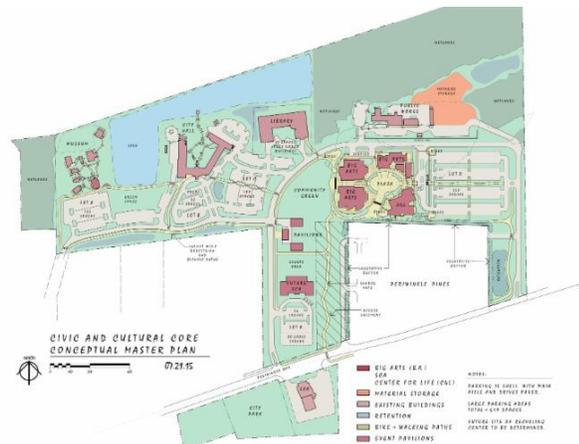




## Council Schedules Two Civic Core Ballot Questions for March 7, 2017

After extensive debate at their December 6 meeting, the Sanibel City Council unanimously agreed to let the voters decide on the future of the Civic and Cultural Core project. Voters will be asked to approve the removal of 13.5 acres from the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Conservation District for the project, and also asked to approve a bond

referendum not to exceed \$8 million. If both pass and outside funding is secured, the full Civic and Cultural Core project will move ahead.



At the December 6 meeting, COTI continued to press for factual answers from Council so we can inform our members and the public about the key issues that have not been clarified ([see prepared COTI public comments here](#)). We still lack answers to our concerns dating back six months to May this year. This creates an uneasy situation for all involved.

Briefly, here are the primary issues supported by e-mail input from our members:

- The apparent inconsistency of this project with the Sanibel Plan
- The effect of the project on island traffic

- The project cost of \$42 million
- The size/scope of the project
- The lack of adequate citizen participation in the project planning

To read all Civic Core emails to COTI (without sender names) [click here](#).

To read the original questions, [click here](#).

At the Council meeting, we emphasized that the two ballot issues have now created serious new questions:

1. If the referendum asking voters to approve the removal of 13.5 acres of conserved land is passed, will there be opportunity for public discussion of alternative, less environmentally-impactful ways of designing the project?
2. The second ballot requests voter approval of a bond referendum not to exceed \$8 million to finance a portion of the Civic and Cultural Core Master Plan including the Center 4 Life (Senior Center) Building and Plaza, Performance Hall, Theater, Gallery, Education Center, Pavilions, and Infrastructure (Roads, Parking, etc.). Assuming the project funding is confirmed, will there be an opportunity for public discussion of reducing the size and scope of the project?

Two other concerns are also on the table: the hoped for grant money of \$22 million has not yet been secured, and the immediate need for the project Master Plan referenced in ballot question #2.

We are hopeful that strong data-based answers will be coming from the City to support the project in time for public discussion on all the issues.

Consequently, COTI has not yet taken a position either opposed to or in support of the ballot questions.

We encourage you to add your voice ... please send your thoughts by email to [coti@coti.org](mailto:coti@coti.org).

In accord with its mission, COTI will continue to raise and study important questions about this project that are in the community interest.

**David Bath**  
**COTI Civic Core Committee**

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