

## Comprehensive Plan Elements Update Future Land Use Element & Density

The [Future Land Use Element](#) governs the use of land within the City through a series of land use categories that are arranged on the [Future Land Use Map](#) as various colored areas. The colors on the map describe where certain land uses are to be located as the community grows. The description or key to what the colors or Future Land Use Categories on the map mean are delineated in the Goals, Objectives and Policies within the text of the Future Land Use Element.



The State of Florida began requiring Comprehensive Plans in the mid 1980's. From the 1980's until 1997 the City and Charlotte County had a joint Comprehensive Plan. So, Future Land Use categories were by design quite vague Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural and a range of Residential uses. These general categories worked quite well for the unincorporated areas of Charlotte County where uses were widely separated following a suburban model. However, within the incorporated [City limits](#) these broad categories did a fairly poor job of describing the historic patterns of development. Recognizing this the City created its own stand along Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1997. This plan acknowledged the more mixed use nature of the historic downtown and adjacent commercial areas of the City. However, Residential (only) categories and the newly established Mixed Use categories did not fully and clearly account for the density of residential uses that were permissible and historically present.

### Density

Residential density is the number of homes per area of land permitted by a Future Land Use Category. Residential density is generally expressed as a number of units per acre. In typical suburban development the density usually corresponds to the type of homes one would expect to be constructed. Using the City's existing categories as an example Low Density Residential would usually be single family detached homes like photo A and High Density Residential would generally be homes grouped in to a multi-family building or group of buildings like photo B.

However, in historic areas of the City detached single family houses occur on much smaller lots than typical suburban standards like photo C. Also found within Punta Gorda are two-family and small scale multi-family residential types on small lots, Photos D & E. These traditional housing types are largely unaccounted for within the existing Future Land Use Categories.

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| Photo A<br>Detached Single Family<br>5 Units per Acre                               | Photo B<br>Multi-Family<br>15 Units per Acre  | Photo C<br>Small Lot Detached Single Family<br>12 Units per Acre                    | Photo D<br>Small Lot Two-Family Attached<br>22 Units per Acre                        | Photo E<br>Small Scale Multi-Family<br>25 Units per Acre                              |

In the photo series above only Photo A and Photo B are recognized as desirable and permissible under the current Comprehensive Plan. As acknowledged in [Plan Punta Gorda Citywide Master Plan](#), it is important to zoom in and identify the patterns of development that give Punta Gorda its unique traditional small town feel if the community wishes to maintain that feel under the reality of continued development pressure. When examining the traditional pattern that exists it becomes evident that the current range of residential densities permitted in the Comprehensive Plan cannot return the types of development found here within the historic downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.