Low estimates								
Household growth		200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		508	508	508	508	508	508	508
Population	33,567	34,075	34,583	35,091	35,599	36,107	36,615	37,123
Southwest Ranches per capita revenue (@ 10%)	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115	$ 115
Adjustment for relative size of houses	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%	65.8%
Golden Gate Estates per capita revenue (@ 10%)	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76	$ 76
Public Service Tax revenue	$ 2,539,504	$ 2,577,937	$ 2,616,370	$ 1,327,401	$ 2,693,235	$ 2,731,668	$ 2,770,100	$ 2,808,533

Notes:

1. Household size is based on American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates for Collier County.

2. Population is lagged one year.

3. Assumes tax applies to electricity and gas products, but not fuel oil/kerosene or water.

4. Naples has a tax rate of 7% on electricity and gas products; Marco Island does not have a Public Service Tax; Everglades City has a tax rate of 8% on electricity, gas products, and water.

5. These revenues are not included in Tables 6 and 7 (five-year revenue and expense projections); they are shown here just to indicated the potential revenue from this source should the municipality decide to adopt a Public Service Tax in the future.

Appendix 5: Local Option Fuel Tax Revenue Projections

	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
High estimates								
County revenue 1 to 6 cents tax	$ 8,295,700	$ 8,100,000	$ 8,295,700	$ 8,295,700	$ 8,295,700	$ 8,295,700	$ 8,295,700	$ 8,295,700
County revenue 1 to 5 cents tax	$ 6,252,200	$ 6,200,000	$ 6,252,200	$ 6,252,200	$ 6,252,200	$ 6,252,200	$ 6,252,200	$ 6,252,200
Total revenue 1 to 6 and 1 to 5 cents tax	$ 14,547,900	$ 14,300,000	$ 14,547,900	$ 14,547,900	$ 14,547,900	$ 14,547,900	$ 14,547,900	$ 14,547,900
Golden Gate Estates population percentage	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%
Adjustment to population percentage	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Adjusted percentage distribution	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%
Local Option Fuel Tax revenue	$ 1,942,145	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,942,145	$ -	$ 1,942,145	$ 1,942,145	$ 1,942,145	$ 1,942,145
Moderate estimates								
County revenue 1 to 6 cents tax	$ 8,295,700	$ 8,100,000	$ 8,100,000	$ 8,100,000	$ 8,100,000	$ 8,100,000	$ 8,100,000	$ 8,100,000
County revenue 1 to 5 cents tax	$ 6,252,200	$ 6,200,000	$ 6,200,000	$ 6,200,000	$ 6,200,000	$ 6,200,000	$ 6,200,000	$ 6,200,000
Total revenue 1 to 6 and 1 to 5 cents tax	$ 14,547,900	$ 14,300,000	$ 14,300,000	$ 14,300,000	$ 14,300,000	$ 14,300,000	$ 14,300,000	$ 14,300,000
Golden Gate Estates population percentage	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%
Adjustment to population percentage	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Adjusted percentage distribution	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%
Local Option Fuel Tax revenue	$ 1,942,145	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,909,050	$ -	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,909,050
Low estimates								
County revenue 1 to 6 cents tax	$ 8,295,700	$ 8,100,000	$ 7,561,200	$ 7,561,200	$ 7,561,200	$ 7,561,200	$ 7,561,200	$ 7,561,200
County revenue 1 to 5 cents tax	$ 6,252,200	$ 6,200,000	$ 5,712,300	$ 5,712,300	$ 5,712,300	$ 5,712,300	$ 5,712,300	$ 5,712,300
Total revenue 1 to 6 and 1 to 5 cents tax	$ 14,547,900	$ 14,300,000	$ 13,273,500	$ 13,273,500	$ 13,273,500	$ 13,273,500	$ 13,273,500	$ 13,273,500
Golden Gate Estates population percentage	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%
Adjustment to population percentage	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Adjusted percentage distribution	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%	13.4%
Local Option Fuel Tax revenue	$ 1,942,145	$ 1,909,050	$ 1,772,012	$ -	$ 1,772,012	$ 1,772,012	$ 1,772,012	$ 1,772,012

Notes:

1. High estimates assume that revenues gradually return to the FY 2021 level and remain constant over the forecasting period.

2. Moderate estimates assume that revenues remain constant at the FY 2022 level over the period.

3. Low estimates assume that revenues decline to the FY 2020 levels and remain constant over the forecasting period.

4. The adjustment to the population percentage is based on combined Naples and Marco Island population percentages relative to the distributions those cities receive.

5. FY 2021 and 2022 revenues are based on FY 2022 Collier County Budget, p. 87.

6. FY 2024 revenues are zeroed out because revenues will not be distributed to the new municipality until the fiscal year after incorporation.

Appendix 6: Communications Services Tax Revenue Projections

	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
High estimates								
Household growth		600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524	1,524
Population	33,567	35,091	36,615	38,139	39,663	41,187	42,711	44,235
Per capita revenue	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20
Communications Services Tax revenue	$ 671,340	$ 701,820	$ 732,300	$ 381,390	$ 793,260	$ 823,740	$ 854,220	$ 884,700
Moderate estimates								
Household growth		400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016	1,016
Population	33,567	34,583	35,599	36,615	37,631	38,647	39,663	40,679
Per capita revenue	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20
Communications Services Tax revenue	$ 671,340	$ 691,660	$ 711,980	$ 366,150	$ 752,620	$ 772,940	$ 793,260	$ 813,580
Low estimates								
Household growth		200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Household size		2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54
Population growth		508	508	508	508	508	508	508
Population	33,567	34,075	34,583	35,091	35,599	36,107	36,615	37,123
Per capita revenue	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20	$ 20
Communications Services Tax revenue	$ 671,340	$ 681,500	$ 691,660	$ 350,910	$ 711,980	$ 722,140	$ 732,300	$ 742,460

Notes:

1. Household size is based on American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates for Collier County.

2. Population is lagged one year.

3. FY 2024 revenue is assumed to be for 6 months.

CHARTER

TOWN OF GOLDEN GATE ESTATES

Section 1. – Corporate name; purpose of the Charter; creation and establishment of the Town of Golden Gate Estates, in the County of Collier ("County") and State of Florida ("State").

(1) *Corporate name.* The municipality hereby established shall be known as the Town of Golden Gate Estates ("Town").

(2) *Purpose of the Charter.* This act, together with any future amendments thereto, may be known as the Charter of the Town of Golden Gate Estates ("Charter").

(a) It is in the best interests of the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Golden Gate Estates area to form a separate municipality for the Golden Gate Estates area with all the powers and authority necessary to provide adequate and efficient municipal services to its residents.

(b) It is intended that this Charter and the incorporation of the Golden Gate Estates area will serve to preserve, enhance, and protect the rural residential character, natural resources, and quality of life of the community.

(c) It is the intent of this Charter and the incorporation of the Town to secure the benefits of self-determination and affirm the values of representative democracy, citizen participation, strong community leadership, professional management, and regional cooperation.

(d) It is the intent of this Charter and the incorporation of the Town to maintain a financially secure and sustainable municipal government and to responsibly manage the Town's debt obligations without causing the State to incur any liability.

(3) *Creation and establishment of the Town of Golden Gate Estates.*

(a) This act shall take effect upon approval by a majority vote of those qualified electors residing within the corporate limits of the proposed Town as described in section 3 voting in a referendum election to be called by the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County in conjunction with the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County to be held November 7, 2023, in accordance with the provisions of laws relating to elections currently in force.

(b) For the purpose of compliance with F.S. Ch. 200.066, relating to assessment and collection of ad valorem taxes, the Town of Golden Gate Estates is created and established effective December 31, 2023.

Section 2. – Powers of Town; form of government.

(1) *Powers of the Town.* The Town shall have all available governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers of a municipality under the State Constitution and laws of this State as fully and completely as though such powers were specifically enumerated in this Charter, and may exercise them, except where prohibited by law. Through the adoption of this Charter, it is the intent of the electors of the Town that the municipal government established in this section shall have the broadest exercise of home rule powers permitted under the State Constitution and laws of the State.

(2) *Construction.* The powers of the Town under this Charter shall be construed liberally in favor of the Town, and the specific mention of particular powers in the Charter shall not be construed as limiting the general powers granted in this Charter in any way.

(3) *Form of government.* The Town shall be a Council-Manager form of government, with the Council to consist of five Town Council ("Council") members elected by the Town at large. The Council shall constitute the governing body of the Town, with the duties and responsibilities hereinafter provided. The Council shall appoint a Town Manager to be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town who shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.

Section 3. – Corporate boundaries.

The territorial boundaries of the Town of Golden Gate Estates upon the date of incorporation shall be as follows:

These properties are generally east of CR 951, north of I-75, south and east of Immokalee Rd, and zoned "Estates." Properties described are NOT owned by County, State or Federal Governments, Collier School District. As shown in Exhibit A and Exhibit B.

Total Acreage: All lying in Collier County being approximately 53,839.72 acres [subject to verification].

All of section 28 southwest of Oil Well Rd;

All of sections 29-33; Township 47, Range 28;

The south 1/2 of section 08 not owned by Collier County;

All of sections 09-12, 15-16, 21-22;

Those parts of section 23 in the west 1/4 not owned by Orange Tree HOA;

All of sections 25-28, 33-36; Township 48, Range 27;

All of sections 04-09, 19-21, 28-33; Township 48, Range 28;

All of sections 01-02, 13-14, 23, 26; Township 49, Range 26;

All of sections 01-12, 17-19; Township 49, Range 27;

All of sections 04-09, 16-21, 28-33; Township 49, Range 28

Section 4. – Town Council.

(1) *General powers and duties.* All powers of the Town shall be vested in the Town Council, except as otherwise provided by law or this Charter, and the Council shall provide for the exercise thereof and for the performance of all duties and obligations permitted by or imposed on the Town by law.

(2) *Composition; eligibility; terms.*

(a) *Composition.* There shall be a Town Council composed of five Council members. Each Council member shall be elected by the electors of the Town at large.

(b) *Eligibility and term of office.*

1. Each candidate for Town Council shall be a qualified elector of the Town.
2. Each candidate for Council shall have been a resident of the Town for at least two years before qualifying for office.
3. Each Council member must reside in the Town for the duration of his or her term.
4. The term of office for each Council member shall be four years.
5. No Council member will serve more than two full terms and no more than eight years in a lifetime
6. Elected officials shall swear to uphold the Oath of Office:

   I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida, and the Charter of the Town of Golden Gate Estates; and will protect the rural residential character of the Town; that I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the State and the Charter of the Town of Golden Gate Estates; and that I will well and faithfully perform the duties of (Mayor or Council member) upon which I am now about to enter. (So help me God.)

(c) *Seats.* The Town Council shall be divided into five separate Council seats to be designated as seats 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, to be voted on a Town wide basis, with each qualified elector entitled to vote for one candidate for one seat in separate contests.

(3) *Mayor; Vice Mayor.*

(a) *Mayor.* By the second regular meeting after December 1 each year, the Council shall by majority vote select from its membership a Mayor, who will serve for a one-year renewable term. The Mayor shall serve as chairperson during the meetings of the Council and shall serve as the head of municipal government for the purpose of execution of legal documents as required by ordinance. The

Mayor shall also serve as the ceremonial head of the Town.

(b) *Vice Mayor.* A Vice Mayor shall be selected in the same manner as the Mayor as provided in paragraph (a). The Vice Mayor shall serve as Mayor during the absence or disability of the Mayor and, if a vacancy of the Mayor occurs, shall become interim Mayor until a Mayor is selected as described in paragraph (a).

(4) *Compensation.* Council members other than the mayor will receive a salary of $1000 per month plus up to $300 per month for approved and documented official expenses; the mayor will receive a salary of $1250 per month plus up to $400 per month for approved and documented official expenses. The mayor and council members may participate in the Florida Retirement System, so long as the Town is not required to pay any additional amount.

(5) *Council meetings.*

(a) The Council shall hold meetings in accordance with a duly adopted ordinance or resolution. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Mayor or a majority of the Council members. At least a 24-hour notice shall be provided to each Council member and the public for special meetings unless there is an immediate threat to the public safety. Except as authorized by law, all meetings shall be open to the public.

(b) Three members of the Town Council shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business unless otherwise provided herein. Unless a quorum is present, no action may be taken except to adjourn. In order to approve any action or adopt any ordinance or resolution there must be at least three affirmative votes for the action, unless otherwise provided herein.

(c) The terms *ordinance* and *resolution* shall have the following meanings unless some other meaning is plainly indicated:

1. *Ordinance* means an official legislative action of the council which action is a regulation of general and permanent nature and enforceable as a local law.
2. *Resolution* means an expression of the city council concerning matters of

administration and expressions of a temporary character or a provision for the disposition of a particular item of the administrative business of the city council.

(6) *Prohibitions.*

(a) Neither the Council, nor any individual member of the Council, shall in any manner attempt to dictate the employment or removal of any employee other than the Town Manager and Town Attorney. The Council is free to make inquiries of Town employees, but no individual member of the Council shall give orders to any officer or employee of the Town. Recommendations for improvements in Town government operations shall come through the Town Manager, but each member of the Council shall be free to discuss or recommend improvements to the Town Manager, and the Council is free to direct the Town Manager to implement specific recommendations for improvement in Town government operations.

(b) No variances, re-zonings, or land use modifications may come before the Council which would inure to a Council member or mayor's special private gain or loss; which he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of any principal by whom he or she is retained or to the parent organization or subsidiary of a corporate principal by which he or she is retained; or which he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of a relative or business associate of the public officer, until that Council member or mayor is no longer serving on the Council.

(c) No present or former elected Town official shall hold any compensated appointive office or employment with the Town until two years after leaving office. No present or former elected Town official shall engage in lobbying or representing any external organization in front of the Council until two years after leaving office.

(7) *Vacancies; forfeiture of office; filling of vacancies.*

(a) *Vacancies.* A vacancy in the office of a member of the Council, Mayor, or Vice

Mayor shall occur upon the incumbent's death, inability to fulfill the duties of the office, relocation of residence outside the Town, resignation, appointment to another public office, judicially determined incompetence, or removal or forfeiture of office as described in this subsection.

(b) *Forfeiture of office.*

1. A member of the Council may forfeit the office if the member:
   a. Lacks at any time during the term of office any qualification for the office prescribed by this Charter or by law;
   b. Violates any express prohibition of this Charter;
   c. Is convicted of any felony or criminal misdemeanor;
   d. Is found to have violated any standard of conduct or code of ethics established by law for public officials or has been suspended from office by the Governor, unless subsequently reinstated as provided by law; or
   e. Misses three consecutive regularly scheduled Council meetings, unless excused by the Council.

   If any of these events should occur, a hearing shall automatically be conducted at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting, and the member may be declared to have forfeited office by majority vote of the Council.
2. The Council shall be the sole judge of the qualifications of its members and shall hear all questions relating to forfeiture of a Council member's office, including whether good cause for absence has been or may be established. The Council shall have the power to set additional written standards of conduct for its members beyond those specified in this Charter and may provide for such penalties as it deems appropriate, including forfeiture of office. In order to exercise these powers, the Council shall have power to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and require the production of evidence.

(c) *Filling of vacancies.*

1. A vacancy on the Council shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Council for the period of time until the next election, when a Council member shall be elected for the remainder of the term vacated. If more than one year remains in the unexpired term and a majority of the remaining Council members cannot reach a decision within 60 days after a vacancy occurs, the vacancy shall be filled by a special election.
2. In the event that all of the Council members are removed by death, disability, recall, forfeiture of office, or resignation, the Governor shall appoint interim Council members who shall call a special election at least 30 days, but no more than 60 days, after such appointment. Such election shall be held in the same manner as the initial elections under this Charter. However, if there is less than one year remaining in any unexpired terms, the interim Council appointed by the Governor shall serve out the unexpired terms. Appointees must meet all requirements for candidates as provided in this Charter.
3. The burden of establishing good cause for absences shall be on the Council member in question; however, any Council member may, at any time during a duly held meeting, move to establish good cause for his or her absence. A Council member whose qualifications are in question or who is otherwise subject to forfeiture of his or her office shall not vote on such matters.

Section 5. – Administration.

(1) *Town Manager.*

(a) The Council shall appoint a Town Manager, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Council. The qualifications of the Town Manager may be established by ordinance.

(b) The Town Manager may be removed by a majority vote of the Council.

(c) During the absence or disability of the Town Manager, the Town Council may by resolution designate a properly qualified person to temporarily execute the functions of the Town Manager. Such person shall have the same powers and duties as the Town Manager and may be removed by the Town Council at any time upon a majority vote of the Council.

(d) The Town Manager shall:

1. Appoint, hire, suspend, demote, or dismiss any Town employee under the Town Manager's jurisdiction in accordance with law, and may authorize any department head to exercise these powers with respect to subordinates in that department.

2. Direct and supervise the administration of all departments of the Town except the Office of the Town Attorney.

(2) *Town Attorney.* There shall be a Town Attorney who shall be a member of the Florida Bar in good standing, be appointed by the Council, and serve as the chief legal advisor to the Council and Town administrators, departments, and agencies. The Council may remove the Town Attorney for any reason by a majority vote of its members.

Section 6. – Departments; personnel; planning.

(1) *Departments; boards; agencies.* The Council may establish, modify, or terminate such departments, boards, or agencies as it determines necessary for the efficient administrative operation of the Town. Such departments, boards, or agencies shall be determined by ordinance.

(2) *Personnel.* Consistent with all applicable state and federal laws, the Council shall provide by ordinance for the establishment, regulation, and maintenance of a system governing personnel policies necessary for the effective administration of employees of the Town's departments, boards, and agencies.

(3) *Planning.* Consistent with all applicable state and federal laws with respect to land use, development, and environmental protection, the Town shall:

(a) Designate an employee, agency, or agencies to execute the planning functions with such decision-making responsibilities as may be specified by ordinance or general law.

(b) Adopt a comprehensive plan and ensure that zoning and other land use control ordinances are consistent with the plan, all in accordance with general law. The Golden Gate Area Master Plan: Rural Golden Gate Estates Sub-Element, as it exists on the day that the Town commences corporate existence, shall serve as the initial comprehensive plan of the Town until the Town adopts its own comprehensive plan pursuant to F.S. Ch. 163.

(c) Adopt zoning and development regulations, to be specified by ordinance, to implement the plan.

(d) All land use and quasi-judicial items require the unanimous vote of the entire Council. All five members of the Council shall be required to vote on all land use and quasi-judicial items. All voting shall be by roll call.

(e) Additionally, any long-term leases (10 years or more, including options to renew) of Town property or purchase or sale of land by the Town require unanimous council vote and two-thirds vote of the electorate.

Section 7. – Financial management.

(1) *Fiscal year.* The fiscal year of the Town shall begin on the first day of October and end on the last day of September of each year.

(2) *Expenditure of Town funds.* No Town funds shall be expended except pursuant to duly approved appropriations or for the payment of bonds, notes, or other indebtedness duly authorized by the Council and only from such funds so authorized.

(3) *Budget adoption.* The Council shall adopt a budget in accordance with applicable general law, after a minimum of two public hearings on the proposed budget. A resolution adopting the annual budget shall constitute appropriation of the amounts specified therein as expenditures from funds indicated.

(4) *Expenditures.* The budget shall not provide for expenditures in an amount greater than the revenues budgeted.

(5) *Appropriations.*

(a) If, during the fiscal year, revenues in excess of such revenues estimated in the budget are available for appropriation, the Council by resolution may make supplemental appropriations for the year in an amount not to exceed such excess.

(b) If, at any time during the fiscal year, it appears probable to the Town Manager that the revenues available will be insufficient to meet the amount appropriated, the Town Manager shall report to the Council without delay, indicating the estimated amount of the deficiency, any remedial action taken, and recommendations as to any other steps that should be taken. The Council shall then take such further action as it deems necessary to prevent or minimize any deficiency and, for that purpose, the Council may by resolution reduce one or more appropriations accordingly.

(c) No appropriation for debt service may be reduced or transferred, and no appropriation may be reduced below any amount required by law to be appropriated, or by more than the unencumbered balance thereof. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the supplemental and emergency appropriations and reduction or transfer of appropriations authorized by this section may be made effective immediately upon adoption.

(6) *Bonds; indebtedness.*

(a) Subject to the referendum requirements of the State Constitution, if applicable, the Town may from time to time borrow money and issue bonds or other obligations or evidence of indebtedness (collectively, "bonds") of any type or character for any of the purposes for which the Town is now or hereafter authorized by law to borrow money, including to finance the cost of any capital or other project and to refund any and all previous issues of bonds at or before maturity. Such bonds may be issued pursuant to one or more resolutions adopted by a majority of the Council and are subject to a debt limit that caps the amount of outstanding long-term obligations at ten percent of assessed property values.

(b) The Town may assume all outstanding indebtedness related to facilities that it acquires from other units of local government and be liable for payment of such indebtedness in accordance with its terms.

(c) *Revenue bonds.* Revenue bonds may be issued by the Town as authorized by law.

(7) *Annual audit.* The Council shall provide for an independent annual financial audit of all Town accounts and may provide for more frequent audits as it deems necessary. Such audits shall be made by a certified public accountant or a firm of such accountants who have no personal interest, directly or indirectly, in the fiscal affairs of the Town government or in any of its officers.

(8) *Shortfalls.* The State is not liable for financial shortfalls of the Town.

Section 8. – Nominations and elections.

(1) *Nonpartisan elections; electors; qualifying.*

(a) *Nonpartisan elections.* All elections shall be conducted on a nonpartisan basis without designation of political party affiliation.

(b) *Electors.* Any person who is a resident of the Town, who has qualified as an elector of this State, and who registers as prescribed by law, shall be an elector of the Town.

(c) *Qualifying.*

1. Each candidate for Town Council shall be a qualified elector of the Town and must reside in the Town for at least two years before the beginning of the qualifying period for the office sought.

2. Any elector of the Town who wishes to become a candidate for Town Council shall qualify with the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County for the initial election; thereafter, candidates shall qualify with the official designated by Town resolution or general law by providing proof of voter registration, current address, and two years of residency in the Town unless the Town Council, by resolution, provides that the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County conduct the candidate qualification process.

3. The qualifying period for candidates for Town Council shall be the same as

provided by the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County or as otherwise provided by ordinance.

(2) *Elections.*

(a) *Adoption of Florida Election Code.* All elections required under any article or section of this Charter shall be conducted in accordance with the Florida Election Code, F.S. Chs. 97-106, except as otherwise provided in this Charter. The Council, by ordinance, may adopt such election procedures as are necessary and as provided by F.S. Chs. 97-106.

(b) *Election spending.* Election spending is capped at $1 per registered voter for referendum votes and $2 per registered voter for council candidates (these amounts can increase annually by the Consumer Price Index or three percent, whichever is less).

(c) *At-large elections.*

1. The first regular election of Council members shall be held March 5, 2024, and thereafter will coincide with the date of the general election of each even-numbered year, unless this date is required to be changed to a date concurrent with any countywide or statewide election.
2. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the Town at-large election in each separate contest shall be elected.
3. The term of office for an elected Council member shall begin immediately after official certification of the results of the election and shall expire upon the assumption of office by his or her successor.
4. No election for a Council member seat shall be required if there is only one duly qualified candidate in such contest for the Council member seat.

(d) *Town Canvassing Board.* The Canvassing Board shall be composed of three members appointed by the Town Council by resolution. No member of the Town Canvassing Board shall be an active participant in the Town election for which he or she is canvassing as the term "active participant" is interpreted by the Division of Elections. Should a vacancy occur on the Canvassing Board, the Town Council shall appoint a replacement member by resolution. The Town Canvassing Board shall canvass the election consistent with the requirements of Florida law and consistent with and pursuant to any agreement between the Town and the Collier County Supervisor of Elections. The Canvassing Board shall certify the results of the election upon receipt of the certification from the supervisor of elections. However, the Town Council may, by resolution, delegate the election canvassing responsibilities for Town elections to the county Canvassing Board.

(3) *Recall.* The qualified electors of the Town shall have the power to remove from office any elected official of the Town in accordance with state law.

Section 9. – Initiative and referendum.

The powers of initiative and referendum are reserved to the qualified registered electors of the Town. The election laws of the State shall govern the exercise of the powers of initiative and referendum under this Charter.

Section 10. – General provisions.

(1) *Code of ethics.* It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of the Town that the officers and employees of the Town be independent and impartial and for their offices not to be used for private gain other than the remuneration provided by law or by ordinances. It is declared to be the policy of the Town that its officers and employees are agents of the people and hold their positions for the benefit of the public. All public officers, employees, members of the Town licensing or advisory boards, and candidates for elected office shall conform to the "Code of Ethics for Public Officials and Employees", F.S. Ch. 122, Pt. III, as presently exist or may be revised in the future.

(2) *Amendments to Charter.* This Charter may be amended in accordance with the provisions for Charter amendments as specified in the Municipal Home Rules Powers Act, F.S. Ch. 166, or as otherwise may be provided by general law. Amendments must

be approved by referendum, with a positive vote from at least two-thirds of the electors voting.

(3) *Severability.* If any provision of this Charter or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect provisions or applications of this Charter which can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application, and to this end the provisions of the Charter are declared severable.

Section 11. – Referendum election; transition.

(1) *Referendum election.* The referendum election called for by this action shall be held on November 7, 2023, at which time the following question shall be placed upon the ballot:

Shall the Town of Golden Gate Estates be created and its Charter adopted?

YES __

NO __

In the event this question is answered affirmatively by a majority of electors voting in the referendum, the Charter will take effect as provided herein. The referendum election shall be conducted by the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County in accordance with the Florida Election Code, and the cost of such election shall be funded by the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County.

(2) *Initial election of Council.*

(a) After the adoption of this Charter, the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County shall call an election to be held March 5, 2024, for the election of five Town Council members. The election shall be conducted by the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County in accordance with the Florida Election Code, and the cost of such election shall be funded by the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County.

(b) An individual who wishes to run for one of five initial seats on the Council shall qualify with the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County in accordance with this

Charter and general law. The qualifying period for the initial election of the Town Council shall begin at noon on January 8, 2024, and end at noon on January 12, 2024, unless otherwise provided by law.

(c) For the initial elections, the County Canvassing Board shall certify the results of the elections in accordance with general law.

(d) The three Council members receiving the highest numbers of votes shall each be elected to an initial term expiring upon certification of the election results for the November 2028 election. The two remaining Council members shall each be elected to an initial term expiring upon certification of the election results for the November 2026 election. Thereafter, all terms shall be for a period of four years.

(3) *First council meeting.* On March 19, 2024, provided the results of the election of the Town Council under this Charter have been certified, the newly elected members of the Town Council shall meet at a location to be determined. In the event the results have not been certified by March 19, 2024, the newly elected members shall meet on the following Tuesday. The initial Council shall have the authority and power to enter into contracts, arrange for the hiring of legal counsel, begin recruiting applicants for Town Manager, provide for necessary Town offices and facilities, and do such other things as it deems necessary and appropriate for the Town.

(4) *Initial expenses.* The Council, in order to provide moneys for the expenses and support of the Town, shall have the power to borrow money necessary for the operation of municipal government until such time as a budget is adopted and revenues are raised in accordance with this Charter.

(5) *Transitional ordinances and resolutions.*

(a) All applicable county ordinances currently in place at the time of passage of the referendum, unless specifically referenced in this Charter, shall remain in place until and unless rescinded by action of the Council, except that a county ordinance, rule, or regulation that is in conflict with an ordinance, rule, or regulation of the Town shall not be effective to the extent of such conflict. Any existing Collier County ordinances, rules, and regulations, as of April 1, 2024, shall not be altered, changed, rescinded, or added to, nor shall any variance be granted, if such action would affect the Town without the approval of the Council.

(b) The Council shall adopt ordinances and resolutions required to effect the transition.

(6) *Transitional comprehensive plan.* Until such time as the Town adopts a comprehensive plan, the Golden Gate Area Master Plan: Rural Golden Gate Estates Sub-Element, as it exists on the day that the Town commences corporate existence, shall remain in effect as the Town's transitional comprehensive plan. However, all planning functions, duties, and authority shall thereafter be vested in the Council, which shall be deemed the local planning agency until the Council establishes a separate local planning agency.

(7) *Transitional land development regulations.* To implement the transitional comprehensive land use plan when adopted, the Town shall, in accordance with the procedures required by the laws of the State, adopt ordinances providing for land use development regulations within the corporate limits. Until the Town adopts ordinances, the following shall apply:

(a) The comprehensive land use plan and land use development regulations of Collier County, as the same exists on the date that the Town commenced corporate existence, shall remain in effect as the Town's transitional land use development regulations and comprehensive land use plan.

(b) All powers and duties of the Collier County Growth Management Department, the Collier County Code Enforcement Special Magistrate, and Board of County Commissioners of Collier County, as provided in these transitional land use development regulations, shall be vested in the Council until such time as the Council delegates all powers and duties, or a portion thereof, to another agency, department, or entity.

(c) Subsequent to the adoption of a local comprehensive land use plan and subject to general law, the Council is fully empowered to amend, supersede, enforce, or repeal the transitional land use development regulations, or any portion thereof, by ordinance.

(d) Subsequent to the commencement of the Town's corporate existence, an amendment of the comprehensive land use plan or land use development regulations enacted by the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County shall not be deemed an amendment of the Town's transitional comprehensive land use plan or land use development regulations or otherwise take effect within the Town's municipal boundaries.

(8) *State-shared revenues.* The Town shall be entitled to participate in all revenue sharing programs of the state effective April 1, 2024. The provisions of F.S. Ch. 218.23(1) shall be waived for the purpose of conducting audits and financial reporting through the end of the Town fiscal year 2024-2025. The Town will establish an ad valorem millage rate that, in combination with either the millage levied by the North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District or that of the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District, satisfies the requirements of F.S. Ch. 218.23(1). Initial revised population estimates for calculating eligibility for shared revenues shall be determined by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research. Should the Bureau be unable to provide an appropriate population estimate, the Collier County Department of Community Development shall provide the estimate.

(9) *Local revenue sources.* The Town shall be entitled to receive all local revenue sources available pursuant to general law, including, but not limited to, the local communications services tax imposed under F.S. Ch. 202.19. The local communications services tax rate imposed by Collier County will continue within the Town boundaries during the period commencing with the date of incorporation through October 1, 2025. Revenues from the tax shall be shared by Collier County with the Town in proportion to the projected Town population estimate of the Collier County Planning Division compared with the unincorporated population of Collier County before the incorporation of the Town.

(10) *Local option gas tax revenues.* Notwithstanding the requirements of F.S. Ch. 336.025, the Town shall be entitled to receive local option gas tax revenue beginning on October 1, 2024. These revenues shall be distributed in accordance with general law or by any

interlocal agreement negotiated with the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County.

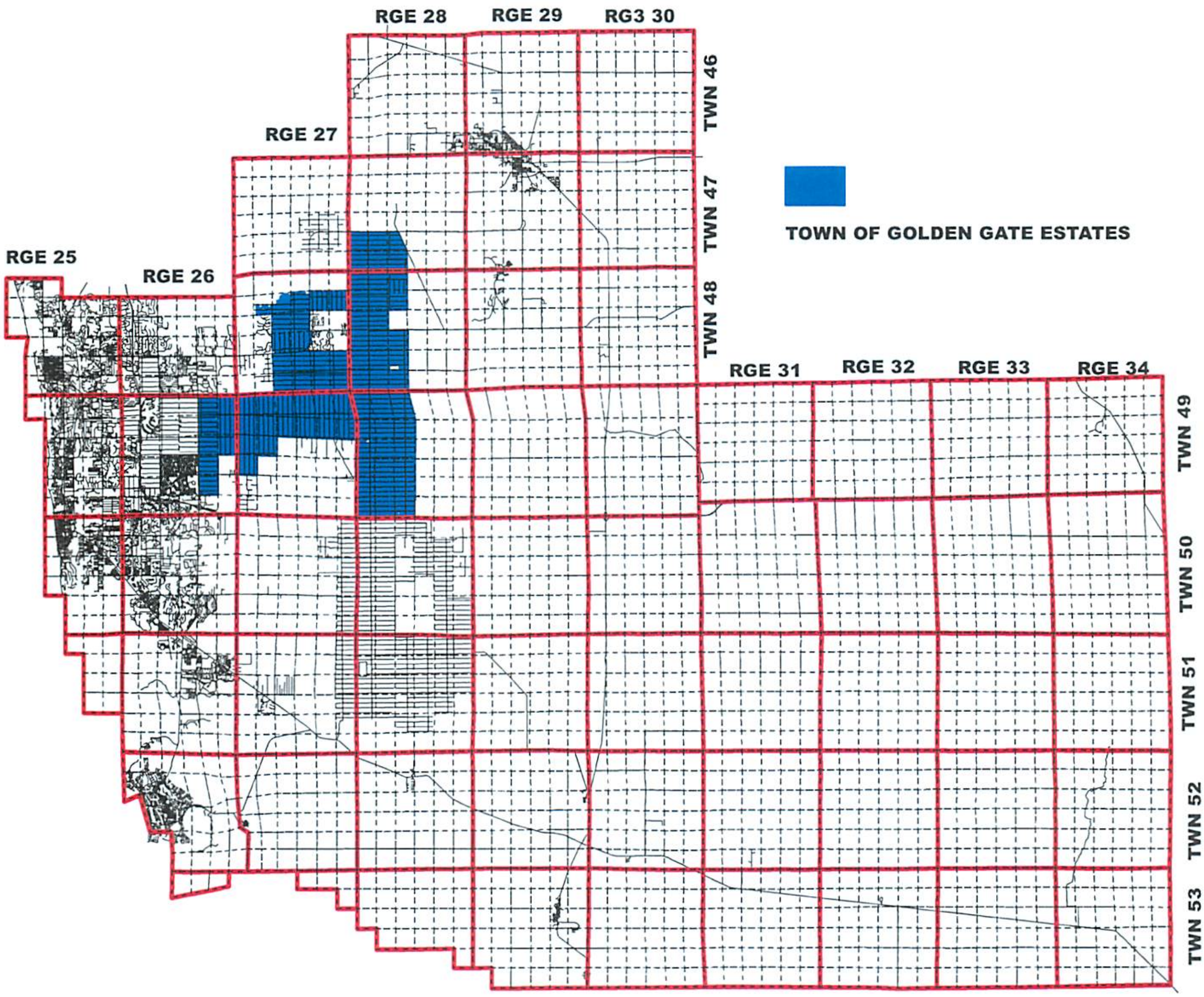
(11) *Contractual services and facilities.* Contractual services for law enforcement, emergency management, public works, parks and recreation, planning and zoning, building inspection, development review, animal control, library services, Town Manager or management firm, Town Attorney, and solid waste collection may be supplied by a contract between the Town and the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County, special districts, municipalities, or private enterprise until such time as the Council establishes such independent services. However, existing solid waste contracts shall be honored as required by F.S. Ch. 165.061(1)(f) and Ch. 10, Art. I of the State Constitution. Facilities for housing the newly formed municipal operations may be rented or leased until the Town selects more permanent facilities.

(12) *Collier County Municipal Service Taxing District; continuation.* Notwithstanding the incorporation of the Town of Golden Gate Estates, that portion of the Golden Gate Community Center municipal services taxing district that lies within the boundaries of the Town of Golden Gate Estates, is authorized to continue in existence until the Town adopts an ordinance, resolution, or interlocal agreement to the contrary.

(13) *Law enforcement.* Law enforcement services shall be provided by the Collier County Sheriff's Office until the Town adopts an ordinance or resolution or enters into an interlocal agreement to the contrary.

(14) *Elimination of transitional elements from this Charter.* Upon completion of the transitional phase provided in this Charter, the sections of the Charter relating to transition may be eliminated from this Charter.

PROJECT LOCATION MAP
EXHIBIT A



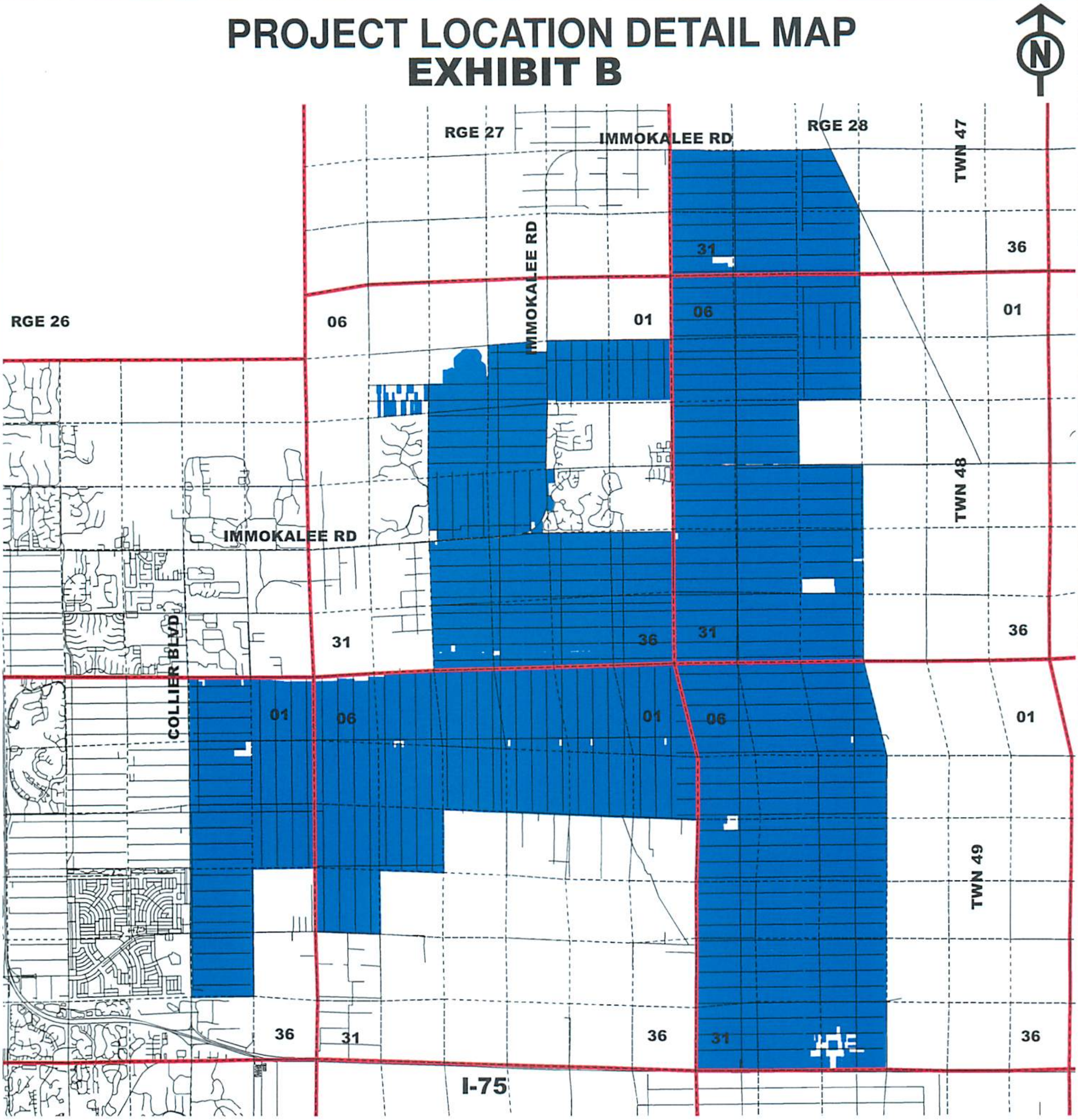
PROJECT: GOLDEN GATE ESTATES INCORPORATION
COLLIER CO,NAPLES,FL

Figure 1. Project Location Map.

Golden Gate Estates Community, Collier Co, Naples, FL
Twn 47,48,49 ; Rge 26,27,28 ; totaling 53,839.72 acres

GGEACA
Golden Gate Estates Are:
Civic Association
2631 4th St. NW
Naples FL, 34120
239.564.1660
www.ggeaca.org
EstatesAreaVoice@gmail.com

PROJECT LOCATION DETAIL MAP
EXHIBIT B



PROJECT: GOLDEN GATE ESTATES INCORPORATION
COLLIER CO,NAPLES,FL

Figure 2. Project Location Detail Map.

Golden Gate Estates Community, Collier Co, Naples, FL
Twn 47,48,49 ; Rge 26,27,28 ; totaling 53,839.72 acres

GGEACA
Golden Gate Estates Area
Civic Association
2631 4th St. NW
Naples FL, 34120
239.564.1660
www.ggeaca.org
EstatesAreaVoice@gmail.com

An act relating to Collier County; creating the Town of Golden Gate Estates; providing a charter; providing legislative intent; providing for a council-manager form of government; providing boundaries; providing municipal powers; providing for a town council and composition thereof; providing for eligibility, terms, duties, compensation and reimbursement of expenses of council members; providing for a mayor and vice mayor; providing scheduling requirements of council meetings; prohibiting interference with town employees; providing for filling of vacancies and forfeiture of office; providing for the appointment of a town manager and town attorney and the qualifications, removal, powers and duties thereof; providing for the establishment of town departments, agencies, personnel and boards; providing for an annual independent audit; providing that the state is not liable for financial shortfalls of the town; providing for nonpartisan elections and matters relating thereto; providing for the recall of council members; providing for initiative and referenda;

providing for a code of ethics; providing for future amendment to the charter; providing for severability; providing a town transition schedule and procedures for the first election; providing for first-year expenses; providing for adoption of comprehensive plans and land development regulations; providing for accelerated entitlement to state-shared revenues; providing for entitlement to all local revenue sources allowed by general law; providing for the sharing of communication services tax revenues; providing for receipt and distribution of local option gas tax revenues; providing for waiver of specified eligibility provisions; requiring a referendum; providing effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

TOWN OF GOLDEN
GATE ESTATES

Section 1. – Corporate name; purpose of the Charter; creation and establishment of the Town of Golden Gate Estates, in the County of Collier ("County") and State of Florida ("State").

(1) *Corporate name.* The municipality hereby established shall be known as the Town of Golden Gate Estates ("Town").

(2) *Purpose of the Charter.* This act, together with any future amendments thereto, may be known as the Charter of the Town of Golden Gate Estates ("Charter").

(a) It is in the best interests of the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Golden Gate Estates area to form a separate municipality for the Golden Gate Estates area with all the powers and authority necessary to provide adequate and efficient municipal services to its residents.

(b) It is intended that this Charter and the incorporation of the Golden Gate Estates area will serve to preserve, enhance, and protect the rural residential character, natural resources, and quality of life of the community.

(c) It is the intent of this Charter and the incorporation of the Town to secure the benefits of self-determination and affirm the values of representative democracy, citizen participation, strong community leadership, professional management, and regional cooperation.

(d) It is the intent of this Charter and the incorporation of the Town to maintain a financially secure and sustainable municipal government and to responsibly manage the Town's debt obligations without causing the State to incur any liability.

(3) *Creation and establishment of the Town of Golden Gate Estates.*

(a) This act shall take effect upon approval by a majority vote of those qualified electors residing within the corporate limits of the proposed Town as described in section 3 voting in a referendum election to be called by the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County in conjunction with the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County to be held November 5, 2024, in accordance with the provisions of laws relating to elections currently in force.

(b) For the purpose of compliance with F.S. Ch. 200.066, relating to assessment and collection of ad valorem taxes, the Town of Golden Gate Estates is created and established effective December 31, 2024.

Section 2. – Powers of Town; form of government.

(1) *Powers of the Town.* The Town shall have all available governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers of a municipality under the State Constitution and laws of this State as fully and completely as though such powers were specifically enumerated in this Charter, and may exercise them, except where prohibited by law. Through the adoption of this Charter, it is the intent of the electors of the Town that the municipal government established in this section shall have the broadest exercise of home rule powers permitted under the State Constitution and laws of the State.

(2) *Construction.* The powers of the Town under this Charter shall be construed liberally in favor of the Town, and the specific mention of particular powers in the Charter shall not be construed as limiting the general powers granted in this Charter in any way.

(3) *Form of government.* The Town shall be a Council-Manager form of government, with the Council to consist of five Town Council ("Council") members elected by the Town at large. The Council shall constitute the governing body of the Town, with the duties and responsibilities hereinafter provided. The Council shall appoint a Town Manager to be the Chief Administrative Officer

of the Town who shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.

Section 3. – Corporate boundaries.

The territorial boundaries of the Town of Golden Gate Estates upon the date of incorporation shall be as follows:

These properties are generally east of CR 951, north of I-75, south and east of Immokalee Rd, and zoned "Estates." Properties described are NOT owned by County, State or Federal Governments, Collier School District. As shown in Exhibit A and Exhibit B.

Total Acreage: All lying in Collier County being approximately 53,839.72 acres [subject to verification].

All of section 28 southwest of Oil Well Rd;

All of sections 29-33; Township 47, Range 28;

The south 1/2 of section 08 not owned by Collier County;

All of sections 09-12, 15-16, 21-22;

Those parts of section 23 in the west 1/4 not owned by Orange Tree HOA;

All of sections 25-28, 33-36; Township 48, Range 27;

All of sections 04-09, 19-21, 28-33; Township 48, Range 28;

All of sections 01-02, 13-14, 23, 26; Township 49, Range 26;

All of sections 01-12, 17-19; Township 49, Range 27;

All of sections 04-09, 16-21, 28-33; Township 49, Range 28

Section 4. – Town Council.

(1) *General powers and duties.* All powers of the Town shall be vested in the Town Council, except as otherwise provided by law or this Charter, and the Council shall provide for the exercise thereof and for the performance of all duties and obligations permitted by or imposed on the Town by law.

(2) *Composition; eligibility; terms.*

(a) *Composition.* There shall be a Town Council composed of five Council members. Each Council member shall be elected by the electors of the Town at large.

(b) *Eligibility and term of office.*

1. Each candidate for Town Council shall be a qualified elector of the Town.

2. Each candidate for Council shall have been a resident of the Town for at least two years before qualifying for office.

3. Each Council member must reside in the Town for the duration of his or her term.

4. The term of office for each Council member shall be four years.

5. No Council member will serve more than two full terms and no more than eight years in a lifetime

6. Elected officials shall swear to uphold the Oath of Office:

   I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, protect, and defend the

   Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida, and the Charter of the Town of Golden Gate Estates; and will protect the rural residential character of the Town; that I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the State and the Charter of the Town of Golden Gate Estates; and that I will well and faithfully perform the duties of (Mayor or Council member) upon which I am now about to enter. (So help me God.)

(c) *Seats.* The Town Council shall be divided into five separate Council seats to be designated as seats 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, to be voted on a Town wide basis, with each qualified elector entitled to vote for one candidate for one seat in separate contests.

(3) *Mayor; Vice Mayor.*

(a) *Mayor.* By the second regular meeting after December 1 each year, the Council shall by majority vote select from its membership a Mayor, who will serve for a one-year renewable term. The Mayor shall serve as chairperson during the meetings of the Council and shall serve as the head of municipal government for the purpose of execution of legal documents as required by ordinance. The Mayor shall also serve as the ceremonial head of the Town.

(b) *Vice Mayor.* A Vice Mayor shall be selected in the same manner as the Mayor as provided in paragraph (a). The Vice Mayor shall serve as Mayor during the absence or disability of the Mayor and, if a vacancy of the Mayor occurs, shall become interim Mayor until a Mayor is selected as described in paragraph (a).

(4) *Compensation.* Council members other than the mayor will receive a salary of $1000 per month plus up to $300 per month for approved and documented official expenses; the mayor will receive a salary of $1250 per month plus up to $400 per month for approved and documented official expenses. The mayor and

council members may participate in the Florida Retirement System, so long as the Town is not required to pay any additional amount.

(5) *Council meetings.*

(a) The Council shall hold meetings in accordance with a duly adopted ordinance or resolution. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Mayor or a majority of the Council members. At least a 24-hour notice shall be provided to each Council member and the public for special meetings unless there is an immediate threat to the public safety. Except as authorized by law, all meetings shall be open to the public.

(b) Three members of the Town Council shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business unless otherwise provided herein. Unless a quorum is present, no action may be taken except to adjourn. In order to approve any action or adopt any ordinance or resolution there must be at least three affirmative votes for the action, unless otherwise provided herein.

(c) The terms *ordinance* and *resolution* shall have the following meanings unless some other meaning is plainly indicated:

1. *Ordinance* means an official legislative action of the council which action is a regulation of general and permanent nature and enforceable as a local law.

2. *Resolution* means an expression of the city council concerning matters of administration and expressions of a temporary character or a provision for the disposition of a particular item of the administrative business of the city council.

(6) *Prohibitions.*

(a) Neither the Council, nor any individual member of the Council, shall in any manner attempt to dictate the employment or removal of any employee other than the Town Manager and Town Attorney. The Council is free to make inquiries of Town employees, but no individual member of the Council shall give orders to any officer or employee of the Town. Recommendations for improvements in Town government operations shall come through the Town Manager, but each member of the Council shall be free to discuss or recommend improvements to the Town Manager, and the Council is free to direct the Town Manager to implement specific recommendations for improvement in Town government operations.

(b) No variances, re-zonings, or land use modifications may come before the Council which would inure to a Council member or mayor's special private gain or loss; which he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of any principal by whom he or she is retained or to the parent organization or subsidiary of a corporate principal by which he or she is retained; or which he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of a relative or business associate of the public officer, until that Council member or mayor is no longer serving on the Council.

(c) No present or former elected Town official shall hold any compensated appointive office or employment with the Town until two years after leaving office. No present or former elected Town official shall engage in lobbying or representing any external organization in front of the Council until two years after leaving office.

(7) *Vacancies; forfeiture of office; filling of vacancies.*

(a) *Vacancies.* A vacancy in the office of a member of the Council, Mayor, or Vice Mayor shall occur upon the incumbent's death, inability to fulfill the duties of the office, relocation of residence outside the Town, resignation, appointment to another public office, judicially determined incompetence, or removal or forfeiture of office as described in this subsection.

(b) *Forfeiture of office.*

1. A member of the Council may forfeit the office if the member:
   a. Lacks at any time during the term of office any qualification for the office prescribed by this Charter or by law.
   b. Violates any express prohibition of this Charter.
   c. Is convicted of any felony or criminal misdemeanor.
   d. Is found to have violated any standard of conduct or code of ethics established by law for public officials or has been suspended from office by the Governor, unless subsequently reinstated as provided by law; or
   e. Misses three consecutive regularly scheduled Council

meetings, unless excused by the Council.

If any of these events should occur, a hearing shall automatically be conducted at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting, and the member may be declared to have forfeited office by majority vote of the Council.

2. The Council shall be the sole judge of the qualifications of its members and shall hear all questions relating to forfeiture of a Council member's office, including whether good cause for absence has been or may be established. The Council shall have the power to set additional written standards of conduct for its members beyond those specified in this Charter and may provide for such penalties as it deems appropriate, including forfeiture of office. In order to exercise these powers, the Council shall have power to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and require the production of evidence.

(c) *Filling of vacancies.*

1. A vacancy on the Council shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Council for the period of time until the next election, when a Council member shall be

elected for the remainder of the term vacated. If more than one year remains in the unexpired term and a majority of the remaining Council members cannot reach a decision within 60 days after a vacancy occurs, the vacancy shall be filled by a special election.

2. In the event that all of the Council members are removed by death, disability, recall, forfeiture of office, or resignation, the Governor shall appoint interim Council members who shall call a special election at least 30 days, but no more than 60 days, after such appointment. Such election shall be held in the same manner as the initial elections under this Charter. However, if there is less than one year remaining in any unexpired terms, the interim Council appointed by the Governor shall serve out the unexpired terms. Appointees must meet all requirements for candidates as provided in this Charter.

3. The burden of establishing good cause for absences shall be on the Council member in question; however, any Council member may, at any time during a duly held meeting, move to establish good cause for his or her absence. A Council

member whose qualifications are in question or who is otherwise subject to forfeiture of his or her office shall not vote on such matters.

Section 5. – Administration.

(1) *Town Manager.*

(a) The Council shall appoint a Town Manager, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Council. The qualifications of the Town Manager may be established by ordinance.

(b) The Town Manager may be removed by a majority vote of the Council.

(c) During the absence or disability of the Town Manager, the Town Council may by resolution designate a properly qualified person to temporarily execute the functions of the Town Manager. Such person shall have the same powers and duties as the Town Manager and may be removed by the Town Council at any time upon a majority vote of the Council.

(d) The Town Manager shall:

1. Appoint, hire, suspend, demote, or dismiss any Town employee under the Town Manager's jurisdiction in

accordance with law, and may authorize any department head to exercise these powers with respect to subordinates in that department.

2. Direct and supervise the administration of all departments of the Town except the Office of the Town Attorney.

(2) *Town Attorney*. There shall be a Town Attorney who shall be a member of the Florida Bar in good standing, be appointed by the Council, and serve as the chief legal advisor to the Council and Town administrators, departments, and agencies. The Council may remove the Town Attorney for any reason by a majority vote of its members.

Section 6. – Departments; personnel; planning.

(1) *Departments; boards; agencies*. The Council may establish, modify, or terminate such departments, boards, or agencies as it determines necessary for the efficient administrative operation of the Town. Such departments, boards, or agencies shall be determined by ordinance.

(2) *Personnel*. Consistent with all applicable state and federal laws, the Council shall provide by ordinance for the establishment, regulation, and maintenance of a system

governing personnel policies necessary for the effective administration of employees of the Town's departments, boards, and agencies.

(3) *Planning.* Consistent with all applicable state and federal laws with respect to land use, development, and environmental protection, the Town shall:

(a) Designate an employee, agency, or agencies to execute the planning functions with such decision-making responsibilities as may be specified by ordinance or general law.

(b) Adopt a comprehensive plan and ensure that zoning and other land use control ordinances are consistent with the plan, all in accordance with general law. The Golden Gate Area Master Plan: Rural Golden Gate Estates Sub-Element, as it exists on the day that the Town commences corporate existence, shall serve as the initial comprehensive plan of the Town until the Town adopts its own comprehensive plan pursuant to F.S. Ch. 163.

(c) Adopt zoning and development regulations, to be specified by ordinance, to implement the plan.

(d) All land use and quasi-judicial items require the unanimous vote of the entire Council. All five members of the Council shall be required to vote on all land use and quasi-judicial items. All voting shall be by roll call.

(e) Additionally, any long-term leases (10 years or more, including options to renew) of Town property or purchase or sale of land by the Town require unanimous council vote and two-thirds vote of the electorate.

Section 7. – Financial management.

(1) *Fiscal year.* The fiscal year of the Town shall begin on the first day of October and end on the last day of September of each year.

(2) *Expenditure of Town funds.* No Town funds shall be expended except pursuant to duly approved appropriations or for the payment of bonds, notes, or other indebtedness duly authorized by the Council and only from such funds so authorized.

(3) *Budget adoption.* The Council shall adopt a budget in accordance with applicable general law, after a minimum of two public hearings on the proposed budget. A resolution adopting the annual budget shall constitute appropriation of the amounts specified therein as expenditures from funds indicated.

(4) *Expenditures.* The budget shall not provide for expenditures in

an amount greater than the revenues budgeted.

(5) *Appropriations.*

(a) If, during the fiscal year, revenues in excess of such revenues estimated in the budget are available for appropriation, the Council by resolution may make supplemental appropriations for the year in an amount not to exceed such excess.

(b) If, at any time during the fiscal year, it appears probable to the Town Manager that the revenues available will be insufficient to meet the amount appropriated, the Town Manager shall report to the Council without delay, indicating the estimated amount of the deficiency, any remedial action taken, and recommendations as to any other steps that should be taken. The Council shall then take such further action as it deems necessary to prevent or minimize any deficiency and, for that purpose, the Council may by resolution reduce one or more appropriations accordingly.

(c) No appropriation for debt service may be reduced or transferred, and no appropriation may be reduced below any amount required by law to be appropriated, or by more than the unencumbered balance thereof. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the supplemental and emergency appropriations and reduction or transfer of appropriations authorized by this section may be made effective immediately upon adoption.

(6) *Bonds; indebtedness.*

(a) Subject to the referendum requirements of the State Constitution, if applicable, the Town may from time to time borrow money and issue bonds or other obligations or evidence of indebtedness (collectively, "bonds") of any type or character for any of the purposes for which the Town is now or hereafter authorized by law to borrow money, including to finance the cost of any capital or other project and to refund any and all previous issues of bonds at or before maturity. Such bonds may be issued pursuant to one or more resolutions adopted by a majority of the Council and are subject to a debt limit that caps the amount of outstanding long-term obligations at ten percent of assessed property values.

(b) The Town may assume all outstanding indebtedness related to facilities that it acquires from other units of local government and be liable for payment of such indebtedness in accordance with its terms.

(c) *Revenue bonds.* Revenue bonds may be issued by the Town as authorized by law.

(7) *Annual audit.* The Council shall provide for an independent annual financial audit of all Town accounts and may provide for more frequent audits as it deems necessary. Such audits shall be made by a certified public accountant or a firm of such accountants who have no personal interest, directly or indirectly, in the fiscal affairs of the Town government or in any of its officers.

(8) *Shortfalls.* The State is not liable for financial shortfalls of the Town.

Section 8. – Nominations and elections.

(1) *Nonpartisan elections; electors; qualifying.*

(a) *Nonpartisan elections.* All elections shall be conducted on a nonpartisan basis without designation of political party affiliation.

(b) *Electors.* Any person who is a resident of the Town, who has qualified as an elector of this State, and who registers as prescribed by law, shall be an elector of the Town.

(c) *Qualifying.*

1. Each candidate for Town Council shall be a qualified elector of the Town and must reside in the Town for at least two years before the beginning of the qualifying period for the office sought.
2. Any elector of the Town who wishes to become a candidate for Town Council shall qualify with the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County for the initial election; thereafter, candidates shall qualify with the official designated by Town resolution or general law by providing proof of voter registration, current address, and two years of residency in the Town unless the Town Council, by resolution, provides that the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County conduct the candidate qualification process.
3. The qualifying period for candidates for Town Council shall be the same as provided by the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County or as otherwise provided by ordinance.

(2) *Elections.*

(a) *Adoption of Florida Election Code.* All elections required under any article or section of this Charter shall be conducted in accordance with the Florida Election Code, F.S. Chs. 97-106, except as otherwise provided in this Charter. The Council, by ordinance, may adopt such election procedures as are necessary and as provided by F.S. Chs. 97- 106.

(b) *Election spending.* Election spending is capped at $1 per registered voter for referendum votes and $2 per registered voter for council candidates (these amounts can increase annually by the Consumer Price Index or three percent, whichever is less).

(c) *At-large elections.*

1. The first regular election of Council members shall be held March 4, 2025, and thereafter will coincide with the date of the general election of each even- numbered year, unless this date is required to be changed to a date concurrent with any countywide or statewide election.
2. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the Town at-large election in each separate contest shall be elected.

3. The term of office for an elected Council member shall begin immediately after official certification of the results of the election and shall expire upon the assumption of office by his or her successor.

4. No election for a Council member seat shall be required if there is only one duly qualified candidate in such contest for the Council member seat.

(d) *Town Canvassing Board.* The Canvassing Board shall be composed of three members appointed by the Town Council by resolution. No member of the Town Canvassing Board shall be an active participant in the Town election for which he or she is canvassing as the term "active participant" is interpreted by the Division of Elections. Should a vacancy occur on the Canvassing Board, the Town Council shall appoint a replacement member by resolution. The Town Canvassing Board shall canvass the election consistent with the requirements of Florida law and consistent with and pursuant to any agreement between the Town and the Collier County Supervisor of Elections. The Canvassing Board shall certify the results of the election upon receipt of the certification from the supervisor of elections.

However, the Town Council may, by resolution, delegate the election canvassing responsibilities for Town elections to the county Canvassing Board.

(3) *Recall.* The qualified electors of the Town shall have the power to remove from office any elected official of the Town in accordance with state law.

Section 9. – Initiative and referendum.

The powers of initiative and referendum are reserved to the qualified registered electors of the Town. The election laws of the State shall govern the exercise of the powers of initiative and referendum under this Charter.

Section 10. – General provisions.

(1) *Code of ethics.* It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of the Town that the officers and employees of the Town be independent and impartial and for their offices not to be used for private gain other than the remuneration provided by law or by ordinances. It is declared to be the policy of the Town that its officers and employees are agents of the people and hold their

positions for the benefit of the public. All public officers, employees, members of the Town licensing or advisory boards, and candidates for elected office shall conform to the "Code of Ethics for Public Officials and Employees", F.S. Ch. 122, Pt. III, as presently exist or may be revised in the future.

(2) *Amendments to Charter.* This Charter may be amended in accordance with the provisions for Charter amendments as specified in the Municipal Home Rules Powers Act, F.S. Ch. 166, or as otherwise may be provided by general law. Amendments must be approved by referendum, with a positive vote from at least two-thirds of the electors voting.

(3) *Severability.* If any provision of this Charter or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect provisions or applications of this Charter which can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application, and to this end the provisions of the Charter are declared severable.

Section 11. – Referendum election; transition.

(1) *Referendum election.* The referendum election called for by this action shall be held on November 5, 2024, at which time the

following question shall be placed upon the ballot:

Shall the Town of Golden Gate Estates be created and its

Charter adopted? YES _

NO _

In the event this question is answered affirmatively by a majority of electors voting in the referendum, the Charter will take effect as provided herein. The referendum election shall be conducted by the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County in accordance with the Florida Election Code, and the cost of such election shall be funded by the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County.

(2) *Initial election of Council.*

(a) After the adoption of this Charter, the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County shall call an election to be held March 4, 2025, for the election of five Town Council members. The election shall be conducted by the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County in accordance with the Florida Election Code, and the cost of such election shall be funded by the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County.

(b) An individual who wishes to run for one of five initial seats on the Council shall qualify with the Supervisor of Elections of Collier County in accordance with this Charter and general law. The qualifying period for the initial election of the Town Council shall begin at noon on January 6, 2025, and end at noon on January 10, 2025, unless otherwise provided by law.

(c) For the initial elections, the County Canvassing Board shall certify the results of the elections in accordance with general law.

(d) The three Council members receiving the highest numbers of votes shall each be elected to an initial term expiring upon certification of the election results for the November 2030 election. The two remaining Council members shall each be elected to an initial term expiring upon certification of the election results for the November 2028 election. Thereafter, all terms shall be for a period of four years.

(3) *First council meeting.* On March 18, 2025, provided the results of the election of the Town Council under this Charter have been certified, the newly elected members of the Town Council shall meet at a location to be determined. In the event the results have not been certified by March 18, 2025, the newly elected members

shall meet on the following Tuesday. The initial Council shall have the authority and power to enter into contracts, arrange for the hiring of legal counsel, begin recruiting applicants for Town Manager, provide for necessary Town offices and facilities, and do such other things as it deems necessary and appropriate for the Town.

(4) *Initial expenses.* The Council, in order to provide moneys for the expenses and support of the Town, shall have the power to borrow money necessary for the operation of municipal government until such time as a budget is adopted and revenues are raised in accordance with this Charter.

(5) *Transitional ordinances and resolutions.*

(a) All applicable county ordinances currently in place at the time of passage of the referendum, unless specifically referenced in this Charter, shall remain in place until and unless rescinded by action of the Council, except that a county ordinance, rule, or regulation that conflicts with an ordinance, rule, or regulation of the Town shall not be effective to the extent of such conflict. Any existing Collier County ordinances, rules, and regulations, as of April 1, 2025, shall not be altered, changed, rescinded, or added to, nor shall any variance be granted, if such action would affect the Town without the approval of the Council.

(b) The Council shall adopt ordinances and resolutions required to affect the transition.

(6) *Transitional comprehensive plan.* Until such time as the Town adopts a comprehensive plan, the Golden Gate Area Master Plan: Rural Golden Gate Estates Sub-Element, as it exists on the day that the Town commences corporate existence, shall remain in effect as the Town's transitional comprehensive plan. However, all planning functions, duties, and authority shall thereafter be vested in the Council, which shall be deemed the local planning agency until the Council establishes a separate local planning agency.

(7) *Transitional land development regulations.* To implement the transitional comprehensive land use plan when adopted, the Town shall, in accordance with the procedures required by the laws of the State, adopt ordinances providing for land use development regulations within the corporate limits. Until the Town adopts ordinances, the following shall apply:

(a) The comprehensive land use plan and land use development regulations of Collier County, as the same exists on the date that the Town commenced corporate existence, shall remain in effect as the Town's transitional land use development regulations and comprehensive land use plan.

(b) All powers and duties of the Collier County Growth Management Department, the Collier County Code Enforcement Special Magistrate, and Board of County Commissioners of Collier County, as provided in these transitional land use development regulations, shall be vested in the Council until such time as the Council delegates all powers and duties, or a portion thereof, to another agency, department, or entity.

(c) Subsequent to the adoption of a local comprehensive land use plan and subject to general law, the Council is fully empowered to amend, supersede, enforce, or repeal the transitional land use development regulations, or any portion thereof, by ordinance.

(d) Subsequent to the commencement of the Town's corporate existence, an amendment of the comprehensive land use plan or land use development regulations enacted by the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County shall not be deemed an amendment of the Town's transitional comprehensive land use

plan or land use development regulations or otherwise take effect within the Town's municipal boundaries.

(8) *State-shared revenues.* The Town shall be entitled to participate in all revenue sharing programs of the state effective April 1, 2025. The provisions of F.S. Ch. 218.23(1) shall be waived for the purpose of conducting audits and financial reporting through the end of the Town fiscal year 2025-2026. The Town will establish an ad valorem millage rate that, in combination with either the millage levied by the North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District or that of the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District, satisfies the requirements of F.S. Ch. 218.23(1). Initial revised population estimates for calculating eligibility for shared revenues shall be determined by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research. Should the Bureau be unable to provide an appropriate population estimate, the Collier County Department of Community Development shall provide the estimate.

(9) *Local revenue sources.* The Town shall be entitled to receive all local revenue sources available pursuant to general law, including, but not limited to, the local communications services

tax imposed under F.S. Ch. 202.19. The local communications services tax rate imposed by Collier County will continue within the Town boundaries during the period commencing with the date of incorporation through October 1, 2025. Revenues from the tax shall be shared by Collier County with the Town in proportion to the projected Town population estimate of the Collier County Planning Division compared with the unincorporated population of Collier County before the incorporation of the Town.

(10) *Local option gas tax revenues.* Notwithstanding the requirements of F.S. Ch. 336.025, the Town shall be entitled to receive local option gas tax revenue beginning on October 1, 2025. These revenues shall be distributed in accordance with general law or by any interlocal agreement negotiated with the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County.

(11) *Contractual services and facilities.* Contractual services for law enforcement, emergency management, public works, parks and recreation, planning and zoning, building inspection, development review, animal control, library services, Town Manager or management firm, Town Attorney, and solid waste collection may be

supplied by a contract between the Town and the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County, special districts, municipalities, or private enterprise until such time as the Council establishes such independent services. However, existing solid waste contracts shall be honored as required by F.S. Ch. 165.061(1)(f) and Ch. 10, Art. I of the State Constitution. Facilities for housing the newly formed municipal operations may be rented or leased until the Town selects more permanent facilities.

(12) *Collier County Municipal Service Taxing District; continuation.* Notwithstanding the incorporation of the Town of Golden Gate Estates, that portion of the Golden Gate Community Center municipal services taxing district that lies within the boundaries of the Town of Golden Gate Estates, is authorized to continue in existence until the Town adopts an ordinance, resolution, or interlocal agreement to the contrary.

(13) *Law enforcement.* Law enforcement services shall be provided by the Collier County Sheriff's Office until the Town adopts an ordinance or resolution or enters into an interlocal agreement to the contrary.

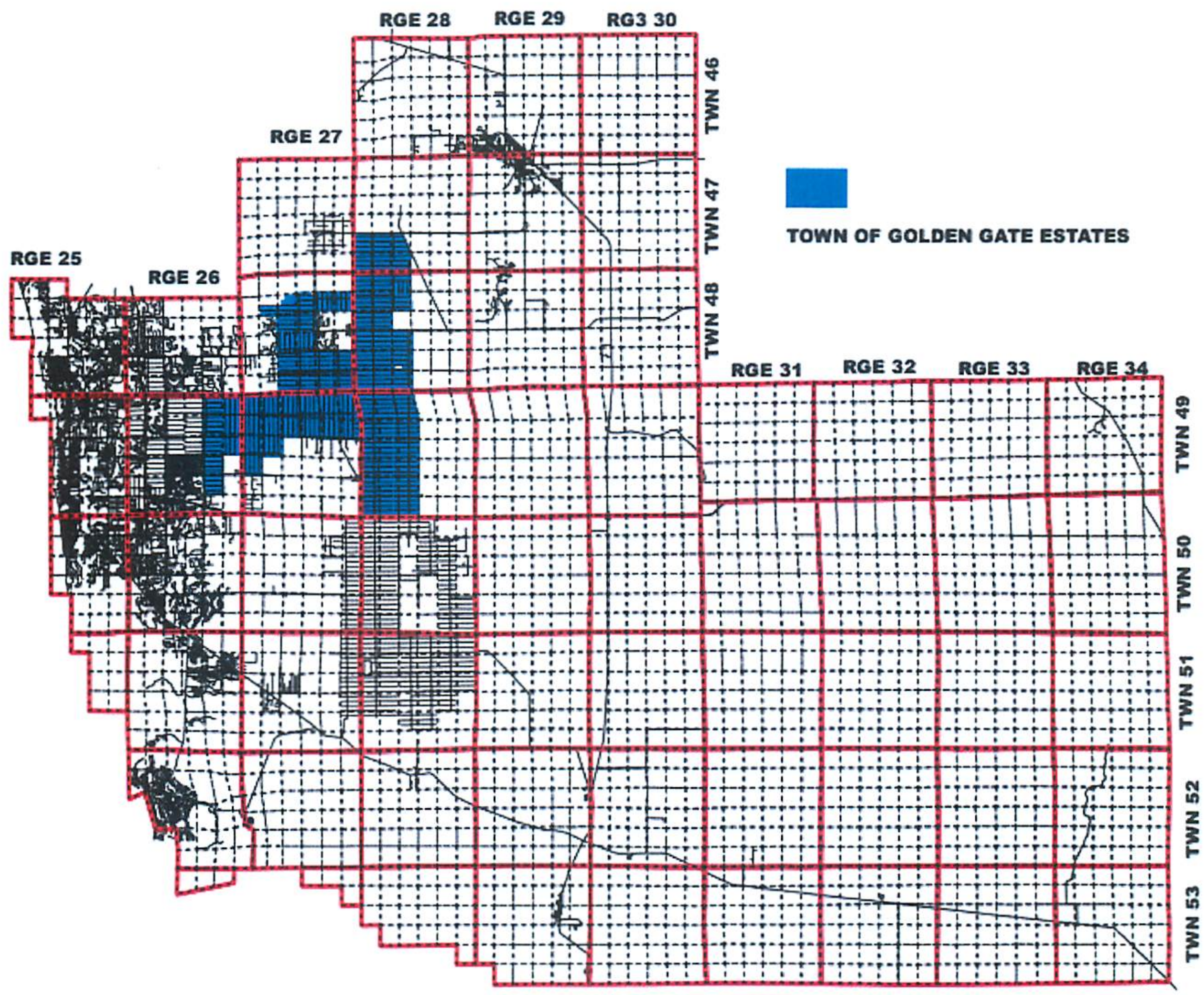
(14) *Elimination of transitional elements from this Charter.* Upon

completion of the transitional phase provided in this Charter, the sections of the Charter relating to transition may be eliminated from this Charter.

(15) *Waiver.* The thresholds established by F.S. Ch. 165.061 for incorporation have been met with the following exception: a waiver is granted to the provisions of F.S. Ch. 165.061(1)(c) relating to the requirement for a minimum average population density of 1.5 persons per acre, to protect and enhance the character, natural resources and quality of life of the town.

(16) *Effective Date.* This act shall take effect only upon its approval by majority vote of those qualified electors residing within the corporate limits of the proposed Town of Golden Gate Estates, as described in Section 3, voting in a referendum conducted in accordance with the provisions of law relating to elections currently in force, except that this section and subsection (1) of section 11 shall take effect upon becoming a law.

PROJECT LOCATION MAP
EXHIBIT A



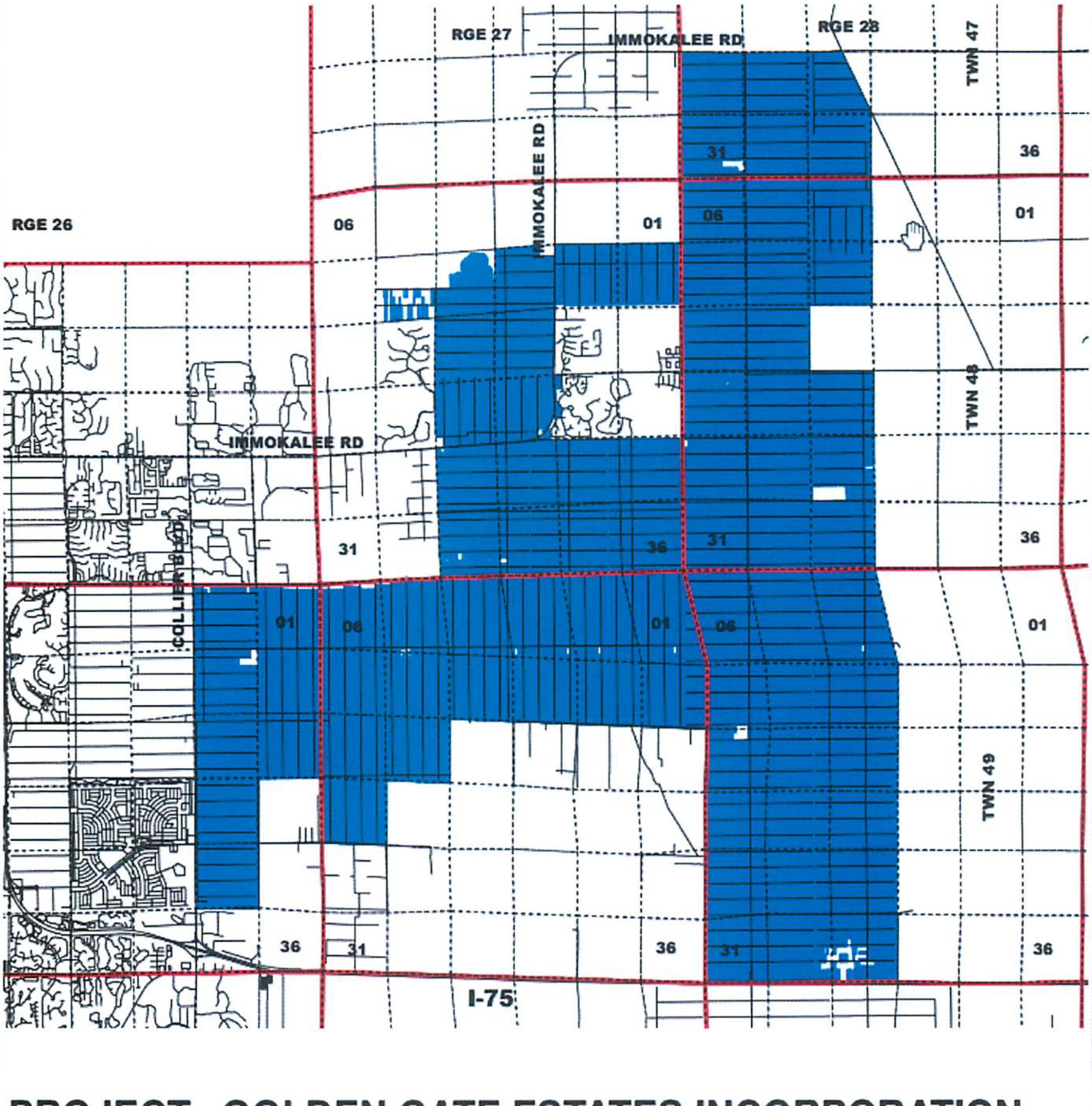
PROJECT: GOLDEN GATE ESTATES INCORPORATION
COLLIER CO,NAPLES,FL

Figure 1. Project Location Map.

Golden Gate Estates Community, Collier Co, Naples, FL
Twn 47,48,49 ; Rge 26,27,28 ; totaling 53,839.72 acres

GGEACA
Golden Gate Estates Are
Civic Association
2631 4th St. NW
Naples FL, 34120
239.564.1660
www.ggeaca.org

PROJECT LOCATION DETAIL MAP
EXHIBIT B



PROJECT: GOLDEN GATE ESTATES INCORPORATION
COLLIER CO,NAPLES,FL

Figure 2. Project Location Detail Map.

Golden Gate Estates Community, Collier Co, Naples, FL
Twn 47,48,49 ; Rge 26,27,28 ; totaling 53,839.72 acres

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Save The Estates
PROTECTING OUR RURAL WAY OF LIFE

11/28/2022

Executive Summary:

"Save the Estates" was founded as a subcommittee of the Golden Gate Estates Area Civic Association to support the community effort of incorporating The Town of Golden Gate Estates.

We are seeking your support for the incorporation of the "Town of Golden Gate Estates", a community of approximately 34,000, or 8.9% of Collier County's population encompassing approximately 58,000 acres recognized as the "Rural" sub element of the Golden Gate Estates Master Plan. The community's desire is to retain its low-density rural character and quality of life. Through incorporation, the community will:

- Protect itself from the pressures of large scale multi family development on its eastern borders and encroachment of developers though-out the area seeking to increase density by rezoning estates zoned properties through the County Commission.
- Allow election of Local Voices to make Local Choices by people that live in the community who understand the unique nature and challenges of the area.
- Protect and improve our quality of life, this is our Oasis.
- Retain more of our tax dollars to be used in the community where needed.
- Allow self-control of Zoning, Permitting and enforcement
- A voice at the "Table"
    - To control wasteful spending
    - To participate in the Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization and Collier County Planning Commission

The statutory required Town Charter and Feasibility Study along with a proposed local bill for the Special Act are completed for the Town of Golden Gate Estates.

The feasibility study satisfies three of the four standards for incorporation, and a waiver is requested for the remaining standard.

- *Compact, contiguous, and amenable to separate municipal government:*
- *Total population must be at least 5,000 persons.*
- *An average population density of 1.5 persons per acre:* The current density is approximately 0.63 persons per acre. When completely built out, the area is expected to have a population of approximately 59,000, with a density of about 1.1 persons per acre. As one of the main goals of incorporation is to give Golden Gate Estates the ability to maintain its low-density rural estates lifestyle, a waiver of this criterion seems justified. In comparison, the Village of Indiantown, in Martin County, had a nearly identical population density when it was approved for incorporation in 2017 (as reported in the Village of Indiantown Incorporation Feasibility Study). Also, the Town of Southwest Ranches in Broward County, which has a similar pattern of land use, had a population density of only about 0.91 persons per acre in 2020 (based on the 2020 U.S. Census population of 7,607 divided by 8,365 acres).
- *Minimum distance of at least two miles from the boundaries of an existing municipality.*

The unincorporated area of Collier County is currently subject to a 0.8069 mill Ad Valorem (Property) tax used to cover the cost of services funded by the MSTD. This rate would no longer apply to Golden Gate Estates after incorporation.

The primary consideration in setting a millage rate is to make certain that the municipality qualifies for state revenue sharing, which requires a minimum rate of 3 mills or equivalent in specified types of revenues (s. 218.23, F.S.). In the case of Golden Gate Estates, this can be achieved by setting a rate of 1.5 mills, which in combination with the local fire district millage rates yields a minimum rate of 3 mills (the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District levies a rate of 1.5 mills and the North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District levies a rate of 3.75 mills).

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