

Community Facilities and Services Element

City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan 2045

Ordinance 2013-2024

February 7, 2024

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An important aspect of community facilities planning is the role of government within the community and what functions are assumed, what services are rendered, and the question of whether they will remain adequate in the future. The community facilities and services evaluated in this section consist of those facilities and functions that serve the residents of Punta Gorda. Those facilities discussed are the Punta Gorda Government Center Complex, Public Works and Utilities Complex, public safety facilities, recreation and open space systems, water and wastewater systems, and City stormwater facilities. The County facilities discussed, but not evaluated in this report are the Justice Center, Historic County Courthouse, Public Library, South County Annex, and County Landfill. Charlotte County School Board facilities that serve the residents of the City of Punta Gorda are also inventoried. In addition, this element identifies many of the health, social, and cultural facilities and services that are available to the residents of the city. All of these facilities serve a population greater than the city, but each has a great influence on the quality of life and the economic vitality of the city.

II. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the *Community Facilities and Services Element* is to identify the locations and arrangements of civic and community centers, public schools, hospitals, libraries, police and fire stations, and other public facilities. This element identifies not only the City facilities, but other facilities and services available to the community. The element outlines the effective coordination efforts between agencies, such as the school board or hospital authorities, having public development and service responsibilities, capabilities, and potential, but not having land development regulatory authority.

Relationship to the City's Comprehensive Plan

There are several key connections between the *Community Facilities and Services Element* and other elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan which include the following:

- ❖ The *Future Land Use Element* allows the land development authority to locate the specific facilities needed to maintain the adopted level of services standards at the time the development impacts occur. It is through the *Future Land Use Element* and the Future Land Use Map that the City's growth management strategy is fully implemented. Therefore, it is essential that the uses prescribed by the Future Land Use Map be consistent with sound urban development policies which promote compatibility between development activities.
- ❖ The *Conservation Element* inventories and describes the City's existing and proposed natural preserves and conservation areas within and adjacent to the city.
- ❖ The *Coastal Management Element* inventories and describes the city's existing coastal areas and their importance to the city's economy and tourism industries within and adjacent to the city.
- ❖ The *Infrastructure Element* is divided into three sections pertaining to stormwater, solid waste, and the provision of sewer and potable water services. It connects to the *Future Land Use Element* through the impacts the proposed facilities have on the existing level of service when the proposed facilities are completed. Facility site location criteria and overall policies regarding the city's infrastructure must be taken into consideration during the establishment of levels of service for water and sewer facilities if the adopted levels of service are to be maintained at the time the development impacts occur.

- ❖ The *Recreation and Open Space Element* identifies the potential recreational opportunities available to the residents of the city. Such opportunities typically include passive recreation, outdoor education, community gardening, and resource-oriented activities such as hiking, boating, and camping.
- ❖ The *Transportation Element* deals with the city's road network and addresses port and aviation facilities, bicycle paths, and pedestrian walkways. The policies of the *Transportation Element* must reflect those of *Future Land Use Element* to ensure that roads are sited in the most appropriate areas possible and are designed in a manner that minimizes impacts to the surrounding land uses and promotes a pedestrian-friendly community.
- ❖ The *Housing Element* lists and identifies the availability of the community facilities and services that effect peoples' housing decisions.
- ❖ The *Capital Improvements Element* allocates sufficient funds in a timely manner for the efficient provision of public facilities and services. It includes a list of projected costs and revenue sources by type of public facilities for a five-year period. Many of those facilities are identified within this element.
- ❖ The *Historical Element* lists historical components of our city's past and identifies their importance to the community. The City owns some of the historical resources detailed and has played a role in the preservation of many others.

III. LEGISLATION

Federal Regulations

Local governments coordinate with numerous agencies on a variety of issues. Each specific issue will define the federal regulation requirements of the local government.

Public Law 117-58

On November 15, 2021, the U.S. President signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58, also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law") into law. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is the largest long-term investment in our infrastructure and economy in our Nation's history. It provides \$550 billion over fiscal years 2022 through 2026 in new Federal investment in infrastructure, including in roads, bridges, and mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband. New programs under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law focus on key infrastructure priorities including rehabilitating bridges in critical need of repair, reducing carbon emissions, increasing system resilience, removing barriers to connecting communities, and improving mobility and access to economic opportunity. Many of the new programs includes eligibility for local governments and Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

State Regulations

Florida Division of Historical Resources

Some of the community facilities owned by the City of Punta Gorda are designated historical structures, listed on the Florida Master Site File. This inventory of historical and cultural places is maintained by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. It is the State agency responsible for promoting the historical, archaeological, museum, and folk culture resources in Florida. The Director of the Division of Historical Resources also serves as Florida's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), providing a liaison with the national Historic Preservation Planning Program conducted by the National Park Service.

Florida Statutes

Chapter 163, Florida Statutes

Chapter 163 of the *Florida Statutes* has specific requirements that relate to ways of dealing with growth management. Adopted level of service standards need to be maintained and to meet existing and future facility needs. The land development process should be managed “so that public facility needs created by previously issued land development orders or future development do not exceed the ability of the local government to fund and provide or require provision of the needed capital improvements”. Chapter 163.3177(1), *Fla. Stat.*, states that the comprehensive plan shall provide the principles and guidelines for the orderly and balanced future development of the area. These principles and strategies shall guide the community’s future decisions in a consistent manner and shall contain programs and activities to ensure comprehensive plans are implemented. The sections of the comprehensive plan containing the principles and strategies, generally provided as goals, objectives, and policies, shall describe how the local government’s programs, activities, and land development regulations will be initiated, modified, or continued.

Chapter 187, Florida Statutes

The State Comprehensive Plan, chapter 187 of the *Florida Statutes*, is intended to be a direction-setting document. Its policies do not carry regulatory authority or authorize the adoption of agency rules, criteria, or standards not otherwise authorized by law. The State Comprehensive Plan has goals and policies pertaining to, but not limited to, the following topics: education, children, families, the elderly, health, public safety, public facilities, as well as cultural and historical resources. These goals and policies contain many statements which offer very general guidance to local governments.

Chapter 418, Florida Statutes

Chapter 418, *Fla. Stat.*, defines the responsibilities of the State of Florida regarding recreation. The Florida Department of State manages the State Library and Archives of Florida in Tallahassee. The State Library provides consulting services for grants and training to assist public libraries and their partners design and improve adult and family literacy programs. They also provide support and technical assistance to public libraries wishing to establish or enhance services for children, teens and their parents, teachers, and caregivers.

Chapter 267.0612, Florida Statutes

The Florida Historical Commission is established in chapter 267.0612, *Fla. Stat.* The purpose of the Florida Historical Commission is to enhance public participation and involvement in the preservation and protection of the State's historic and archaeological sites and properties. The commission advises and assists the Division of Historical Resources in carrying out its programs, duties, and responsibilities. The commission reviews and ranks Special Category Historic Preservation Grant applications, and votes on nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the commission makes recommendations regarding policy and preservation needs.

Local Regulations

Strategic Regional Policy Plan

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council’s Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) states specific regional goals with which local government comprehensive plans must be consistent. There are

policies in the regional plan relating to the siting of public facilities in order to discourage urban sprawl. The City aims to provide services and infrastructure in a compact and contiguous development pattern within the urban area. The SRPP for Southwest Florida provides a long-range guide for the physical, economic, and social development of the region. The overall purpose of the SRPP is to steer the region toward a healthy and sustainable future. The SRPP is not merely a plan for the Council, it is a plan for the region and all those who are active participants in shaping its future.

[Charlotte County Code of Laws and Ordinances](#)

The only public library in the city, the Punta Gorda Charlotte Library, is part of the Charlotte County Library System. The local regulations that govern it are the Charlotte County *Code of Laws and Ordinances*, which establishes guidelines for library administration.

[City Code of Ordinances](#)

Chapter 8A “City Finances” provides the financial and administrative responsibilities for the City’s accounting and taxation, and provides the budgeting details for the individual departments. This section also contains the financing methods of proposed expenditures and capital expenditures necessary to maintain or improve facilities in order to meet the adopted level of service standard.

[City Comprehensive Plan](#)

The City’s Comprehensive Plan provides the growth management strategies necessary for the City to meet future population growth and subsequent infrastructure and service demands. Legislative changes since the adoption of a previous Comprehensive Plan required the revision of the procedures for the submittal and adoption of comprehensive plans. Through

these changes, local governments now have more discretion in determining the need to update their plans. If a local government determines there is a need to amend its plan to reflect changes in state requirements or its own local conditions, then the local government is required to submit the proposed amendments to the State’s land planning agency, the Department of Economic Opportunity’s (DEO) Division of Community Development.

IV. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A snapshot of the City’s community facilities and services includes thirteen public buildings: City Hall, City Hall Annex, Public Works and Utilities Campus, Public Safety, Fire Stations Two and Three, Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants, Bayfront Center, A.C. Freeman House, Cooper Street Center, Laishley Park Marina, and Herald Court Centre. The City is responsible for a street network including, 121 miles of streets, 62 miles of sidewalks, 2,886 streetlights (1,270 streetlights are maintained by the City and 1,616 are maintained by Florida Power and Light), 19 signalized intersections, four roadway bridges. A water and sewer utility system including Hendrickson Dam/Shell Creek Reservoir, a water treatment plant, a wastewater treatment plant, 269 miles of water mains, 209 miles of sanitary sewer lines are also owned by the City. The City’s park and public space infrastructure includes twenty-three parks, totaling 130 acres and the Punta Gorda Pathways, a ten mile network of multi-use recreational trails. Additionally, the City owns and maintains 110 linear miles of seawall, most of which is located within the Punta Gorda Isles and Burnt Store Isles Canal Maintenance Districts.

The maintenance and operation of all the City’s infrastructure requires telecommunications and information technology systems including: ninety-six servers (they are mostly cloud-based), fifty wireless access points, a voice over internet protocol (VoIP) phone system with 275 phone sets, three miles of network fiber optic

cable, two gigabytes of internet bandwidth, over 700 PCs, laptops, tablets, and mobile phones.

The City must operate and maintain all of the community facilities and public infrastructure systems, while continuously evaluating these systems to accommodate anticipated growth. Additionally, all of these community assets must be secured against the onslaughts of natural and man-made damage and destruction.

Administration

Administrative facilities are the center of operations for the seat of government, whether it is at the municipal or county level. They may have one or more of the following characteristics:

- ❖ Seat of authority
- ❖ Place of assembly
- ❖ Departmental complex
- ❖ Depository of records

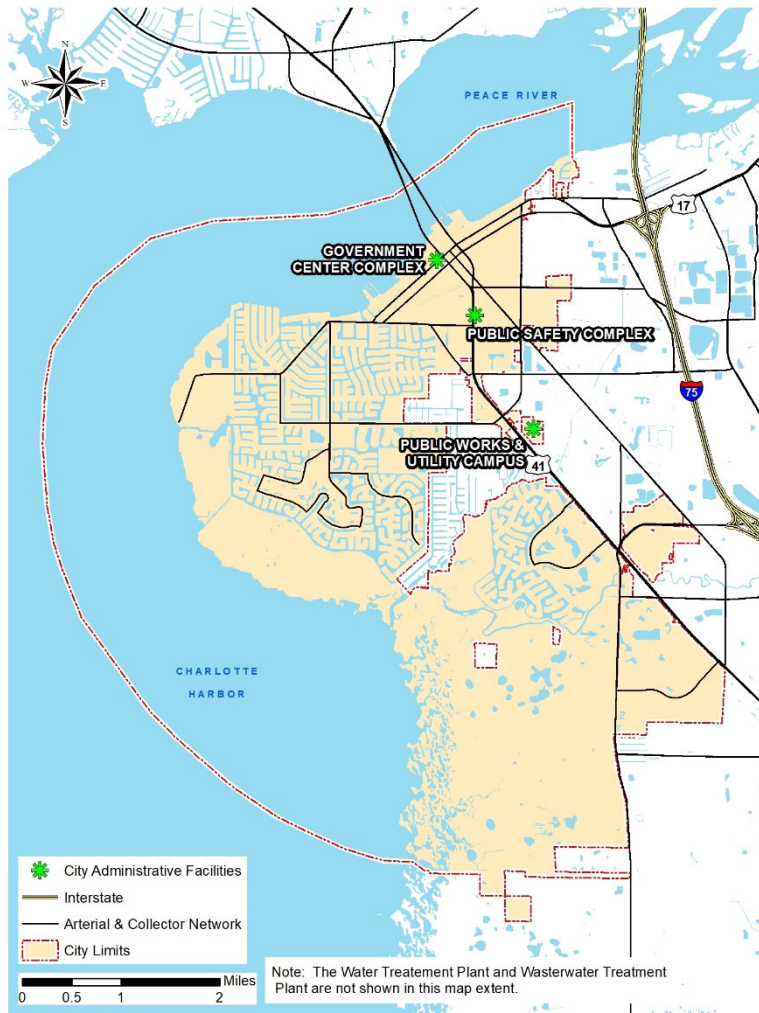
The objective of the City's administrative offices is the development and implementation of sound municipal management structure and processes that provide for efficient operations. This strategy will strengthen the City's standing with financial institutions and sets in place measures of performance for the organization as a whole, and within each department.

Funding is the single greatest challenge to the planning of community facilities and services and, more specifically, the operation and maintenance of such facilities. The uncertainty of the impact of the fiscal year and future budgets brings many challenges to the organization over the next planning decade. Nonetheless, the City continues to fulfill its obligation to provide the necessary services to meet growing demands. Specific needs for and the benefit of public facilities and services must be

identified to serve the population efficiently and in a financially feasible manner.

The City owns and maintains a variety of facilities, ranging from government administration buildings and public utilities, to roads and swales. Map #47 - City of Punta Gorda Administrative Facilities shows the locations of the City's administrative buildings and public works facilities.

Map #47 – City of Punta Gorda Administrative Facilities



Facility Siting

Facility siting is an issue which must be given careful attention due to the city’s coastal location. Siting of any facility outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is extremely difficult since most of the city, including nearly all of its population, are within this zone as detailed in the *Coastal Management Element*. The majority of this platting occurred prior to the passage of the Growth Management Act in 1985. Although there is a severe shortage of suitable facilities to be used as emergency shelters, some progress has been made in establishing additional “refuge sites” to provide extra spaces.

Considerations for Facilities Planning

In siting City facilities, the government implements sound compact and contiguous urban techniques. Through the implementation of the land development regulations, the City promotes a coherent built environment, which respects local historical and regional architecture, an integrated and balanced transportation system, adequate provision of utility infrastructure, schools, parks, other public necessities, as well as the preservation of the natural environment. Given the reality of limited fiscal resources and significant level of infrastructure it will be imperative to review and prioritize projects carefully. Alternative methods of funding include partnerships, grants, and tax credits will continue to be important in meeting the needs of the community.

The City prioritizes the siting of urban services to focus them on existing developed areas. Various departments identify needs for new facilities at different times and have different expectations of how quickly their needs should be met. Established timing procedures with set lead times provides future facilities in an equitable and efficient manner. A five- (5) year capital improvement plan is reviewed and updated annually, identifying the facilities to be built or expanded in the following five (5) years. However, there is no indexing system which identifies

variables that indicate a need for construction. A master plan for space programming, which includes projections for growth, would be helpful in timing the provision of local government facilities.

Government Center Complex

The Government Center Complex is located on the western side of the downtown business district, one block from Charlotte Harbor. The Complex covers the majority of a single block on the original Town of Trabue plat and is composed of three buildings, City Hall, City Hall Annex, and the A.C. Freeman House. These three public buildings, along with several privately-owned buildings, surround a large public parking lot (100+ spaces). This parking lot is used by City staff, visitors to the City facilities, and the employees and customers of the businesses in the surrounding area.

City Hall

Completed in 1927, the City Hall building fronting West Marion Avenue is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing structure to the Punta Gorda National Register District. This Neo-Classical Revival brick building retains most of its original historic architectural appearance on the exterior. In 1978, a City Council Chambers addition was made to the eastern side of the structure, as well as an enclosure of the old fire station garage on the western side of the structure for additional office space. The structure was heavily damaged by Hurricane Charley in 2004, with extensive damage to the Greek-style portico and the roof which collapsed onto the second-floor offices. These extensive damages were repaired and the building was rehabilitated to its original appearance. After the repairs were completed, the building continued to house the City Clerk, City Finance Department, and City meetings in the 1978 Council Chambers Addition.

In the mid-2010s the City conducted an extensive building analysis of this important civic structure. This analysis prompted

City Council to proceed with a project to completely rehabilitate the 1927 historic portion of the building, demolish the 1978 addition and construct a new addition containing council chambers, meeting, and office space. This project, anticipated to be complete in 2025, will include the rehabilitation of 7,000 square feet of existing office space and the addition of a new 100-seat City Council Chambers, and approximately 9,000 square feet of new office space. This facility will provide modern meeting spaces suitable for in-person and virtual meetings as well as office spaces to accommodate the growing needs of the City.

City Hall Annex

The City Hall Annex building, fronting Harvey Street, was completed in 1990. The structure contains two stories of office space with approximately 17,000 square feet of office space above ground-floor parking. This office space currently houses a mix of departments and divisions including Urban Design, Information Technology, Human Resources, Procurement, Utilities Billing and Collections, and the City Manager's Office.

Hurricane Ian damaged the roof of this structure, resulting in the loss of use of most of the 3rd-floor office space due to damage to the furnishings and finishes. Once hurricane damages are repaired, this building will be connected to the City Hall Expansion on the 2nd and 3rd floors to provide easier access to and from various City staff offices.

A.C. Freeman House

Fronting West Retta Esplanade, the A.C. Freeman House is in its third location since its original construction. When it was originally built in 1903 by Punta Gorda businessman and mayor, Augustus C. Freeman, the A.C. Freeman house was located on the 500 block of East Marion Avenue. The structure was saved from demolition in the mid-1980s by the Charlotte Community Foundation and relocated a few blocks away to the southwest corner of Hargreaves Avenue and Booth Street. This location was

leased to the Charlotte Community Foundation by the hospital and the structure, once rehabilitated, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, in 2005, after damages from Hurricane Charley in 2004 and the hospital declining to renew their land lease, the Charlotte Community Foundation donated the structure to the City for relocation of the structure to its current site. After the relocation and repair of hurricane damages, the structure was leased to the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce as space for their Punta Gorda office. Initially this lease included provision for the Punta Gorda Historical Society to provide period appropriate furnishings, and docents to provide information about the history of the structure. Unfortunately, the agreement with the Punta Gorda Historical Society did not last long and, due to leadership changes at the Chamber of Commerce, the building was not utilized regularly.

During this period of irregular use in the late 2010's, several failures of building's systems resulted in extensive damage, rendering the building unsuitable for use. The City is currently in the design process for a complete rehabilitation of the structure, partially funded by a grant from the Florida Division of Historical Resources, including the provision of a separate restroom pavilion. Once this project is complete, the City intends to request proposals from non-profit organizations for the use of the structure for causal office space, small receptions and events, and partial use as a museum house.

Public Works and Utilities Campus

The Punta Gorda Public Works and Utilities Campus consists of two buildings and a service yard. This facility was acquired after the previous facility was destroyed by Hurricane Charley in 2004. In reviewing the growing needs of the city and the location of new development, the decision was made to relocate the Public Works and Utilities Departments to mitigate the risks of future natural disasters.

After Hurricane Charley, proximity to the Harbor was a primary consideration in deciding where the new campus should be sited.

It was determined that in order to enhance the resiliency of these facilities, they should be situated in an area less prone to flooding and at lower risk of being damaged during an extreme weather event. With these factors in mind, Utilities was moved from within 2,000 feet of the Charlotte Harbor shoreline at 900 West Henry Street to the current location, which is an elevated site at the Cooper Street extension over two and quarter miles away from the open water of the harbor.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department is made up of seven (7) divisions under the management of the Public Works Director. Each division has a variety of responsibilities.

Administration

The Public Works Administration Division is composed of the Director and the administrative support staff. The Division provides technical and clerical support to divisions within Public Works. The administrative staff recognizes service area responsibilities and formulates programs, then plans, organizes, directs, and controls these programs. Citizen requests and inquiries are taken by the Administrative Division and routed for the appropriate action and/or response.

Canal Maintenance

The Canal Maintenance Division is responsible for the maintenance of seawalls and the dredging of canals located within the canal district. Some seawall construction is accomplished by divisional forces in conjunction with contracted services in the event of failures. Other duties include dockside dredging, sinkhole filling, and related tasks.

Engineering

Engineering is a service-oriented division that provides technical support and services to City departments, issues canal

construction special permits, performs surveys and grade shots for City projects, and manages and performs inspection duties on capital improvement projects (CIPs) and department projects. The Engineering Division is also the point of contact for information relating to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Permit.

Parks and Grounds

The Parks and Grounds Division is responsible for maintaining City parks, municipal grounds, downtown streetscape, street trees, playgrounds, tennis courts, City and community entrance features, and medians. Other division responsibilities include irrigation design, installation, and maintenance, herbicide spraying, fertilizing, cul-de-sac deliveries, and all related tasks.

Facilities Maintenance

The Facilities Maintenance Division provides routine maintenance for all City buildings. The division prepares preventive maintenance programs that ensure serviceability of building infrastructure, provides contract administration and project management for City building rehabilitation or replacement, and provides new electrical installation and maintenance for building, street, and park lighting.

Right-of-Way Maintenance

The Right-of-Way Maintenance Division is responsible for maintenance of streets, storm sewers, swales, sidewalks and related appurtenances located within the right-of-way. Normal operations include traffic sign maintenance, storm sewer cleaning, right-of-way mowing, swale improvements, tree trimming, and street sweeping. The scope of operations includes one hundred and twenty-one (121) miles of improved streets, over sixty (60) miles of sidewalks, and two hundred and thirty-one (231) miles of stormwater drainage systems.

Sanitation

The Sanitation/Refuse Collection Division presently collects refuse, yard waste, and white goods from approximately 12,243 residential and commercial accounts each month, an eleven percent increase over the previous decade. In addition, the City provides weekly curbside recycling to all its residential customers. The curbside program collects paper products, corrugated cardboard, plastics with 1-7 codes, glass, aluminum cans, and other metals. In addition, materials such as tires, paint, used motor oil, car batteries, and electronic waste, such as televisions, computers, monitors, and printers, are all accepted by the recycler at the curb.

City Warehouse

The City Warehouse is included in the new Public Works Campus and is under the supervision of the Finance Department. The warehouse facility is used for supply deliveries.

Utilities Department

The Utilities Department provides water and sewer service to customers both inside and outside the city limits, in the Utility Service Area. The department consists of six divisions, of which three are housed in the Public Works and Utilities Campus. They are Utilities Administration, Water Distribution, and Wastewater Collections.

Utilities Administration

The Utilities Administration Division contains the Utilities Engineering Section. It is responsible for providing services to internal customers for all aspects of utility engineering, including improvements and upgrades to the existing utility at the treatment plants, water distribution system, wastewater collection system, wastewater disposal, and in-stream reservoir and storage tanks. For external customers this division is

responsible for the approval and permit issuance for private utility projects that connect to the City utility system.

Water Distribution

The Water Distribution Division is responsible for the maintenance and operation of approximately 269 miles of water main piping, serving an area of over 38 square miles. In addition, the division maintains 2,100 main valves, 2,003 fire hydrants, and 12,000 water meters. Daily operations include; new meter installations, fire hydrant maintenance, the cross-connection control program, and the valve exercise program. The department also operates a 24-hour on-call service, so any after-hours water emergencies can be handled quickly and efficiently on nights, weekends, and holidays.

Wastewater Collections

The Wastewater Collection Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 121 sewage pumping stations along with 138.7 miles of gravity-sewer mains and 70.1 miles of force mains. This division also includes the Pretreatment Program and Instrumentation Control and Calibration Unit.

Utility Plants

The remaining two Utilities Divisions (Water and Wastewater Treatment) are housed at their respective treatment plants.

Wastewater Treatment Division and Plant

The Wastewater Treatment Division operates and maintains the Punta Gorda Wastewater Treatment Plant, a 4.0 MGD (million gallons per day) plant. The division also operates and maintains the Master and Booster Pumping Stations. The treated water is discharged to an effluent disposal deep injection well.

Fleet Maintenance

The City's Fleet Maintenance is located with the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The primary function of the division is the maintenance of City-owned vehicles and heavy equipment. The department is responsible for vehicle maintenance and repairs and provides vehicle and equipment specifications necessary in the budget planning process.

Water Treatment Division and Plant

The Water Treatment Division operates and maintains the Shell Creek Water Treatment Facility, which treats and supplies potable water to Punta Gorda Utility water customers. The plant is currently rated at ten-million gallons per day. The division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Burnt Store Isles Elevated Tank, the Punta Gorda Isles Ground Storage Tank, and the Booster Pump Station. The Water Treatment Division is continuing to respond to increased requirements relating to water management, water quality, and treatment standards required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and other regulatory agencies.

The division comprises an operations division and maintenance division. The plant is staffed twenty-four (24) hours a day, 365 days a year.

Public Safety Complex

The City's Police Department and Fire Department, are co-located in the Public Safety Complex, a 22,500 square foot building built in 2002 located at 1410 Tamiami Trail (US 41) just south of downtown.

Police Department

Both Divisions of the Punta Gorda Police Department, Operations Division and Support Services Division, operate out of the Public Safety Complex.

Operations Division

Under the Operations Division are the Uniformed Patrol Section, Criminal Investigation Section, Community Services Section, and Reserve Unit.

Uniformed Patrol

The Uniformed Patrol Section consists of squads that work 12-hour shifts and rotate between dayshift and nightshift every three months. They are primarily responsible for preserving the peace, protecting life and property, preventing crime, enforcing laws, and responding to calls for service.

Criminal Investigations

The Criminal Investigations Section is primarily responsible for investigating serious crimes, recovering stolen property, and conducting background checks for police department applicants.

Community Services

The Community Services Section includes the Community Engagement Unit, the Marine Enforcement Unit, and the School Resource Officer Unit. In addition, this section is responsible for crime prevention and oversight of all department specialty teams.

Reserve Unit

The Reserve Unit consists of volunteer officers who provide sworn law enforcement support for the Uniformed Patrol Section, Criminal Investigations Section, and for special events.

Support Services Division

The Support Services Division is responsible for most non-operational activities. It ensures that officers have the necessary equipment and support to provide high-quality law enforcement services to Punta Gorda's citizens. It comprises the

Administrative Services Section; the Communications Section; the Evidence, Property, and Crime Scene Unit; the Volunteers in Policing Section; and the Police Chaplain Unit. Additionally, the Support Services Commander facilitates fleet management for the Punta Gorda Police Department. This includes coordinating repairs, processing fleet paperwork, and purchasing new vehicles.

Administrative Services

Administrative Services is supervised by a lieutenant who supervises the Employee Development Unit, the Records Services Unit, the Accreditation and Administrative Services Unit, staff inspections and media and public relations.

Communications

The Communications Section answers administrative calls and 911 calls within the city limits of Punta Gorda. Minimum staffing per shift is two public safety dispatchers, with one focusing primarily on law enforcement and the second focusing primarily on fire rescue and answering the phone. In 2022, Communications staff answered 34,446 administrative calls and 10,042 9-1-1 calls, with an average emergency response time of six minutes and nine seconds.

Evidence, Property, and Crime Scene

The Evidence, Property, and Crime Scene Unit is responsible for processing and storing criminal evidence, maintaining departmental equipment, responding to crime scenes, and collecting evidence.

Volunteers in Policing

The Volunteers in Policing program organizes citizens who assist in nearly every component of the police department, including patrol and traffic, marine patrol, bike patrol, records, community services, criminal investigations, community garden management, fingerprinting, the police pension board, and more.

Police Chaplain

The Police Chaplain is a volunteer member of the department who is an approved and experienced representative of their religious denomination. The Police Chaplain is not a law enforcement officer, but a volunteer minister capable of providing spiritual help, guidance and counseling. The Police Chaplain's responsibilities are to assist members and their families upon request, in matters that fall under their purview.

Fire Department

In addition to the Police Department the Public Safety Complex houses Fire Station One and Fire Department administration including fire prevention, safety, permitting and inspections. The Fire Department operates three additional locations Fire Stations Two and Three as well as a training facility.

Administration

This Department leadership oversees three Fire Stations, one on-site and two remote, staffed by Firefighter-EMS paramedics, providing 24-7 service to the City including Advanced Life Support (non-transport).

Station One

Fire Station One houses the aerial apparatus (ladder truck), battalion chief truck, a Charlotte County ambulance and a reserve ladder truck to respond to emergencies within the service area.

The City of Punta Gorda's police and fire station and equipment, as identified on Map #48 – City of Punta Gorda Fire Stations, are funded through public safety impact fees that pay for growth-related projects.

At this time there are no deficits in the service response time for the city. In the calendar year 2022, the Punta Gorda Fire Department responded to 4,536 calls for service. The average

Station Two

Fire Station Two was built in 2007, as a result of damages sustained to the previous Fire Station Two building during Hurricane Charley. The station was relocated from the previous site at 10051 Burnt Store Road to 2601 Acline Road to enhance facility access and increase resilience from storm surge and other coastal flooding events. This station houses two fire engines.

Station Three

Fire Station Three is located in the heart of Punta Gorda Isles, the largest residential neighborhood in the city at 1623 Aqui Esta Drive. Built in 2000, this station is 2.9 miles from Station One and 4 miles from Station Two. It houses one fire engine and Charlotte County ambulance. This facility also hosts a Charlotte County EMS ambulance and crew.

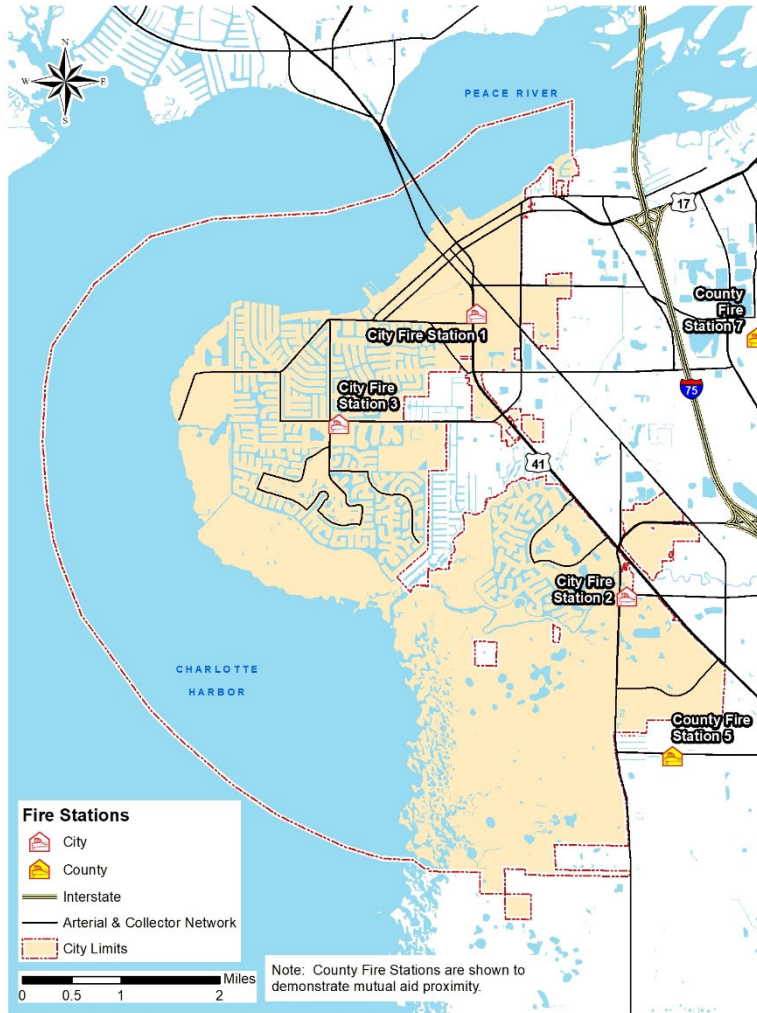
Punta Gorda Fire Department Training Facility

The Fire Training Facility is located at 10051 Burnt Store Road in the old Station Two building. The structure was rehabilitated by department members to include a classroom as well as areas for drills and equipment training. A project is currently underway to place a two-story drill tower on the site for use by the Fire and Police Departments.

The quality of these facilities and the services they provide impact the department's Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating. The rating is determined by assessing five categories: training, water supply, manpower, communications, and equipment. The better the ISO rating, the lower the insurance premiums paid by homeowners.

response time from dispatch to arrival on the scene was four (4) minutes and forty-four (44) seconds. Eighty-one percent of calls had a response time of less than five minutes. Based on a population of 19,230, there is one firefighter for every seven hundred and twelve (712) residents.

Map #48 – City of Punta Gorda Fire Stations



Community Facilities in the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA)

A Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is a taxing district established by local government for the purpose of carrying out redevelopment activities that include reducing or eliminating blight, increasing the tax base, and encouraging public and private investments in the redevelopment area under the Florida Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, codified as chapter 163, Part III, *Florida Statutes*.

The Punta Gorda CRA area encompasses the entire downtown and surrounding historic neighborhoods with an area of approximately 24,280 acres. It is bounded on the north by the Peace River, on the west by Maud Street, on the south by Henry Street, and on the east by Cooper Street.

Bayfront Center

Built in 1963, the Bayfront Center is located in Gilchrist Park on Charlotte Harbor. The facility is managed by the Sky Family YMCA and it is used as a place to host special events, meetings, fitness classes, and youth programs. In addition, the Peace River Power Squadron and Learn to Sail Program are located at the facility. Damaged by Hurricane Ian, this facility will be demolished and may be reconstructed in the near future to increase community resiliency to future natural disasters while continuing to provide space desired for community activities.

Cooper Street Center

Originally built in 1945, with additions in 1999 and 2007, the Cooper Street Recreation Center sits on approximately three acres and serves the youth of Punta Gorda. As one of the City's most intensively developed parks, Cooper Street offers a variety of

educational support services, cultural stimulation, and recreational opportunities for the city's youth. The center includes a playground, tennis court, basketball courts, and a large picnic pavilion.

Laishley Park Municipal Marina

The Municipal Marina is located in downtown at Laishley Park, the City's park for most major events. Completed in 2009, the marina has the capacity to accommodate one hundred and forty-two vessels (there are boat slips for 85 vessels and a mooring field) for year-round docking, and up to one hundred and seventy-two vessels during certain authorized community events. The marina also provides day docks, a public fishing pier, and boat ramp. The marina building has a day room, boater's bathrooms (which includes showers), and a bait shop. The property also includes a large community room that hosts community groups, private functions, and civic and corporate meetings.

The docking structures, located on the public lands, are under lease from the Florida Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund. As a condition of that lease, ninety percent of the slips must be available to recreational vessels to rent on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Herald Court Centre

Herald Court Centre has four hundred parking spaces in a four-level parking garage. Completed in 2009, the facility is located in the heart of the historic downtown, adjacent to the historic county courthouse. Herald Court Centre was designed to provide a platform and catalyst for development within the downtown. In addition to accommodating parking demand from the existing historic downtown buildings, the structure provides:

- Active street fronts with 17,000 square feet of ground floor retail space,
- Economic incentive to develop existing vacant lots nearby,
- An example of integrating a large modern structure into the existing fabric of historic structures, and
- A unique space for events on the top parking level.

Other Community Facilities (not operated by the City)

There are a variety of community facilities available to the city's residents and tourists that are located in and around the city, yet not operated by the City. These facilities are described below and are identified on Map #49 - Other Community Facilities.

Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center

Opened in 2009, the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center is owned and operated by Charlotte County. The 44,000 square foot facility was built to replace the Charlotte Memorial Auditorium, which was demolished due to damage from Hurricane Charley. The City initially donated the land to the County for the construction of the original Memorial Auditorium, and the City later provided funding towards the construction of the existing facility. Located in the heart of downtown, the Event Center has 240 free surface parking spaces that serve the downtown businesses during times when no events are being hosted.

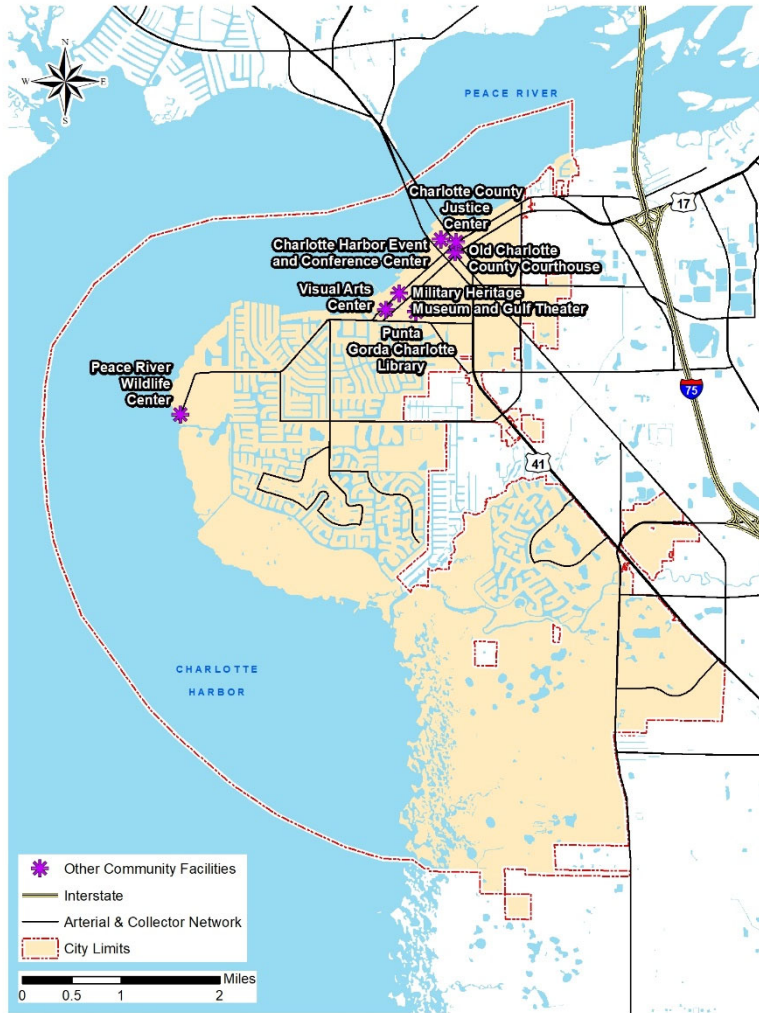
Old Charlotte County Courthouse:

The Old Charlotte County Courthouse is a historic, two-story, brick building located in the center of Punta Gorda's downtown area. Built in 1928, the structure is Neo-Classical with large pediments and columns creating a grand civic presence. In order to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population of the county, several major additions were made to the building in the 1960s, and again in the 1980s, covering up most of the

architectural character of the structure. In 1999, the functions of the Courthouse were relocated to the new Charlotte County Justice Center.

Prior to Hurricane Charley, the County demolished the previous half-century's worth of renovations, leaving behind an unfinished and battered shell. Punta Gorda's citizens put pressure on the City to finish the building's rehabilitation. In 2005, the Board of County Commissioners and the City of Punta Gorda undertook the restoration and renovation of the original 1928 structure that remained. It was reopened to the public in a ceremony on February 29, 2008 and is now used as the County's Supervisor of Elections Office.

Map #49 – Other Community Facilities



Charlotte County Justice Center

The Justice Center, built in 1999, doubled the courtroom capacity to eight courtrooms and covers 160,000 square feet of space. It houses all functions related to the judicial system, including the State Attorney’s Office and Office of the Public Defender, the Sheriff’s Civil Service Office and the Clerk of the Courts. The Justice Center provides a total square footage of 400,000 square feet and provides additional parking spaces that can be used outside of the normal business hours. The additional spaces provide a benefit to the downtown businesses.

Punta Gorda Charlotte Library

The Punta Gorda Charlotte Library, completed in 2018, containing over 19,000 square feet is operated by the Charlotte County Library System. Located at 401 Shreve Street on approximately 6 acres of land donated to the County by the City of Punta Gorda, this facility serves all the residents of South Charlotte County. The facility contains meeting rooms, historical archive facility, as well as an extensive collections of fiction, non-fiction, young adult, and children’s materials.

Peace River Wildlife Center

The Peace River Wildlife Center is located at 3400 Ponce de Leon Parkway, adjacent to Ponce de Leon Park. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the treatment and rehabilitation of injured and orphaned native-Florida wildlife. The PRWC treats over 2,000 mammalian and avian patients annually. When an animal cannot be returned to the wild, but is otherwise healthy, it becomes a permanent of the PRWC. They are housed in attractive habitats, suggestive of their native environments, and are available for public viewing daily.

Visual Arts Center

Early in the 1980's, artist Henry Lohse led an energetic charge to get a brick-and-mortar Visual Arts Center built in Charlotte County. The Charlotte County Art Guild secured a long-term lease of Punta Gorda City property at the corner of Maud Street and Marion Avenue. Fred Babcock, the man who assembled 63,000 acres for the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area (see *Historic Element*), was the first Patron of the Arts and contributed greatly to the building fund.

The Center was built in phases with funds raised from the community, as well as, two matching capital grants from the State of Florida's Division of Cultural Affairs in 1985 and 1987. The building hosted its grand opening in 1989.

Today, the VAC provides instructor-led art classes, exhibitions, an art store, and rental space for meetings and small events. These opportunities are open for members and visitors alike.

Military Heritage Museum and Gulf Theater

The Military Heritage Museum is located at 900 West Marion Avenue. This unique facility was originally built to house IMPAC University, a center for post-graduate education, in 1994. After the University closed, the property was acquired by the owners of Fisherman's Village and leased to the Military Heritage Museum in 2013. The Museum, honoring veterans from all branches and eras of U.S. military service, includes exhibit areas, a military research library, and archive. The museum also includes the 247 seat Gulf Theater, which hosts events ranging from community meetings, lectures, musicals, and other entertainment events.

Public Schools

The following is a brief description of the public school facilities available to the residents of Punta Gorda. Complete and detailed information is contained in the *Public School Facilities Element*. New residential development occurring within the community has the most significant impact on the public school system. Because of the relationship between residential development and the provision of public schools, coordination between local governments and the school district is critical to ensuring that future student growth needs are addressed and can be accommodated within the public school system.

The data, inventory, and analysis contained in the *Public School Facilities Element* details the methods that have been employed to support the Charlotte County School Concurrency Program. Within Charlotte County, the participants in school concurrency are the City of Punta Gorda, Charlotte County, and the School District of Charlotte County. The Goals, Objectives, and Policies section is adopted by ordinance and addresses the correction of existing school capacity deficiencies, establishes a level of service standard for schools, identifies the financial feasibility of the School District's Capital Plan, coordinates the location of planned public school facilities with the plans for supporting infrastructure, and coordinates the location of public school facilities relative to the location of other public facilities such as parks, libraries, and community centers. Further detail is available in the *Public School Facilities Element*.

Four (4) schools are located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the city. However, they cannot be reviewed independently of the rest of the school district. These schools contribute to the whole of the Charlotte County School District and need to be reviewed in unison with the entire district. The school locations can be reviewed on Map #62 - Public Schools and Map #63 - Public School Ancillary Facilities.

In addition, all of the public high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools serve as adult and community education sites, depending on subject matter and availability.

Table 6.1 – 2021-2022 Public School Enrollment in Punta Gorda

<i>School Name</i>	<i>Grades Taught</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>
<i>Baker/Head Start</i>	Pre-K	182
<i>Sallie Jones Elementary School</i>	Pre-K to-5	674
<i>Punta Gorda Middle School</i>	6-8	1,228
<i>Charlotte High School</i>	9-12	1,950

Source: Florida Department of Education

Private Schools/Other Schools

There are a variety of private schools in the city and the county that do not receive any public funding. Most facilities require that parents pay tuition fees for their children. Some of the schools offer subsidy programs to help offset the costs to families. Most of the private schools are church-supported or religious in orientation.

[Florida SouthWestern Collegiate High School](#)

As the first collegiate high school in Southwest Florida, and the state’s only collegiate high school to incorporate ninth graders when it opened its doors in August of 2009, Florida SouthWestern Collegiate High School is located on the Charlotte Campus of Florida SouthWestern State College. FSWC-Charlotte is designed to provide students an opportunity to graduate with both a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts (AA) degree. As Charlotte County’s only charter school, FSWC-Charlotte is free to students.

[Charlotte Technical Center](#)

Charlotte Technical Center is operated by the School District of Charlotte County, and is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education. It is a specialized institution offering occupational, secondary and adult education, and support services designed to assist individuals in attaining their career goals. The Charlotte Technical Center is the campus for the Charlotte County Adult and Community Education Program.

[Florida SouthWestern State College \(previously known as, Edison State College\)](#)

Florida SouthWestern State Collage is a 200-acre campus that serves the residents of Charlotte County and surrounding areas. The college offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Baccalaureate degrees, as well as various certificate programs.

[Florida Gulf Coast University](#)

The 760-acre campus is located south of the city, near I-75 and Alico Road in south Lee County. The university provides undergraduate education with a wide range of programs in the arts and sciences, business, environmental science, computer science, education, nursing/allied health, and social services. The programs are designed for college transfer students as well as beginning freshman. As of 2022, the school had an

undergraduate student enrollment of 14,228 and a graduate student enrollment of 1,681.

Recreation and Open Space

The following is a brief description of the city's park facilities. A complete description is contained in the *Recreation and Open Spaces Element*.

City Park Facilities

The demand for outdoor recreation and open space continues to be a challenging issue. With population and demographic trends changing in Florida, a wide variety of recreational activities are needed. Increasing populations, retired populations, and families of all income levels are seeking leisure-time activities, thereby leading to continued demand for a variety of recreational facilities, organized open space, and other leisure-related activities.

As Punta Gorda's population grows, it is important that the quality of existing facilities improves and the amount of recreation and open space increases to meet the needs of the community. The current City of Punta Gorda Strategic Plan identifies some of the areas the City is interested in improving and increasing services. Undeveloped parks allow the City to plan for and provide the future level of service needed to manage the growing population. The City continues to develop a park system that can be enjoyed and used by a multitude of users. The *Recreation and Open Spaces Element* Table 5.2 – City Recreational Facilities and Sites identifies the existing park systems that are maintained by the City's Parks and Grounds Division.

The division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of City parks and recreation facilities. Twenty-three parks totaling 130 acres and nine miles of pathways (Harborwalk and Linear Park multi-

use recreational trails) are maintained by the Parks and Grounds Division. Additionally, the Parks and Grounds Maintenance Division provide care and maintenance for the grounds of the City-owned buildings.

School Facilities

The school facilities that assist the City's ability to meet the daily recreational needs of residents are listed in the *Recreation and Open Spaces Element*, Table 5.3 – Publicly-Owned Charlotte County School Recreational Facilities and Sites. These systems provide diverse, organized, and year-round programs that are accessible to the population. These systems are generally more intensely developed than other parks.

Health Facilities (not operated by the City)

Medical care in the City of Punta Gorda is available through a variety of State and private providers. Treatment in virtually every medical specialty is offered by facilitators. The county's hospitals provide a range of medical, wellness, and educational services. They do so with highly-trained physicians and nurses, along with the help of hundreds of volunteers.

ShorePoint Health

ShorePoint Health Punta Gorda, formerly known as Bayfront Health and Charlotte Regional Medical Center, is a 208-bed, for-profit hospital, operated by Community Health Systems. It was the first hospital in Charlotte County, having opened its doors on August 17, 1947, as Charlotte Hospital.

ShorePoint Health Punta Gorda is an acute-care setting that is home to a primary stroke center, the Joint Commission Certified Joint and Spine Center, a chest-pain center, a hyperbaric and wound care center, and emergency care. Additional on-campus services include adult inpatient psychiatric care at ShorePoint Behavioral Center, a medical detox program, and rehabilitation and wellness services.

Health Department

Located on Loveland Boulevard in Charlotte County, the Health Department offers health services to the public. It is a State agency governed by chapter 154, *Florida Statutes*. The Health Department is able to monitor and diagnose health issues and refer patients for treatment. They are also responsible for educating the public and identifying community health hazards.

Assisted-Living Facilities and Nursing Homes

There are a variety of facilities and services for retirees in the city (a detailed description of these facilities is contained in the *Housing Element*). These include centers for independent living, in-home care, assisted living, or the full services of a nursing facility. There are numerous congregate-living facilities and nursing homes in the city and the county and there is a demand for more, especially affordable/subsidized facilities. Demand will increase considerably as the “baby-boomer” generation continues to retire to the community. This demand will require a significant addition of assisted-living facilities and nursing homes. The *Housing Element* contains a more detailed discussion of these facilities.

Human Services (not operated by the City)

Human services are provided to the city’s residents by numerous public, private, and non-profit agencies. Churches, religious organizations, and support groups also provide human services to their membership and the community. Each organization provides selected services that are based on its funding availability and serve specialized needs. Eligibility criteria are determined by the individual agencies.

Charlotte County’s Department of Human Services

The County’s Department of Human Services is available to the city’s residents under the direction of the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners. It employs social workers, case managers, and program specialists who determine eligibility for

several county, state, and federally funded grant programs that provide assistance to individuals and families. Services provided through these programs include 2-1-1 information and referral, economic counseling, hospital and prescription assistance, indigent burials, emergency food assistance, and home energy and utility assistance.

As a result of the large percentage of seniors in the city and the county, the department has a separate division that serves only seniors and focuses on aging issues and concerns. Additional grant funding from the Department of Elder Affairs and the Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida allows for several additional programs. They include the Alzheimer’s disease Initiative, the Medicaid Waiver Program, and the Home Care for Elderly Program. Other senior services include: case management, case aide, screening and assessment, homemaker, personal care, respite, transportation, companionship, congregate and home-delivered meals, nutrition education, chore management, emergency alert response, and outreach. Participation in human service programs currently ranges between 1,000 and 1,500 people per year.

The provision of human services is largely impacted by the state and federal governments. Federal welfare reform in the 1990s radically changed the scope of services that had been provided for more than thirty years. The Florida Department of Children and Families has already seen the privatization of several of its programs and the trend by state governments toward privatization and local devolution continues.

Department of Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families is a State agency that has many functions. It serves everyone from infants to senior citizens, while providing a wide range of programs and services. These services include aging and adult services, children and families protective supervision, voluntary family services, child protection investigation, foster care, developmental services, emergency preventive dental program, an economic services/payment unit, emergency financial assistance for housing

program, Florida adoption reunion registry, and project independence (career counseling, job training, etc.).

The city’s aging population, which will continue to grow with the retirement of the baby boomers, will require that their needs be considered when developing priorities and funding for long-term health care. Other issues facing the very-elderly population include affordable and appropriate housing, prescriptions, Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia, transportation, and family support.

Veteran Services

Assistance is available to veterans of military service, their families, dependents, and survivors residing in our county. The Charlotte County Veterans Services (with offices located on Loveland Boulevard in Port Charlotte) provides counseling and filing assistance for U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs benefits (such as pensions, compensation, death benefits, health care, etc.).

Other Services

Many public-private partnerships exist to link human service providers, non-profit agencies, faith-based organizations, and volunteers. After the hurricane seasons of 2004, 2017, and 2022, the human services community developed a strong desire to work together in the recovery efforts by pooling funding resources, identifying unmet needs, and coordinating service delivery.

Cultural Resources Facilities

Cultural life in the city is diverse, growing, and continuously evolving as the population changes. Activities range from art lessons and gallery walks and exhibits, to community theater groups, choral groups, symphony orchestras and Broadway road shows. Cultural programs are in place throughout the city and county for both children and adults. They include painting and

crafting; instrument, voice, and dance lessons; and music and theater groups. There is a wide variety of performing groups. The small, non-profit, cultural groups in the city continue to grow in size and number and provide cultural activities by non-profit sponsors.

Table 6.2 - Cultural Organizations in Punta Gorda

Facility Name and Address	Address	Organization	Type
Blanchard House Museum	406 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr	Blanchard House Museum	Non-Profit
Center for the Performing Arts	701 Carmalita St	Charlotte County Public Schools	Public
History Park of Punta Gorda	501 Shreve St	Punta Gorda Historical Society Sunday Market Community Garden	Non-profit, operated on land leased from City of Punta Gorda
Isles Yacht Club	1780 W Marion Ave	Isles Yacht Club	Private

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT

Punta Gorda History Center	512 E Grace St	The Punta Gorda History Center Punta Gorda Historical Archives	Non-profit
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Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association	2001 Shreve St	Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association	Non-profit
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Punta Gorda Women's Club	118 Sullivan St	Punta Gorda Historical Society	Non-Profit
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Punta Gorda YMCA	2905 Tamiami Trail	YMCA of Southwest Florida	Non-profit
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Seminole Lakes Golf and Country Club	26200 Stillwater Cir	Seminole Lakes Golf and Country Club	Private
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St. Andrews South Golf Club	1901 Deborah Dr	St. Andrews South Golf Club	Private
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Twin Isles Country Club	301 Madrid Blvd	Twin Isles Country Club	Private
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Visual Arts Center	210 Maude St	Charlotte County Art Guild	Non-profit, operated on land leased from City of Punta Gorda
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Future Facilities Needs

In determining the future facility needs, the City will implement sound compact and contiguous urbanization techniques. Through the implementation of the land development regulations, the City will continue to developing a coherent built environment that respects local historical and regional architecture; has an integrated and balanced transportation system; adequately provides for utility infrastructure, schools, parks, and other public necessities; and preserves the natural environment. The City will evaluate the population projections, development trends, and needs analysis to determine the future facilities. The evaluation recommendations will be incorporated within the Capital Improvements Program as it plans for new facilities during the next planning decade.

Risk Reduction and Building Resilience

Green architecture (also known as “sustainable architecture” or “green buildings”), as mentioned in the *Infrastructure Element*, is a conservation-oriented building method that should be incorporated into City facilities. When applied correctly, green

architecture is a means of climate-change adaptation planning that can result in operational cost savings for local governments.

Transforming government buildings to net-zero energy facilities can lower maintenance costs, better resiliency to power outages and natural disasters, and improve local energy security. Net-zero energy means that a building balances its energy needs with energy produced from renewable, zero-emission sources. The Department of Energy defines a net-zero energy building as, “an energy-efficient building where, on a source-energy basis, the actual delivered energy is less than or equal to the on-site renewable...energy”.

One small example of a non-fossil fuel energy input occurs at the City’s Water Treatment Plant, where excess water pressure from the reverse-osmosis system powers a turbine. This turbine boosts the water from the first stage of the reverse-osmosis system to the second stage. Use of the turbine eliminated the need for a larger feed pump or secondary booster pump. This results in an approximate 20% savings in energy costs of this process within the Water Treatment Plant. The plant’s continuously operating pumps, wells, valves, filters, computers, air conditioners, etc. require massive amounts of energy to maintain operations. Should the electricity fail, backup generators are on stand-by; however, these require a substantial quantity of diesel fuel to operate. Sitting on one-hundred and sixty (160) acres of land, the entire facility may be optimally situated to take advantage of a supplemental alternative energy source option such as natural, renewable energy in the form of solar and possibly wind power. A study of the facility power demands and available open space could be conducted to evaluate the feasibility and financial viability of harnessing and storing renewable energy on-site. The City of Punta Gorda, through green building practices and localized energy production, could increase its resiliency to disasters by becoming self-sufficient and sustainable.

Emergency Operations Center

Punta Gorda City Council, as part of their 2023 legislative priorities, stated the need to identify funding sources to address hardening the Public Safety Center. After experiencing impacts from several major disasters over the first decades of the 21st century, the City recognizes the need to have an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) within its public safety facilities in order to ensure continuity of operations. The EOC would also provide a platform for critical communication systems redundancy and utilize new technology including Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to enhance disaster response and restoration of public services.

V. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal 6.1: Within financial feasibility, the City will provide high-quality and accessible community facilities and services that meet the informational, educational, recreational, safety, health, welfare, and justice needs of its citizens.

Objective 6.1.1: The City of Punta Gorda will provide general government public facilities and services to meet the needs generated by new and existing residents of the community.

Policy 6.1.1.1: The City of Punta Gorda will develop personnel growth and space needs plans to assist in the determination of necessary public facilities and services.

Measurement: Review of City strategic and plan.

Policy 6.1.1.2: The City of Punta Gorda will encourage urban-center development (compact and diverse) with the siting and design of its future community facilities and services.

Measurement: The development or redevelopment of community facilities and services implementing the Land Development Regulations.

Policy 6.1.1.3: The City of Punta Gorda will place a high priority on flexibility in design and will seek to share facilities where appropriate.

Measurement: Number of shared-use agreements signed and/or implemented.

Policy 6.1.1.4: The City of Punta Gorda will provide access to civic life for people with disabilities by implementing the recommendations of the ADA Transition Plan.

Measurement: Implementation of the recommendations from the final ADA Plan.

Objective 6.1.2: The City of Punta Gorda will continue to assist Charlotte County in providing and maintaining a high-quality, accessible system of public libraries to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the city's residents and visitors.

Policy 6.1.2.1: The City will continue to work with the County through the collection of impact fees that incorporate funding for public libraries, as allowed by law.

Measurement: Continued collection of impact fees.

Objective 6.1.3: The City of Punta Gorda will coordinate with the School Board to provide a public education system that meets the needs of the city's and county's existing and future population.

Policy 6.1.3.1: The City of Punta Gorda will establish mechanisms designed to coordinate with the Charlotte County School Board, in order to provide to the greatest extent possible compatibility between local land use and public school planning.

Measurement: The implementation of the Inter-local School Agreement and number of School Concurrency Approval Development Letters included in the City's staff reports.

Policy 6.1.3.2: The City of Punta Gorda will coordinate with the School Board to permit the joint use of school sites and City facilities with similar facility needs, such as libraries, parks, and recreation facilities, health care facilities, and emergency shelters.

***Measurement:** The adoption of the updated Interlocal School Siting and Facility Update Agreement.*

Objective 6.1.4: The City of Punta Gorda will both maintain and expand, when necessary, the Fire and Emergency Medical Services delivery system in order to provide the highest level of safety and protection to its citizens and property.

Policy 6.1.4.1: The City of Punta Gorda will coordinate the Five-Year Stations Location and Master Plan with this comprehensive plan and its urban service area strategy.

***Measurement:** The addition of new facilities within the urban core, necessary to maintain the level of service to the city’s residents and businesses.*

Policy 6.1.4.2: The City of Punta Gorda will continue to work with interlocal agreements to strengthen response times.

***Measurement:** Number of interlocal agreements updated to improve response times.*

Policy 6.1.4.3: The City of Punta Gorda will continue to advance its technology and equipment with changing times.

***Measurement:** Number of programs developed or implemented to meet local needs.*

Objective 6.1.5: The City of Punta Gorda will provide for the safety of its residents and visitors by maintaining or improving emergency storm plans.

Policy 6.1.5.1: The City of Punta Gorda will explore opportunities for developing additional refuge/shelter space possibilities, especially within the Special Flood Hazard Area.

***Measurement:** The development of new shelter space facilities.*

Policy 6.1.5.2: The City of Punta Gorda will develop a mitigation plan to reduce the effects of natural hazards.

***Measurement:** The completion of a mitigation plan and its annual update.*

Objective 6.1.6: The City of Punta Gorda will endeavor to support those public facilities and services that provide for the health, safety, and well-being of the city’s residents.

Policy 6.1.6.1: The City of Punta Gorda will encourage outreach and education efforts regarding mental and physical health, physical and emotional abuse prevention and recovery, substance abuse, and gang interdiction.

Measurement: *The number of public-private partnerships formed, or public educational programs developed, that enhance or promote public safety practices.*

Policy 6.1.6.2: The City of Punta Gorda will foster cooperation and coordination with the County to establish a clear direction that minimizes duplication of effort and maximizes community resources.

Measurement: *The review of development projects, interlocal agreements, and memorandums of agreements when requested.*

Policy 6.1.6.3: The City will continue to collect medical sharps and dispose of prescription medicines collected from residents through the Fire and Police Departments at the Public Safety Complex.

Measurement: *Record of program use including distribution of materials to the public and collections of medical waste for disposal.*

Objective 6.1.7: The City of Punta Gorda will provide support to the City’s Police Department that will strengthen its policing capabilities and help to secure the safety of residents and visitors.

Policy 6.1.7.1: The City of Punta Gorda will engage in cooperative planning to accommodate growth and ensure safety. The City will encourage partnerships between public and private sectors and between community groups, local government, and law

enforcement agencies in order to amass and share information regarding planning and design practices that enhance safety.

Measurement: *The number of public-private partnerships formed, or public educational programs developed, which enhance or promote public safety practices.*

Objective 6.1.8: The City of Punta Gorda will support the development of the arts and arts-related activities, thereby enhancing the quality of life, civic and social pride, and community identity.

Policy 6.1.8.1: The City of Punta Gorda, will support the development of a public art program that seeks to improve the aesthetics of the city, increase civic and social pride, and increase community identity.

Measurement: *The completion of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.*

Policy 6.1.8.2: The City of Punta Gorda will endeavor to expand its facilities and become a venue for more conventions, small-scale exhibitions, and conferences.

Measurement: *The provision of infrastructure services, the approval of development projects, and the provision of a Future Land Use Map that propose development for facilities that support these activities.*

Policy 6.1.8.3: The City of Punta Gorda will consider the development of an annual awards program, which would give recognition to design excellence

in public and private development projects in the city.

Measurement: *The continuation of the recognition awards programs for projects completed in the city.*

Goal 6.2: The City of Punta Gorda will improve its emergency preparedness, resiliency, and risk mitigation strategies when building new facilities and maintaining existing facilities.

Objective 6.2.1: The City of Punta Gorda will explore the incorporation of appropriate climate change adaptation and emissions mitigation measures into the construction of new facilities and additions to existing facilities.

Policy 6.2.1.1: The City will study the power demands and available open space to evaluate the feasibility and financial viability of storing renewable energy on-site.

Measurement: *Number of renewable energy feasibility studies conducted.*

Policy 6.2.1.2: The City will seek to improve its energy security by investigating alternative renewable energy sources for City-owned facilities.

Measurement: *Amount of renewable energy investments for City-owned facilities.*

Policy 6.2.1.3: The City will research grant funding and partnership opportunities for climate adaptation and renewable energy production.

Measurement: *Amount of grants obtained for renewable energy projects.*

Policy 6.2.1.4: The City will identify funding opportunities to harden City-owned facilities.

Measurement: *Amount of funding obtained for facility-hardening projects.*

Objective 6.2.2: Punta Gorda will provide for the safety of its residents by maintaining and operating critical communications infrastructure during and after a storm event.

Policy 6.2.2.1: The City will research alternative internet and mobile phone service providers that can maintain communication systems during and after a major storm event.

Measurement: *Outcome of alternative internet and mobile phone service provider research.*

Policy 6.2.2.2: The City will investigate and support the use of technology and equipment (such as drones) to assess property damage, and health and human safety after a storm event.

Measurement: *Investigations into such technology and equipment.*

Policy 6.2.2.3: The City will identify and map key communications infrastructure (networks or points of production or distribution) that may be affected by climate change impacts.

Measurement: *Mapping of communication infrastructure within the City's adaptation areas, as identified in the Adaptation Plan.*

Policy 6.2.2.4: The City will ensure communications infrastructure is accessible for repair and re-activation in the event of a climate-related disaster.

***Measurement:** Record of pre-disaster planning to implement post-disaster access to public and utility (private) communications infrastructure.*