

2005 CITIZENS MASTER PLAN



TEAM Punta Gorda

Spring 2005



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A.

Introduction

A. Downtown aerial
(Pre-Hurricane
Charley)

Hurricane Charley tore into the Charlotte Harbor area on Friday, the 13th of August of 2004. In a few hours, this powerful storm shattered the City of Punta Gorda's visual identity, its sense of security, and its peace of mind. The devastation included some of the most beloved city spaces, waterfront areas, and buildings. For the citizens of Punta Gorda, the tragedy might have removed some of its most important physical landmarks but, it did not erase its "hometown" feeling or its community harmony –two characteristics which have turned it into one of the most livable waterfront cities in the United States.

A non-profit organization, with a communal sense of spirited determination, was put in place by a group business people, home owners, investors, and residents. TEAM Punta Gorda, the result of this

meeting of the minds, was determined to rebuild and get back what was lost. In a continuous search for the voice of the entire community, TEAM Punta Gorda came to the powerful realization that a tragedy of these proportions could only mean great and unprecedented development opportunities for their beloved environment.

In the first quarter of 2005, TEAM Punta Gorda charged **JAIME CORREA AND ASSOCIATES**, a Miami-based town and architectural design firm, with leading one of the most important planning initiatives in the history of the City of Punta Gorda: *the creation of a Citizens Master Plan for the reconstitution of a region devastated by a natural disaster.* The design firm began a community process to facilitate the creation of a master plan to guide future development and provide the greatest amount of benefits for

the entire region of Punta Gorda.

This book culminates the efforts of the town designer to bringing consensus and accommodating the goals and objectives of citizens, stakeholders, and public officials. It also summarizes the results of meetings with community leaders, three public presentations, one hands-on public workshop, and a design *charrette* on the grounds of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

While there is more community process to come, the discussion must now shift from planning to the implementation of specific projects. At this point, it should be clarified that a master plan is purely illustrative and its compliance is voluntary. In effect, its illustrations are formulated as simple guidelines to help public officials, stakeholders, and citizens determine the

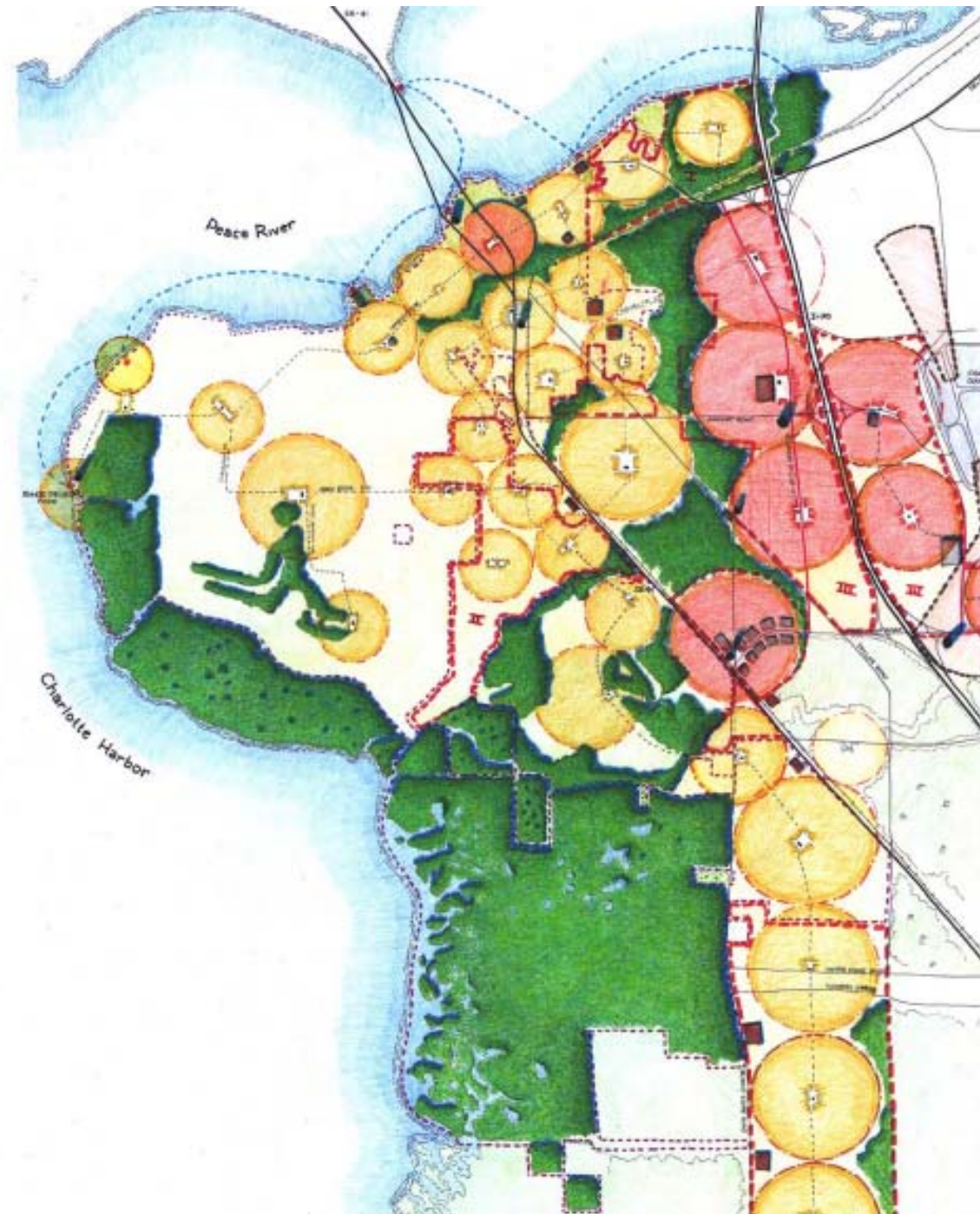
The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Regional Master Plan

overall value of any future proposals. The citizens must understand that without an enforceable set of instructions, the implementation of the community desires is NOT guaranteed.

Therefore, a new set of Land Development Regulations (LDR's) is imperative for the implementation of this master plan. The citizens should acknowledge the tremendous effort made by the City Staff to come up with reasonable amendments to its existing LDR's. But, they should also realize that the production of codes and/or regulations without a viable master plan may become too abstract or self-defeating.

The City Staff and its public officials should take this opportunity to gain citizens' support for the implementation of new regulating plans, urban standards, thoroughfare specifications, architectural guidelines, and landscape regulations. For instance, a new zoning map with the location of open spaces and the type and



A.



B.

B. Images of Punta Gorda

and openings must be delineated in order to avoid the lack of harmony characterizing suburban environments; and, finally, a list of plant species (with instructions regarding their location and planting pattern) must be correlated to various locations in the urban to rural gradient of the region.

The truthful and uncompromised implementation of this plan shall allow you to reconstitute, not only what was taken by Hurricane Charley in August of 2004 but, the “Institutional Memory” of its citizenry, and the hope for a better and more productive future.

It would be impossible to arrive at this day without the dedication and commitment of many individuals and organizations. We at JAIME CORREA AND ASSOCIATES look forward to continuing our partnerships as we share with you the scope, joy, and hope of this historic job.

trajectory of the various thoroughfares is of the essence; as is the revision of those aspects of buildings which affect the public realm including, but not limited to, building setbacks, frontages, building height, encroachments, parking requirements, etc.; a matrix specifying dimensions for vehicular and pedestrian activities shall be assigned to the regulating plan; the permitted configurations and materials of walls, roofs,



Hotel Charlotte Harbor — Punta Gorda, Fla.

History of Punta Gorda

A. Hotel Charlotte Harbor, c.1929

“Her citizens come from all corners of the United States, hence are not a people of one idea or of a single opinion. All shades of thought, genius, religion, politics and taste prevail.”

(Punta Gorda: where life is worth living, 1919)

The City of Punta Gorda was incorporated on December 7, 1887. It is one of the most deeply rooted cities on the West Coast of the State of Florida and the oldest in Charlotte County. The City grounds were initially owned by Col. Isaac Trabue, a successful lawyer from Kentucky, and by his wife Virginia Taylor. The City, originally known as Trabue City, was surveyed by Kelly B. Harvey. Its first lots were sold during the state exposition of 1885; and soon after that, the first settlers arrived in the company of the Florida Southern Railway.

Within the next few years, a group of citizens and Mr. Trabue himself decided to change the name and establish a local

government. The City of Punta Gorda was born as a thriving settlement on the crossroads of the Florida Southern Railway and the Morgan Steamship Line on Charlotte Harbor –with regular service to Havana, Key West, and New Orleans.

The transportation of cattle, phosphate, and large quantities of fish and seafood became the primary economic source of the City of Punta Gorda. In fact, it was never meant as a fisherman’s village but as a complex intersection of various modes of transportation where boats had always a recreational focus.

In a series of insurance maps, drawn by the Sanborn Insurance Company in 1909, the layout of the city reveals a series of clues about its development history. For instance, the block system shows how the city was meant to be read as a conglomeration of houses on relatively small lots. The plans also represent the hierarchy of the original streets, the differences between civic and

domestic buildings –in terms of materials and configuration, the presence of commercial environments supported by shaded sidewalks with wooden colonnades, and the general order of things. But, most importantly, this sequence of maps allows the normal resident of Punta Gorda understand the morphology of the city structure, the spatial hierarchy of its public spaces, and the significance of specific buildings in the overall context of the city.

One of these buildings was the old Punta Gorda Hotel (aka: Hotel Charlotte Harbor c. 1928) at the corner of Taylor and Marion Avenues. Undoubtedly, a resort hotel was essential to the prosperity of the railway system. In effect, one of the railway real estate development corporations was the entity that actually built the Punta Gorda Hotel. The hotel had a beautiful lawn along the riverfront and, for a long time, it was the largest facility of its kind in south Florida –with room for more than 3,000 wealthy guests.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Marion Avenue,
c.1936

The typical houses had a simple configuration. Pictures of homes on Retta Esplanade show wooden structures with ample porches, small towers, gable roofs, and operable windows supporting systems of cross-ventilation. The commercial buildings, on the other hand, were deep (40 ft. to 60 ft.) and narrow, with arcades encroaching over the wooden sidewalks, and with wall-painted or perpendicular signs hanging from the roofs of the arcades. Storage buildings and small shops occupied the most prominent piers along the riverfront.

Civic buildings demonstrated their community presence by means of their iconographic character. Brick was used in buildings such as the Old County Courthouse or the Merchants Bank of Punta Gorda; at the same time, a great variety of monumental towers decorated the bell towers of many of the local churches and public buildings.



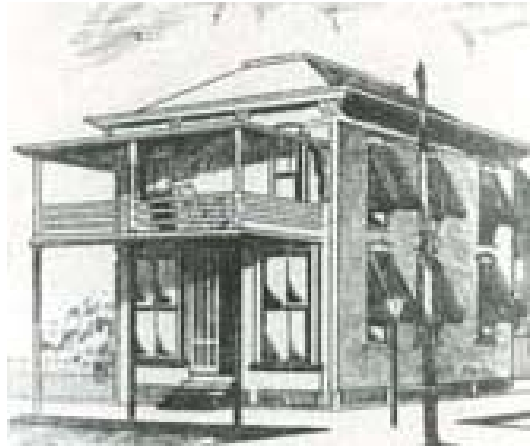
A.

The city also counted with its numerable charitable groups in charge of public improvements. For instance, a bath house was added to the City Dock by the Ladies Civic Improvement Association in 1916. Salt water bathing became one of the attractions of Punta Gorda every day of the year. The bath house had dressing rooms on the lower floor and an open-air dancing ballroom on the second.

The city's landscape, resulting from the continuous dedication and exotic

experimentations by Marian McAdow and Albert Gilchrist, was perhaps one of the most coherent in the state of Florida. Continuous rows of palm trees and shade trees protected pedestrians from the scorching Florida sun. Beautiful tropical domestic gardens were wild and untidy. Parks and waterfront areas were informal and conducive to community building.

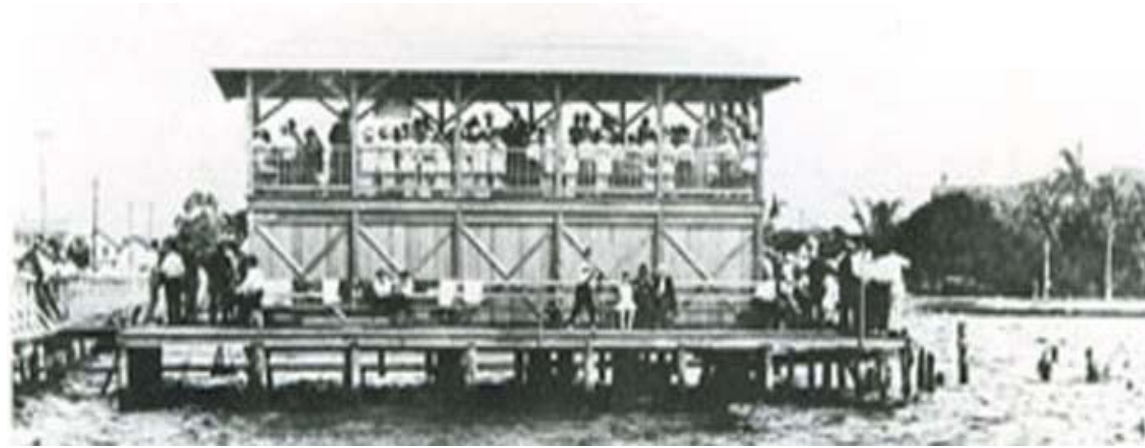
As the town continued to grow, several events determined the future of the city as we know it. First, the development of



B.

Punta Gorda Isles, in 1958, destroyed mangroves, salt-marsh sand flats, and the home of ducks and curlew to transform the area into hundreds of waterfront homes.

Then, the Punta Gorda Hotel was devastated by a fire in August of 1959 leaving a void in the midst of the downtown area and one of the greatest scars in the collective memory of the city; the destruction of the hotel created external effects on the health of business along Marion Avenue and according to Vernon Peeples in his Pictorial History: "...its demise left a void in Punta Gorda that was soon filled by the Punta Gorda Mall." And finally, the changing face of the city was



C.

completed upon the construction of the two Highway 41 bridges across the Peace River.

The new-comers and the old-timers have always found an amiable point of encounter within the City of Punta Gorda. Nevertheless, the new-comers still lack the sort of "institutional memory" required for the healthy re-building of an excellent urban model. It is important to clarify that cities do not get built in one day. The notion of a "collective memory" worth of reconstitution is pervasive amongst the citizens of Punta Gorda. Although it has never been articulated, they yearn for a small town feeling where the architecture of the

city enhances the idea of community and where everyone feels in control of their own destiny.

Hurricane Charley has provided the City of Punta Gorda with the extraordinary opportunity to reconstitute its collective memory. In addition to being the representation of identity and cooperative wishes, the 2005 Citizens Master Plan is a testimony to community excellence and, as of today, the clearest blueprint for a better future.

- B. The first Punta Gorda Bank, c.1894
- C. Bath house; the Ladies Civic Improvement Association, c.1916



Methodology

- A. Design team member in studio
- B. Table presentation to citizens

This project was designed by a multi-disciplinary group of professionals with one single mission: *to translate the development desires of a community badly hit by Hurricane Charley into projects with implementation potential.* The design team was composed of fifteen urban designers, a retail specialist, a traffic engineer, a housing specialist, a landscape designer, a marina

specialist, an affordable housing specialist, a redevelopment expert, and a logistics supervisor.

The design team collected information from four sources: institutional, phenomenological, existential, and pragmatic. From all the institutional sources of information, the following may be



A.



B.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Consultants and design team at work



A.

understood amongst the most important: the City of Punta Gorda and Charlotte County Comprehensive Plans, the City of Punta Gorda Land Development Regulations, the 2004 Demographic Profile, the Sanborn Insurance Maps of 1909 and 1925, the reports generated during previous Charrette processes, publications on the history of Punta Gorda (particularly Mr. Vernon Peoples' Pictorial History), and many more.

Phenomenological sources of information

were collected during one-to-one interviews with public officials, local historians, garden clubs, old timers, and stakeholders – particularly faith-based organizations. This important information supplied the design team with a complete historic recollection of the City of Punta Gorda at its heyday and with community goals and objectives.

Existential information was collected during public workshops and presentations. This information was mainly received from

around 450 citizens, a number of stakeholders, and public officials who, by their own volition, decided to participate in the workshops and presentations lead by members of the design team. The input received during these events acquired the highest degree of priority, helped the design team to establish value judgments, disclosed the real costs and benefits of living in a small Florida town, and defined the most achievable and realistic development goals.

Finally, a multiplicity of pragmatic issues was discussed, during round-table meetings, with stakeholders, public officials, local non-profit organizations and agencies, and more. The concerns of these groups of interest were taken into consideration but, they were never included at the expense of the desires

of the community. Many of the on-going development proposals ended up with design configurations which made sense in the general scheme of the master plan and which complied with the programmatic and financial requirements of its generators.

The multi-disciplinary group of professionals met with citizens, public officials, stakeholders, and members of TEAM Punta Gorda at the Church of the Sacred Heart between April 8 and April 15, 2005.

B. Table discussions with citizens



B.

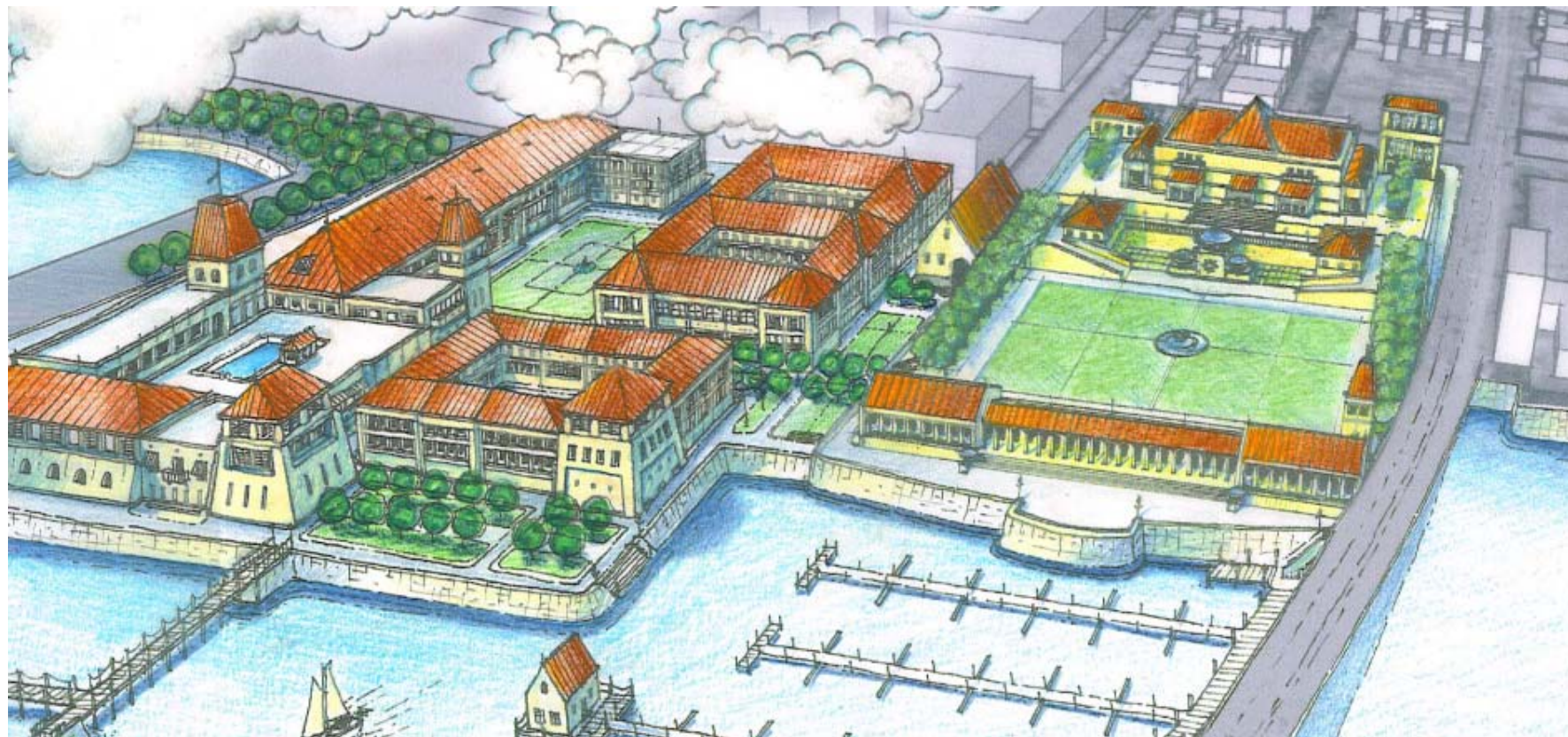


The Master Plan

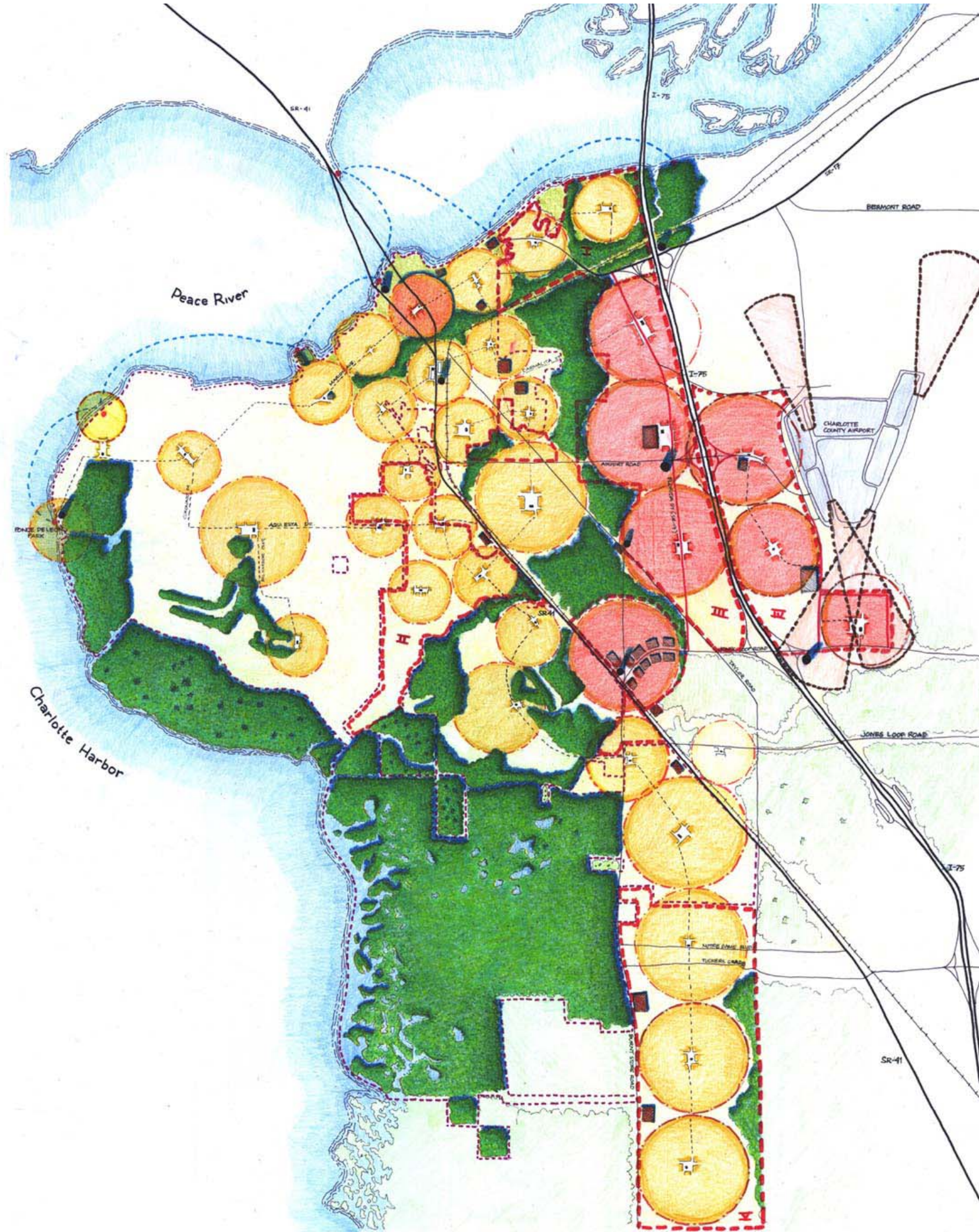
The Punta Gorda 2005 Citizens Master Plan has three parallel components. First, the REGIONAL MASTER PLAN establishes the organization of the Punta Gorda region including the definition of urbanized areas, potential annexations, environmental protection, open space, and quality of life. Then, the DETAILED MASTER PLAN focuses on the scale of

the neighborhood, the block, and the public space –including the street, the sidewalk, the waterfront, and the various urban space categories; and, finally, the SPECIAL PROJECTS section depicts proposals for individual parcels, the architectural syntax and character of future proposals, and other guidelines and landscape standards.

- A. Downtown Master Plan
- B. Perspective of Downtown



B.



Regional Master Plan Key

-  Neighborhood
-  Neighborhood Center
-  District
-  District Center
-  Green Belt Conservation

A.

Regional Master Plan

The regional master plan establishes the organization of the Punta Gorda region. It includes a hierarchy of its urbanized areas, the location of its supporting districts, the potential for the annexation of neighboring territories, the location of open space corridors and areas of environmental protection, and particular strategies for the

development of waterfront areas. Its main goal is the mapping of a predictable and defensible future where the traffic congestion, the fragmentation, and the dissatisfaction of conventional suburban sprawl are NOT necessarily the design criteria.



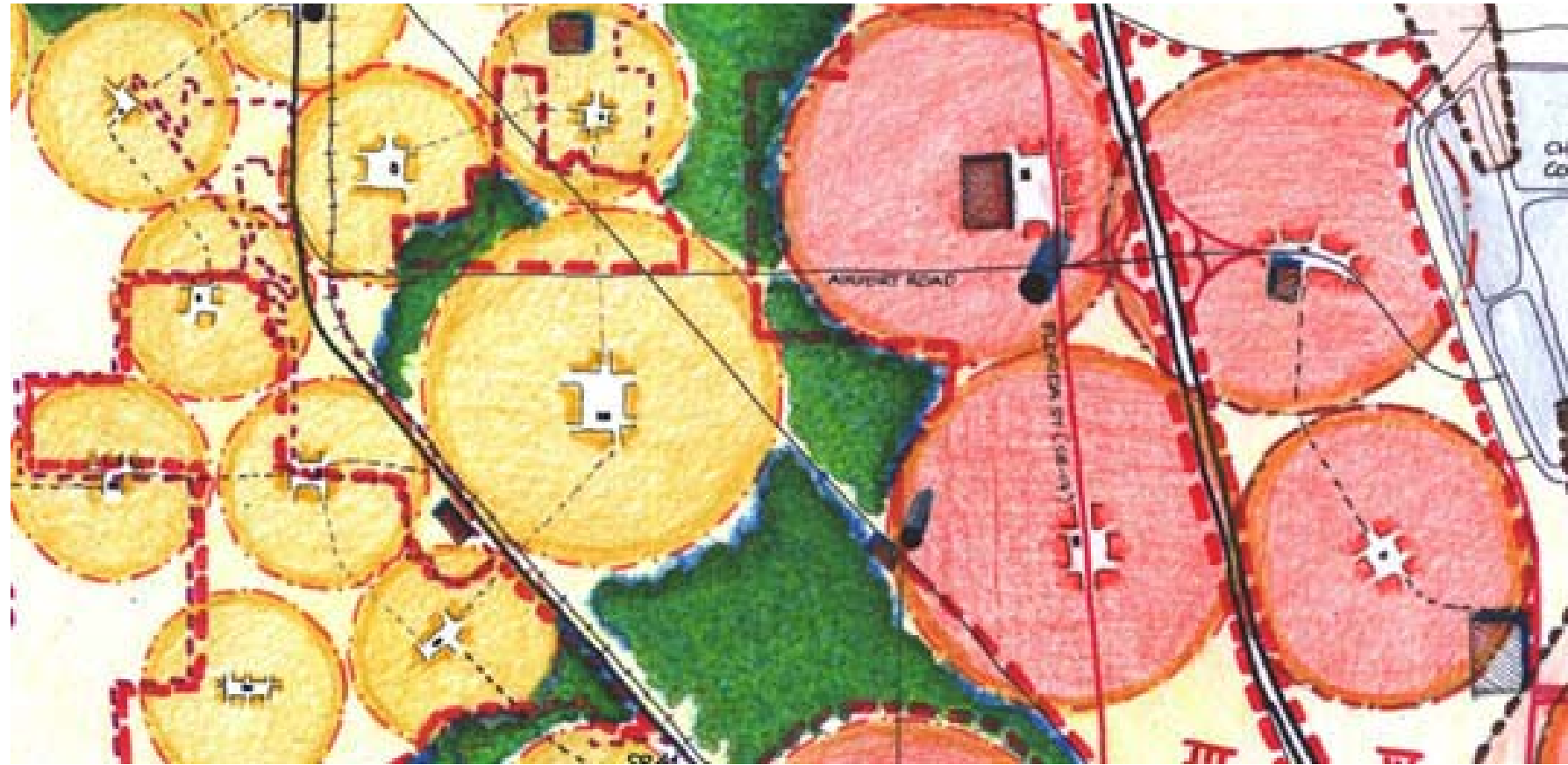
B.



C.

- A. Regional Master Plan
- B. Regional Aerial
- C. Detail of Regional Master Plan

A. Typical neighborhood size



A.

The Neighborhood Requirements:

The regional master plan sets apart specific areas of the Punta Gorda territory for neighborhoods with various scales and character. The neighborhood is hereby understood as a comprehensive planning increment which varies in population and density to accommodate localized conditions. A neighborhood is limited in

size so that a majority of its population is found within a 5-minute walking distance from its center (approximately ¼ mile).

In theory, the needs for daily living should be available within the neighborhood proper. In practice, due to commercial demands for servicing support, it is sometimes necessary to share these areas

and locate them at the articulation of two or more neighborhoods. The elderly and the young benefit, and gain independence of movement, by bringing most of the activities of daily living into a walking distance.

The neighborhood streets shall be laid out in a knitted network, so that there are



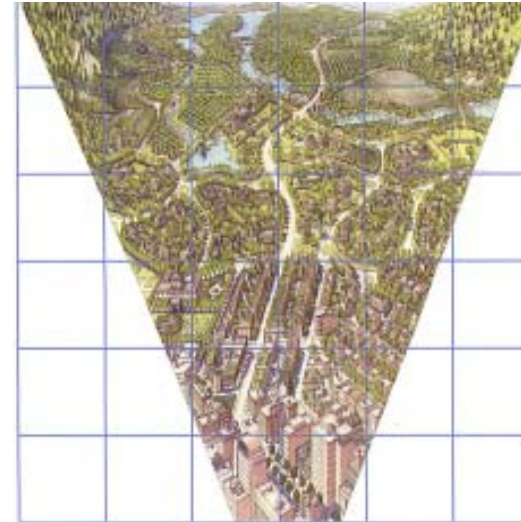
B.

multiple alternate routes to every potential destination. Therefore, the neighborhood streets can afford to be smaller, with slower traffic, on-street parking, trees, sidewalks, and building frontages defining urban/suburban public rooms. By reducing the number and length of automobile trips, the expenses of road construction and traffic congestion are minimized.

Neighborhoods shall contain one center and

a variety of open spaces for the location of civic buildings (schools, meeting halls, pool houses, condo-clubs, museums, churches, libraries, etc.). By providing streets and open spaces of comfortable scale, the residents can come to know each other, may get encouraged to develop democratic initiatives, and may watch over their collective security.

Neighborhoods provide a wide collection

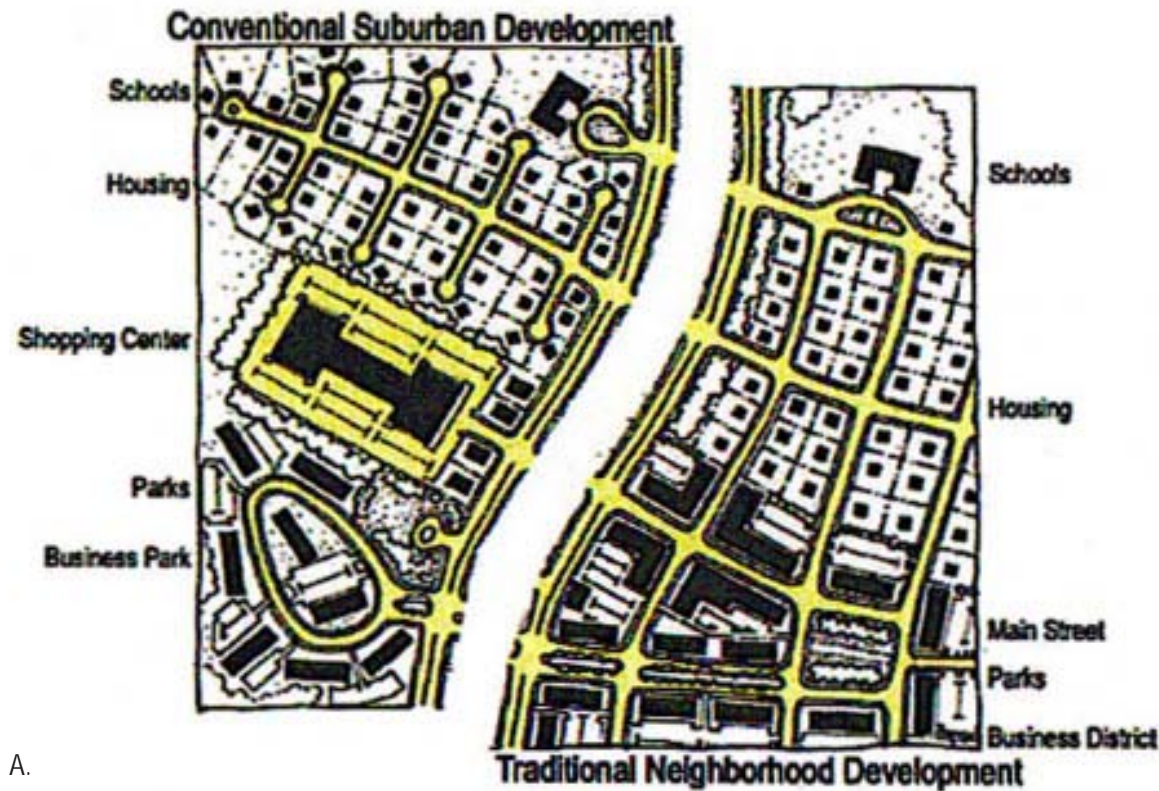


C.

of building types. A full range of housing types, work places, age and income distributions, and economic classes should be integrated to form authentic communities. Nevertheless, there shall be a gradient of neighborhoods -going from the more urban to the more rural. The more central the neighborhood is, the greater its density should be. To achieve economies of scale and concentration of services, rural neighborhoods may afford an increase of up to 40% the size of a regular neighborhood.

- B. Typical neighborhood center
- C. Rural to Urban Transect diagram

A. Comparison of suburbs to traditional Neighborhoods



A.

A neighborhood is NOT composed of sprawling areas, pods, gated communities, office parks, residential clusters, large housing projects with segregated areas, units of similar cost, 50 M.P.H. retail, cul-de-sacs or looping streets, parking lots dominating the public space, highly articulated buildings, buildings placed randomly in and out on the lots, civic buildings located on residual spaces, buffers, “berms”, or other ill-defined spaces or buildings.

The District Requirements:

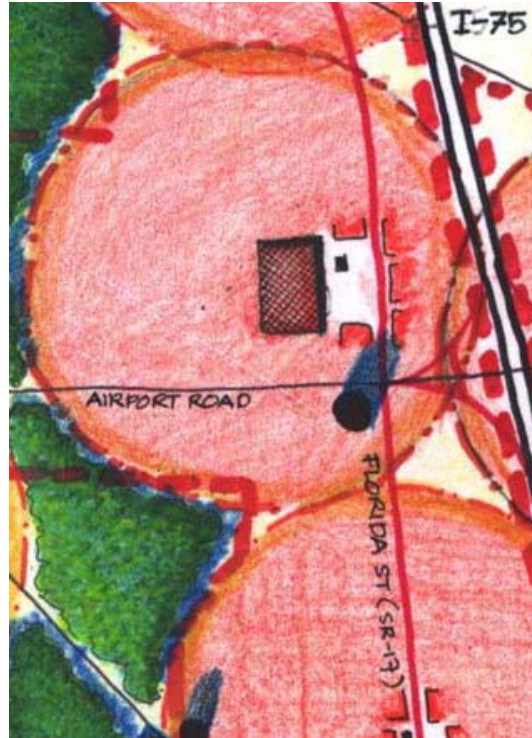
A district is a specialized section within the region. Districts are typically occupied by land uses which, by their function, are incompatible with other pedestrian oriented areas within the region. Nevertheless, the design of districts should be held up to the same standards of the neighborhood unit.

Whenever possible, a district should have a mix of land uses conducive to the creation of life on a twenty-four hour basis. To resolve the contradiction of land use incompatibility and pedestrian activities, districts shall use Live/Work units –a type of housing unit which, by definition, requires a combination of living facilities (typically of a lofty type) and work areas (typically for no more than 3-4 employees/unit bay).

The configuration of Live/Work units comes in three types:

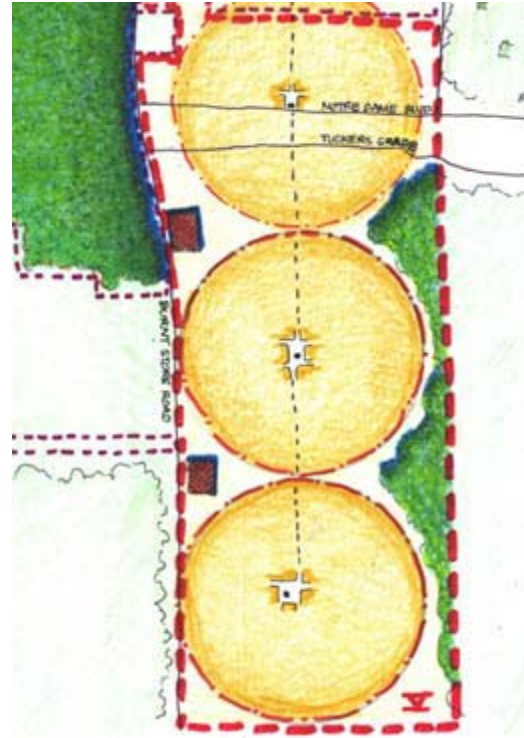
1. Work on the ground floor and living facilities on the upper floors,
2. Work in the front of the lot and living facilities in the rear, and
3. Living facilities in the front of the lot and working area in the rear.

Districts are typically used to supply the demands of the new economy. Typical



B.

districts include areas with gigantic distribution and warehouse centers (storage areas for large corporate Big Boxes i.e.: Walmart, Publix, Target, etc.), a collection of Big/Boxes (also known as a Power Center), or for premises available for the creation, assemblage, and repair of artifacts including their retail sales i.e.: art districts, factory districts, fashion districts, etc.



C.

The Punta Gorda Region is composed of various neighborhoods and districts:

Burnt Store Rural Neighborhoods:

The Punta Gorda regional master plan assumes a neighborhood composition with a rural to urban gradient. The most rural neighborhoods would be located in the

south –further away from the center, with a variety of lots in excess of ¼ of an acre; the most urban neighborhoods, in the center of the urbanized areas, with a minimum lot width of approximately 20 ft. –a lot appropriate for a typical small live/work unit or a row house.

The most rural neighborhoods are located south of Jones Loop Road between Burnt Store Road and State Road 41. The preservation of their rural character, by means of density controls, is important to the overall health of the region. These rural neighborhoods should occupy a territorial area not to exceed 40% the normal area of a typical neighborhood. Club houses, common facilities, or central parks shall be located at their approximate geographic center. Daily living activity centers shall occur at the intersection of the neighborhoods, and preferably along Burnt Store Road; these facilities may include: convenience stores, convenience retail (barber shop, bakery, etc.) schools, clinics,

- B. Typical district size
- C. Burnt Store Rd. rural Neighborhoods

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- A. Typical rural neighborhood center
- B. Solutions to truck problem of US 41



A.

medical offices, police or fire sub-stations, gyms, library branches, churches, social clubs, etc. As a rural area, the roads may be smaller and/or curvilinear, the buildings may be set back at irregular intervals, the landscape may be planted in a more informal manner, an abundance of picket fences should be highly encouraged, and sidewalks may be understood as an option.

These neighborhoods are highly threatened by truck drivers attempting to avoid

the Interstate Road 75 weight station located between Tuckers Grade and Jones Loop Road. As a consequence, Burnt Store Road and State Road 41 carry the greatest truck traffic impact. One or a combination of several of the following three solutions were suggested as potential answers to the current problem:

1. Encourage a greater police presence and enforcement at the Interstate Road 75 exits on Tuckers Grade and Jones Loop

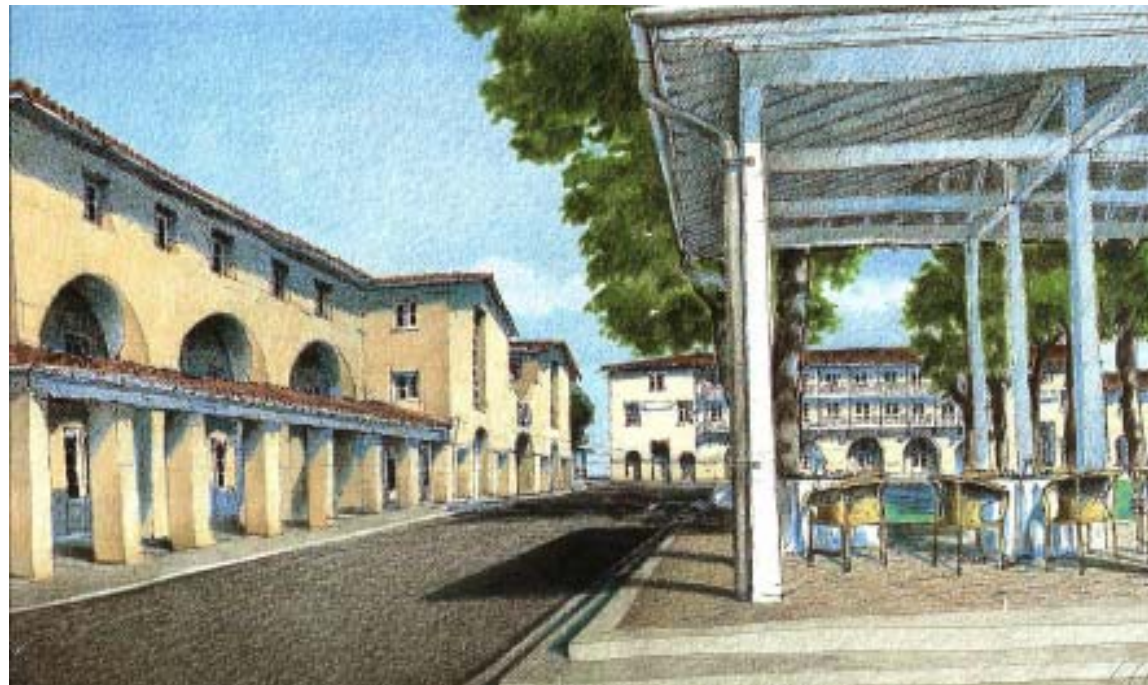


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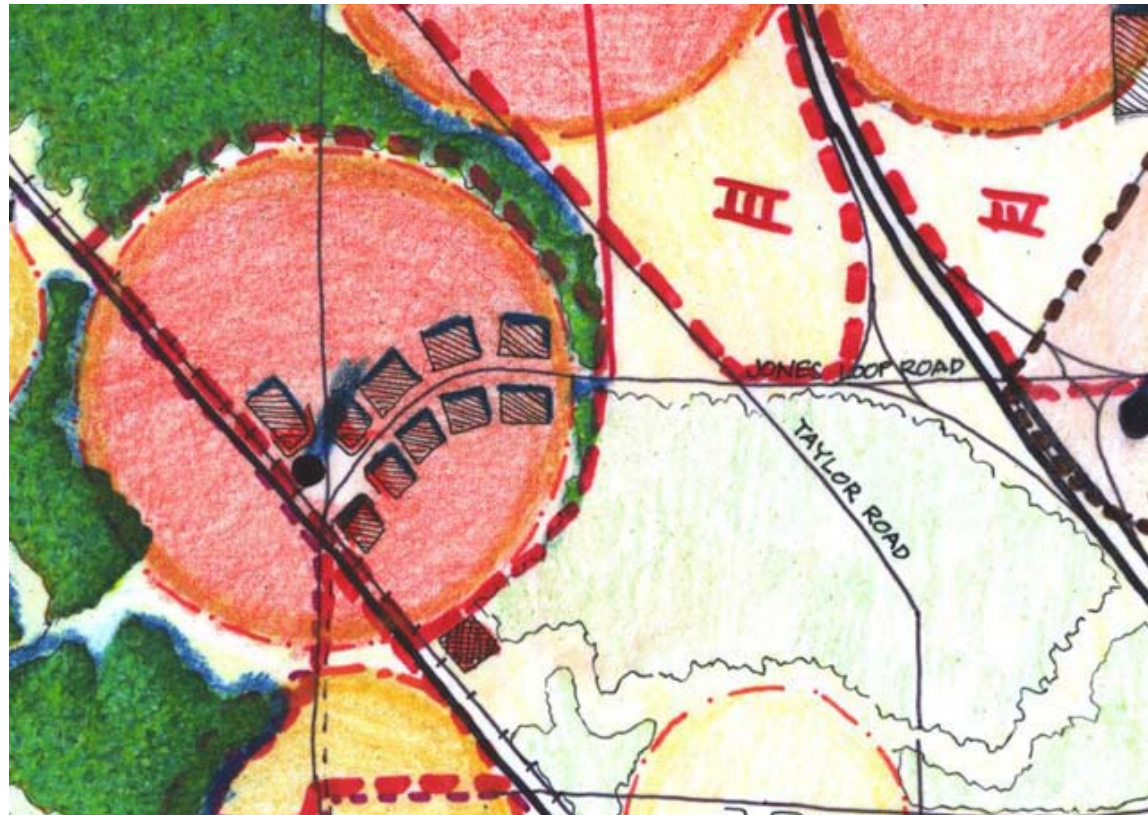
Road. These two exits could even afford small police sub-stations.

2. Dedicate one lane of traffic on Tuckers Grade, State Road 41, Burnt Store Road, and Jones Loop Road to exclusive truck traffic and, on these exclusive lanes, reduce the speed limit to 25 M.P.H..

3. Reduce the width of traffic lanes on Tuckers Grade, State Road 41, Burnt Store Road, and Jones Loop Road. In theory, smaller traffic lanes may assure decreasing traffic speeds.



C.



D.

Jones Loop Road Power Center District:

The undeniable intensity of this new district is completely overwhelming. The presence of some of the most important Big Box “Category Killers” is imminent within its boundaries. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the strength of this new development trend and to realize that it is better to conglomerate these land uses together than to let them grow without control.

The proposed regional plan welcomes the location of a new Power Center along Jones Loop Road but, it also recognizes the necessity of stricter zoning and land development regulations. It is important to understand that the addition of Live/Work units and defined public spaces may add life, capture trips, and produce spaces of pride and opportunity.

- C. View of a potential Power Center
- D. Jones Loop Rd. Power Center

A. Airport industrial districts

Airport Industrial Districts

The location of the new Distribution Center on the west side of the airport provides a perfect opportunity for the development of a chain of servicing and light-industry districts on both sides of Interstate Road 75; A regional Life-Style Center is proposed on Jones Loop Road –east of Interstate Road 75. This small district could contain a program with one or several of the

following activities: welcoming center, gym, bowling alley, museum, open-air theater, drive-in restaurant, movie theater complex, designer retail, etc.

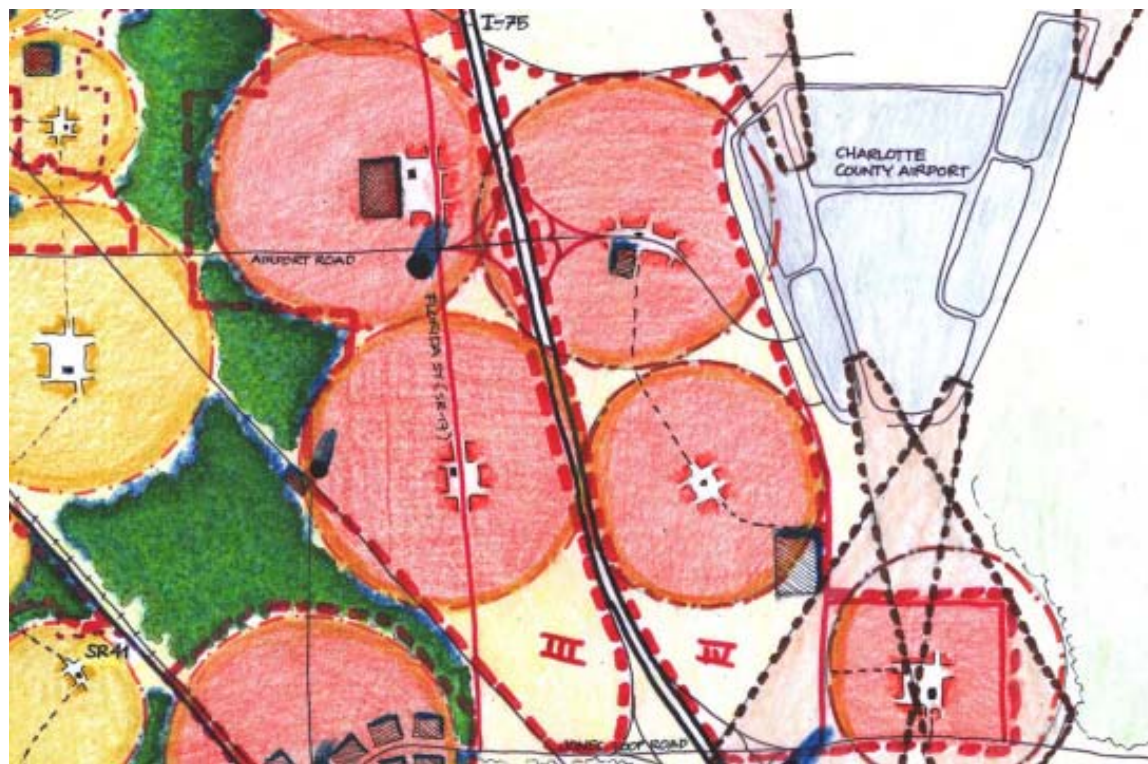
For the sake of land use diversity, urban richness, and security, it is important to introduce a minimum amount of Live/Work or housing units within these separate districts. A district should never be monolithic; it should contain a variety of

land uses working in unison at various times of the day.

The Gateway at State Road 17:

The Punta Gorda Regional Plan identifies the setting and location of unique gateways and landmarks announcing regional territorial boundaries and thresholds. These gateways and landmarks must be understood as economic, efficient, and beautiful pieces of architecture, land art, or sculpture which carry a high content of symbolism.

The charrette team proposed, as a mere example, one of these pieces on State Road 17 at the exit of Interstate Road 75. This piece was designed in memory of a the water towers and sight-seeing belvederes that characterized the historic urbanscape of the old City of Punta Gorda and its



A.



B.

neighboring towns –particularly Arcadia. The proposed piece is a hybrid building composed of a traditional water tank, a central viewing terrace, and a welcoming center on its ground floor. The drawing also suggests a greater degree of ornamentation –including the name “Punta Gorda” in big letters, a weather vane in the shape of a small boat, and a diversity of façade materials inspired by those one may find in the existing historic district.

Annexation Proposals:

The cost-benefit analysis of any annexation proposal should always be based on issues ranging from urban economics to the establishment of potential political controls on unincorporated areas. In the case of the Punta Gorda Region, the annexation of five (5) areas was prioritized as follows:

1. Neighborhoods Along State Road 17:

although these neighborhoods are not incorporated in the territorial base of the City of Punta Gorda, they form part of the first visual impression of any visitor arriving to the City via Interstate Road 75. Nevertheless, their importance in the overall plan is not visual or economic but purely strategic. The incorporation of these neighborhoods would have immense traffic repercussions for the local downtown area –bringing control of State Road 17 back to the City of Punta Gorda. In this case, the City of Punta Gorda could decide future detours and more appropriate connections between SR-41 and SR-17; plus, it would



C.

have the power to change the character of the two downtown pairs to local roads –with great implications for the downtown area, where Marion and Olympia could be reconstructed with their original character as two-way retail streets.

2. Neighborhoods East of Punta Gorda

Isles: these settlements have become some sort of unincorporated island in the midst of the urban territory. What at one point used to be rural land is, nowadays, an important part of the suburban territory of the City of Punta Gorda. If the existing lack of land development controls persists,

- B. Entrance feature
- C. First annexation phase

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- A. Second annexation phase
- B. Third & fourth annexation phases
- C. Fifth annexation phase

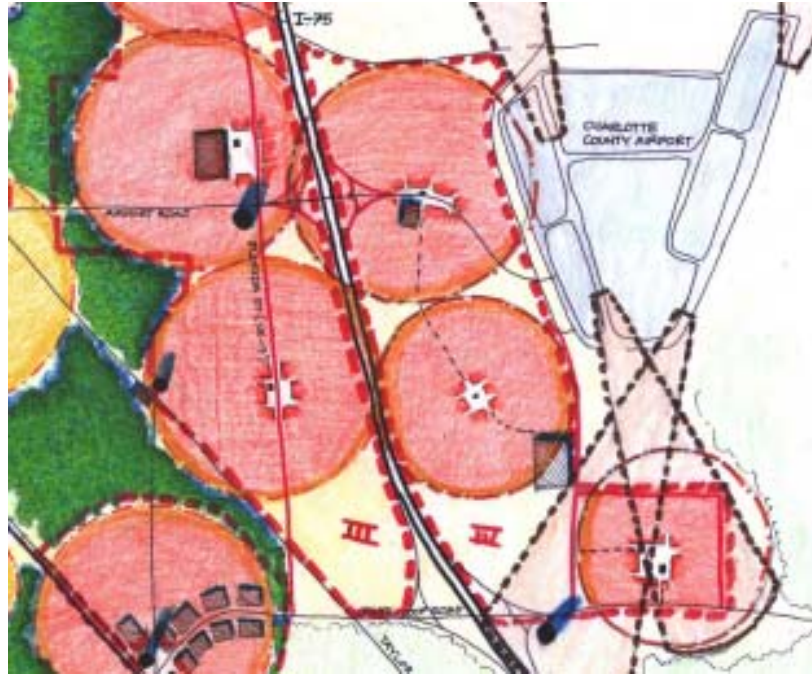


A.

these neighborhoods shall become the paradigm of regional sprawl and unbridled sub-urbanism in Charlotte County. In order to recuperate the unity of character deserved by the City of Punta Gorda, these neighborhoods must be annexed in second degree of priority.

3. Districts West of Interstate Road 75:

similar traffic calming strategies are a rationale for the annexation of these districts. Once the City of Punta Gorda establishes control over the future of State

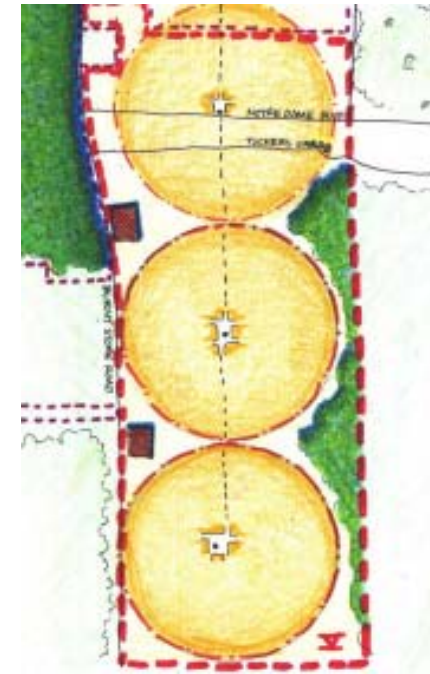


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Road 17, it could reroute its traffic content along Florida Street and directly to Jones Loop Road. This strategic move would be beneficial to the economic health of the districts, the airport, and the proposed Power Center District on Jones Loop Road.

4. Districts East of Interstate Road 75:

the undeniable economic benefit created by the location of the new distribution center and the proposed Life-style Center, in the vicinity of the airport, places these districts in fourth place.



C.

5. Burnt Store Rural Neighborhoods:

future annexations may include the incorporation of these rural neighborhoods. At this point, however, it is an unlikely possibility. Currently, an objective cost/benefit analysis results in an increased tax base for the City of Punta Gorda but a lack of immediate benefits for its residents – most of these areas work on septic tanks, have small infrastructural requirements, and do not lack overall County services.



D.

Greenbelt Conservation:

The conservation of the natural landscape is important to the common ecological performance and survival of the Punta Gorda region. The maintenance and

protection of wild areas is essential to its overall health. It is within the purpose of this plan to designate and safeguard such areas.

D. Greenbelt Conservation

A greenbelt network, composed of a series of open spaces separating urbanized areas, is proposed between the Peace River and Charlotte Harbor. This open space network shall contain environmental and agricultural preserves, golf courses, parks, playing fields, trails, and bicycle paths. This trajectory leads through rural and urban areas –adjacent to neighborhoods and districts.

The proposed network of conservation shall have a landscape appropriate to its location. The landscape patterns shall vary; naturalistic within the countryside, and formal within the neighborhoods and districts.

The 2005 Citizens Master Plan pays particular attention to animal migratory patterns, nesting requirements, vegetable and animal endangered species, as well as local watersheds. The preservation of the local ecological transect is as important as the reconstitution of the physical spaces within the region.

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- A. Punta Gorda Isles c.1967
- B. Punta Gorda Isles Master Plan
- C. Existing Bal Harbor Plaza
- D. Proposed Bal Harbor Plaza

Punta Gorda Isles:

Punta Gorda Isles may have great water efficiency but it still lacks wholeness, life, and beauty. As a typical post-war zoning plat, this planned unit development lacks pedestrian and automobile connectivity, a vibrant center, and architectural standards insuring the predictability, beauty, and character of its buildings.

The Regional Master Plan proposes the location of three new centers at the intersection of Aquí Esta Drive and Bal Harbor Boulevard, Coronado Drive and Marion Avenue, and Bal Harbor Boulevard and Suzi Street. Although these three centers would not be a permanent solution to the current suburban maladies, they would partially improve the lack of commodity and will supply a good variety of daily services at a more or less reasonable distance.



A.



B.

Bal-Harbor Plaza:

The charrette team explored the design and development possibilities for one of the potential centers in Punta Gorda Isles. The retrofitting, reconfiguration, and



C.



D.

reconstitution of the Bal-Harbor Plaza Shopping Center is shown as a paradigm for similar projects within the Punta Gorda region.

In its current state, the Bal-Harbor Plaza

presents the configuration of a typical suburban shopping center. A “head & tail” liner building, with a larger commercial space at one end and a series of smaller commercial spaces on its tail, is surrounded by a sea of asphalt. Two or three out-parcels, designed to supply the needs of

drive-in banks and fast-food restaurants, complete the overall development program. The counter-proposal assumes the presence of the “head & tail” liner as a given but, it proposes the almost surgical reconfiguration of the parking areas with defined public spaces, a system of complete blocks, and

infill buildings. The blocks have complete frontages composed of courtyard buildings with retail uses on the ground floor and small apartment units or offices on the upper levels; the open spaces have public amenities including a band stand with flying curtains, a fountain, and a landscape

E. View of proposed Bal Harbor Plaza



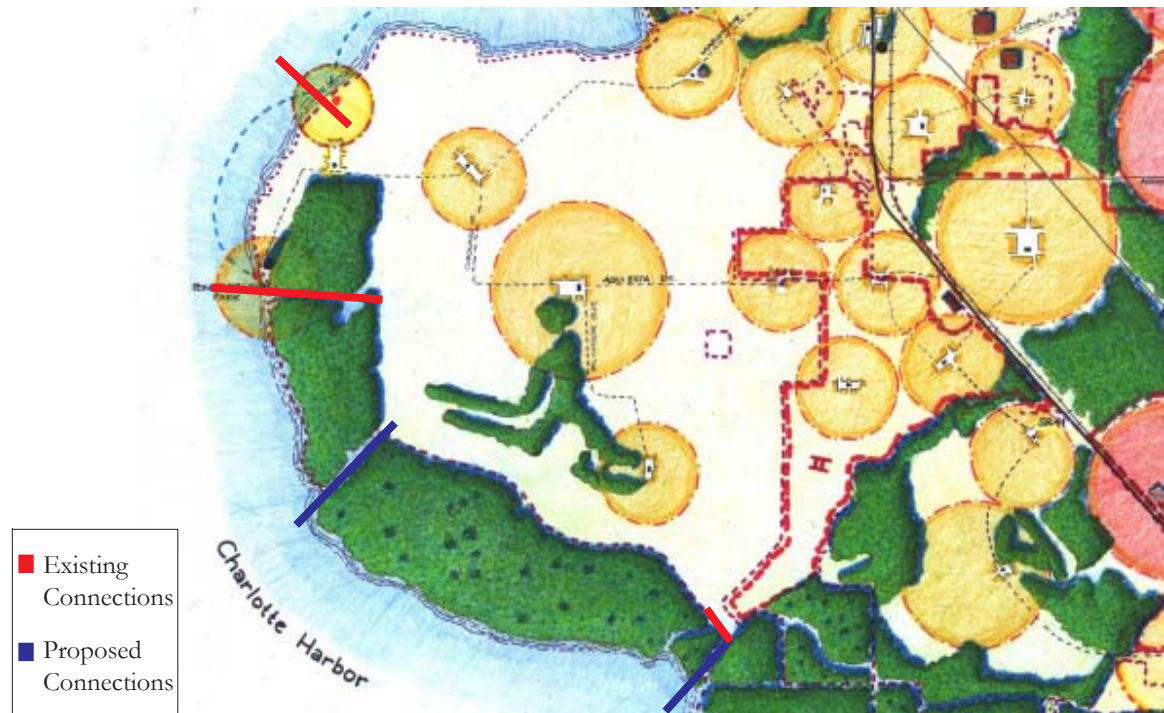
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The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Punta Gorda Isles waterfront connections

scheme appropriate for areas where heat and visibility might turn into important design issues (palm trees and shaded colonnades); new infill pieces are designed to create analogies with the best architectural pieces in historic Punta Gorda.

A Park-Once system (a.k.a.: Park and Walk) is proposed behind one of the infill pieces. This parking garage accommodates the required parking for the new housing units and takes care, within the confines of a shared parking method, of the excess vehicular traffic. On-street parking (diagonal or parallel), along the proposed network of streets, shall generate sufficient spaces to supply the overall parking requirements.



A.

Punta Gorda Isles Waterfront Connections:

The success of the Punta Gorda Isles project resides in its accessibility to the Charlotte Harbor waterfront. In fact, the desirability of these properties is the result of a network of canals facing the rear of every lot in the project. At this point, however, the security of the water access is being threatened by the number of connections to Charlotte Harbor and by the

width and depth of the same.

Residents of Punta Gorda Isles indicated that, during weekends, it may take between one and two hours to reach the Ponce de Leon Park connection to Charlotte Harbor. Moreover, they expressed their concerns regarding the possibility of a boat accident with the potential to close off the only exit to the Harbor. And finally, in collaboration with the Charrette Waterfront Consultant, they came up with alternative



B.

connections and ideas to increase the width of the existing Ponce De Leon Park connection.

The drawing on page 30 shows three new connections and two possibilities for widening the existing canals. The new connections would alleviate the existing boat traffic and would decrease the time spent by boat owners to reach the Charlotte Harbor area –particularly the southernmost connection.

Water Taxi:

A proposal for a water taxi was put forward by the citizens. Amongst its immediate advantages, a water taxi would be beneficial for the elderly population, would create a network of connections on the two sides of the Peace River, would augment the traffic potential of particular projects within the City of Punta Gorda, would promote the preservation and conservation of the existing ecology, would allow citizens and



C.

visitors to admire the historic landscape, and would add an extra sight-seeing mechanism to enhance various tourism programs within the City of Punta Gorda.

As proposed, the water taxi would have seven strategic stations: Ponce De Leon Park, North Punta Gorda Isles, Fisherman's Village, Downtown Auditorium, County's Redevelopment Area, Hospital, and Conservation Park.

- B. Map of water taxi destinations
- C. Historic view of the Peace River area

Downtown Master Plan Key



Existing Buildings



Proposed Buildings



Proposed Parking Structure



Downtown Master Plan

- A. Downtown Master Plan
- B. Downtown region
- C. "Missing teeth" diagram



B.

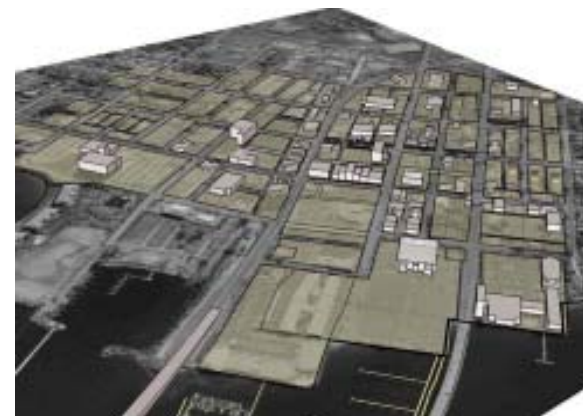
Downtown Punta Gorda is the center of gravity of the whole region. In its current state, however, the downtown is not conducive to a good pedestrian experience. It suffers from what is known in urban design as the "Missing Tooth Syndrome". This so-called "MTS syndrome" is found in cities where the relationship between building frontages and continuity of sidewalks is not parallel or concurrent. In theory, the more continuous the building frontages along uninterrupted sidewalks, the more energy, livability, and aliveness the retail place will have; and vice versa,

the less continuous the building frontages along interrupted sidewalks, the more lethargic, dead, and ungraceful it will be.

In Punta Gorda, an empirical observation of this relationship proves to be quiet disturbing. The lack of continuity of the downtown building frontages must be reconstituted. Supportive land development regulations (LDR's) and architectural guidelines could encourage the production of pedestrian friendly urban buildings of the highest design quality.



C.



A. Place making examples

Retail Development as Place Making:

Downtown retail development is not about making shopping centers but about life and place-making –creating spaces with attractive destinations for time well spent. In general, people do not come to downtown areas for everyday shopping needs; they come looking for an urban experience including: entertainment, an attractive waterfront, a variety of historic and contemporary architecture, pedestrian friendly areas, lots of things to do, see, explore, meet, etc.; most importantly, a downtown is NOT an artificial environment but, a friendly public stage where people go to see and be seen by other people.

People come to downtowns to have the Communal Experience they cannot find in a mall or in a strip center. For Downtown Punta Gorda to be successful, it must deliver this Experience.



A.



B.

Downtown Character and Composition:

The residents of Punta Gorda do not want suburban-style shopping centers, big box retail stores or a large number of chain stores and franchises in their downtown area. In fact, the location of businesses in the downtown area carries definite clues on the character and development strategies necessary for a successful downtown. By pure observation, the downtown area has four niches and retail development strategies that can be used for a successful redevelopment: dining, entertainment, waterfront businesses, and arts and culture.

The future of any retail strategy must focus on the continuation of: core galleries, cafes, restaurants, and businesses geared towards



C.

the arts and culture. Moreover, the addition of key underserved market niches would highly complement such a retail mix including home furnishing and design-related facilities.

The historic character of downtown Punta Gorda is the foundation for vibrant retail. Therefore, historic preservation efforts and the development of compatible land development regulations are essential for the success of any development endeavor. Upon a pre-application interview, every potential developer, architectural designer, interior designer, or landscape specialist must be given copies of old photos, postcards, and historic information regarding the character of old downtown Punta Gorda. New buildings, with contemporary uses, must create life, must be compatible with its neighbors, and must bring back the most beloved elements of the old downtown.

- B. Examples of Punta Gorda's historic character
- C. Proposed character of the historic center

A. Example of a downtown center of gravity

Coordinated Leasing, Management, and Marketing:

Although downtowns are not shopping centers, they do need to adopt the coordinated leasing, management, and marketing practices that make shopping centers successful. These practices have been translated and adapted by the National Main Street Program to serve downtowns where there are multiple property owners and merchants. The existing merchants associations, the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Punta Gorda should seriously consider creating a Main Street Program (MSP) and hiring a Manager to implement it.



A.

Downtown Critical Mass of Retail and Center of Gravity:

The more retail assembled in one place, the more attractive a destination becomes. This rule is the same for shopping centers, strip centers, and downtown areas. The greater the variety and concentration of retail, the larger the trade area becomes – the greater the distances people are willing to travel.

Larger trade areas bring more customers and create more successful retail. Fisherman's

Village, for instance, has succeeded because it has a concentration of retail shops and restaurants, a relatively attractive location, and a “brand name” image that lends itself to marketing. Many downtowns, however, do not take advantage of these opportunities. As a retail destination, downtown Punta Gorda could grow stronger with the addition, in quantity and quality, of: shops, restaurants, arts and cultural activities, etc.

The first order of business should be the



B.

creation of a core destination within the downtown area—a center of gravity; a place where a critical mass of shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues would complement the creation of public space. In terms of place-making, this requires completing the two sides of the street or the four sides of an open public space (i.e.: proposed plaza at Marion Avenue and Taylor) with retail activity. Vacant lots, empty window fronts, parking lot frontages, drive-in tellers, and crossing fast one-way streets are not pedestrian friendly or conducive to retail activities.



C.

Taylor and Marion Avenues

The new restaurants on Marion Avenue between SR-41 and Taylor (River City, the Turtle Club, etc.) are becoming a key attraction for this sector of downtown. Moreover, the corner of Taylor and Marion must be understood as the center of the downtown area—what is typically known in retail circles as the “100% street”.

Traffic calming and re-design are essential to the future success of Marion Avenue. As

originally designed, Marion Avenue was meant to be a true urban retail center, flanked with shops on both sides of the street. Wide sidewalks and a two-way street system complemented the friendliness of this magnificent pedestrian environment. The existing situation, however, is dismaying. A one-way street is robbing energy from the northern side of the street. The reconstitution of the historic two-way street system is fundamental for the livability of all the shops along Marion Avenue. Moreover, the planting of trees shall be done strategically to avoid blocking main retail entrances and signage.

Taylor should also be designed as a high quality pedestrian-friendly street. From the Sacred Heart Church to the waterfront, Taylor should have wide sidewalks, parallel parking for the protection of pedestrians, and at least two lanes of traffic; the rest could be continued as an attractive tree-lined boulevard thoroughfare connecting the downtown with the I-75 interchange.

- B. Proposed Street Sections
(Top: Marion Ave.)
(Bottom: Taylor St.)
- C. Marion Avenue

A. View of proposed waterfront market

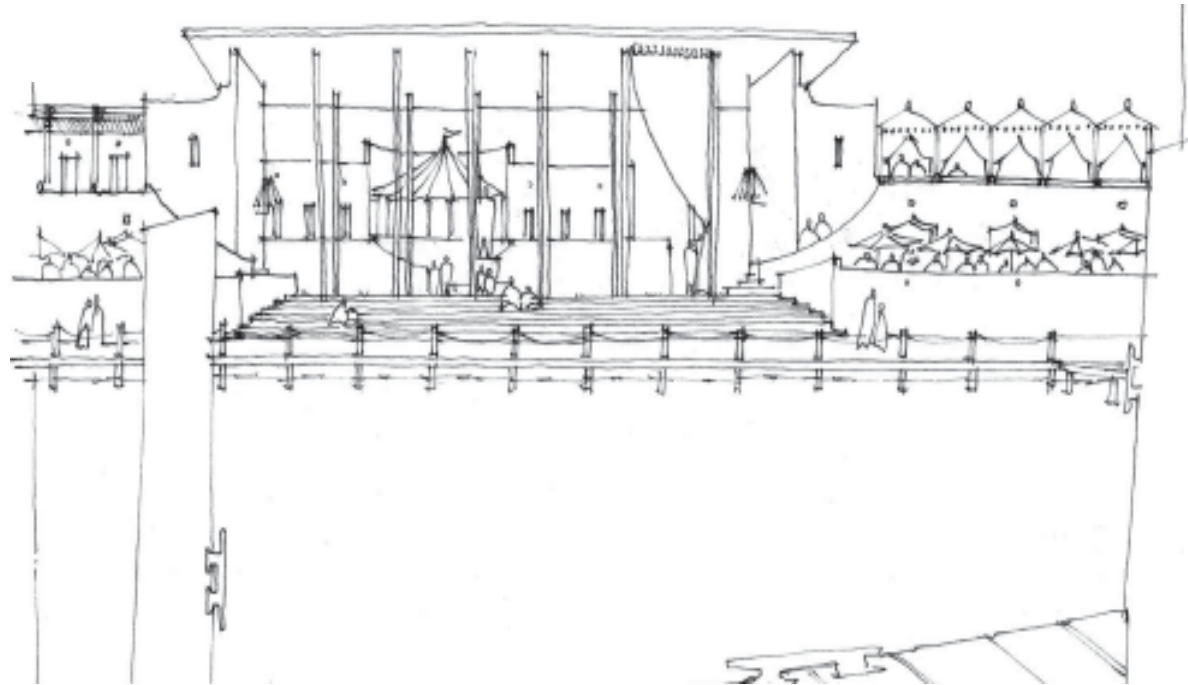
Downtown Clusters and Branding

Themes:

Great downtown areas are characterized by many distinctive streets and public spaces - each with its own character and combination of activities. In addition to Fisherman's Village, the new Citizens Master Plan for downtown Punta Gorda proposes five clusters of activity with individual identities and character.

1. The Waterfront Market

The proposed space by the new Auditorium building recalls elements from the old Punta Gorda Hotel: a great lawn and an abundance of fountains and pavilions. The Citizens Master Plan also proposes a waterfront loggia that will add a distinctive architectural element to the park and to the public face of downtown Punta Gorda. This loggia will terminate the vistas along State Road 41 South and will provide an ideal venue for an open-air market.



A.

Open-air markets may be programmed to suit the preferences of downtown merchants associations and residents. Typical activities may include: farmer's markets (fresh produce), arts and crafts, antiques, flowers and other nursery items. The goal should be to establish a regular market that is professionally managed with a strict screening of tenants, programming of special events and entertainment, and marketing much like the Main Street Program practices for a downtown.

Open-air markets also provide an inexpensive way to jump-start potential downtown businesses – freestanding, open-air colonnades are much cheaper to build and cost nothing to operate compared to air-conditioned buildings.

Open-air markets create terrific business incubators. They provide new merchants with an inexpensive way to try out small business concepts without purchasing property or leasing more expensive interior



B.

space. The managing organization should work carefully to support tenants, provide small business advisory services, and help successful merchants transition into permanent space in existing and proposed buildings within the downtown area.

A long-term objective could be to have a continuously operating open-air market. As



C.



D.

one downtown merchant pointed out “...this would give people a good reason to visit downtown Punta Gorda”.

For further information, please consult an excellent resource on creating, managing, marketing and programming public markets: the Project for Public Spaces (www.pps.org/PublicMarkets).

2. Restaurant Row

This center, focused along Marion Avenue between Taylor Street and State Road 41 North, builds on the core of existing restaurants on the south side of Marion Avenue. This is the place where Punta Gorda comes to eat. New town centers and main streets have learned from the “restaurant rows” forming naturally in cities; by concentrating restaurants on a single street, a few blocks, or around an attractive public space a dramatic increase of customers may happen –in general, the density of restaurants is correlated to the attractiveness of a place as a dining destination. For instance, in the Mizner Park project, in Boca Raton, shops and restaurants surround an attractive public space and people stroll and shop all around the boulevard plaza, underneath a proportional arcade, while waiting for a restaurant table.

- B. Examples of outdoor markets
- C. Proposed building across restaurant row
- D. Example of outdoor restaurant

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Examples of outdoor reading room (Bryant Park, NY)

The downtown Restaurant Row in the Citizens Master Plan proposes a conglomeration of high canopy trees and an open space (central plaza) to accommodate large areas for outdoor dining. The Citizens Master Plan envisions a distinctive bistro building set in the middle of the plaza space; this bistro would be surrounded by outdoor dining as a focal point (the Brio's in Easton Town Center is a good example). Restaurant Row requires parallel or angled parking around the plaza space, as well as a central valet station that would serve all of the restaurants.

Complementary shops and businesses akin to Williams and Sonoma (or a local independent version of this), floral shops, wine bars, cigar stores and other complementary businesses could occupy retail space. This is a lively part of town and upper floor space would become an attractive residential location for people who enjoy living close to the urban action or to their own offices (Mizner Park has both).



A.

3. Punta Gorda's Reading Room and Gallery

A third gathering place and cluster of synergetic businesses is envisioned for a public space in front of the old courthouse, which could be rehabbed and used for a library or some combination of center for arts and culture. The park is located near existing galleries and art-related businesses on Sullivan and Taylor near Olympia. It is planned as a central gathering place for the artistic and cultural lives of the residents of Punta Gorda.

The character of this park is envisioned with similar elements to those of Jackson Square in New Orleans, Ruskin Place in Seaside, Florida, or Bryant Park in Manhattan. The square is proposed with a more residential character; a quieter and less commercial area with arts- and culture-related commercial space.



B.



4. Retail Center at Marion Avenue and Wood Street

Another cluster of existing retail businesses is established across from the Justice Center and includes the Plaza Camille, the Clock Tower Building, and the Tiki apparel store. This center provides more everyday retail goods and services, some associated with the Justice Center, and could be connected to the downtown core by continuing to reintroduce retail along Marion and extending the high quality pedestrian character of Marion east to this cluster.

The raised storefronts and parking in front of these buildings is not ideal for downtown retail; the huge gaps created by the parking lots in front of the post office and Justice Center would need to be remedied to truly make this an attractive pedestrian extension from the downtown core. Short-term solutions may include very thin Liner Buildings along the north side of Marion to screen the parking lots. Long-term solutions may include the construction of a parking garage to free up land for more substantial infill. In fact, a parking garage could create an opportunity

for shared parking arrangements between the public uses, active during the weekday work hours, and types of retail uses that might be more active on evenings and weekends.

These public gathering places and retail clusters should be linked together by high quality pedestrian-friendly streets leading back to the center of gravity at Taylor and Marion.

A network of high-quality pedestrian streets can be staged starting at Marion and Taylor; and then, by reclaiming Olympia, Sullivan, and Esplanade Way or other streets adjacent to the Taylor-Marion core -working outwards to the State Road 41 pair. These gathering places, viewed collectively, form a much richer downtown than could possibly be achieved by any one of them individually.

- B. Picture of Tiki Apparel store
- C. Marion Ave. & Wood St.

- A. The two US 41's through downtown
- B. US 41 South proposed off-peak street section

5. The Two 41's: Retail Boulevards – Designer Row

It is not a secret that both sides of State Road 41 North and South will change radically within the next decade. This fact presents an opportunity to completely revamp the character of these two critical thoroughfares cutting through (almost severing and dividing) the downtown.

These two roads will probably have to remain one-way for the foreseeable future. Therefore traffic calming and redesign become fundamental. A lot of it may be accomplished simply by pulling buildings close to the street and by improving sidewalks and lining these with trees in planting strips. The addition of lighting on the bridge and two towers on either side (see State Road 41 South Gateway below) announcing arrival into the downtown will tell drivers they are entering a place and buildings; street trees will cause them to slow down.

Additional traffic calming can be

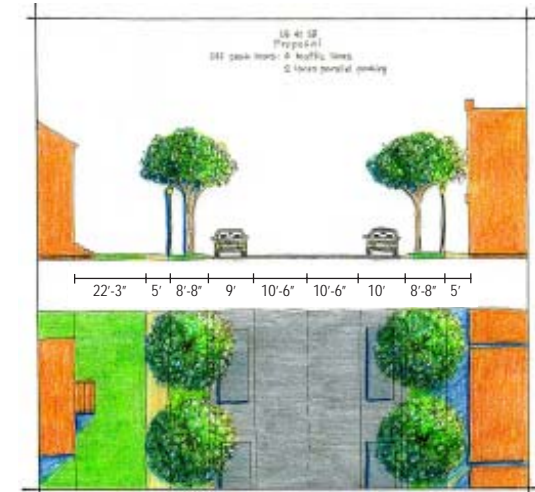


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accomplished through the resurfacing of intersections with pavers and through the provision of parallel parking at off-peak hours. Both of these two alternatives provide cues as to the pedestrian-oriented character of this area; plus, it would force drivers to slow down.

Within the downtown, both legs of State Road 41 should be redesigned as urban boulevards where pedestrians feel safe walking, where traffic slows down a bit for the few blocks of the downtown, and that present attractive, tree-lined streets through the downtown.

In terms of retail along these corridors, the market is wide-open for home furnishings



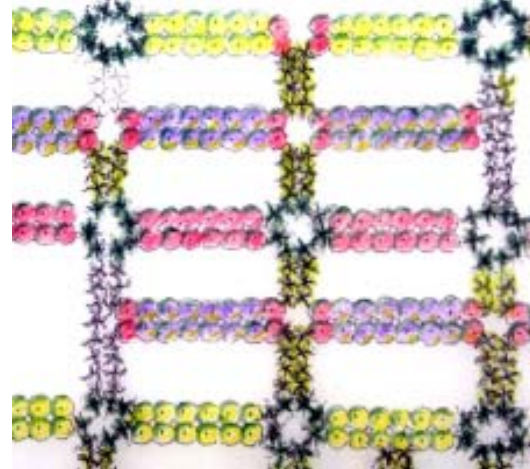
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and interior design-related businesses; it is clear that the entire region is rebuilding homes, stores, and offices and replacing interiors. These types of businesses as well as good antique shops could add a core retail sector to the downtown -concentrated along the State Road 41 north and south corridors. The Citizens Master Plan proposed a concept similar to that of the restaurants. But, in this case, it would be a “Designer Row” with parking accommodated to the rear of buildings.

Some development along the “Designer Row” corridor could also go to 2-3 stories and incorporate housing to calm traffic even further and to bring permanent residents to the downtown.



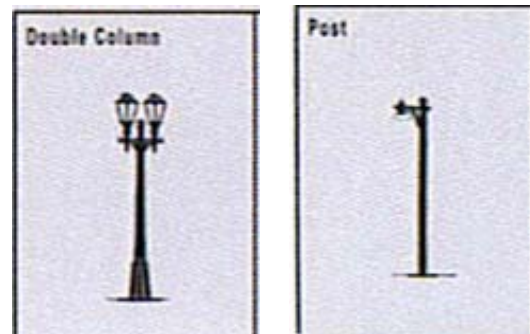
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F.

Materials, Signage, Lighting, and Landscaping

The environmentally conscious move to purchase benches and garbage cans made from recycled plastic materials became a failed experiment. According to the citizens, this kind of street landscape had an impermanent appearance and a degree of kitsch associated with today's suburban America.

For the short term, the City of Punta Gorda should focus its street landscaping expenditures on installing durable street lamps, benches, tree wells, manhole covers, garbage cans and planters (hanging or ground-based). Durable items made from high-quality and structurally sound materials—even when it means to postpone some resurfacing of streets and planting strips with pavers. The existing exception is Herald Court, which is already in process,

with dedicated funds, and which may become the initial center of gravity while awaiting redevelopment of the City Market Place.

The downtown street trees should be carefully replanted with a caliper of no less than 8 inches and a height, at planting time, of no less than 8 feet. Moreover, these trees must be carefully selected in consultation with a historian and an arborist to ensure that the trees will create a canopy where desired and not obstruct views of the storefront displays, signage, awnings or lighting that represents the visual merchandising so essential to successful main streets.

It is important to understand that trees must be placed strategically, rather than uniformly spaced, in order to locate them where the walls of two buildings meet and to avoid placement in front of window displays.

Finally, street trees can create landscape themes along particular streets – royal palms on the waterfront, flowering trees around the arts-related park, canopy trees around

- C. Example of Signage
- D. Proposed Street Landscaping
- E. Punta Gorda Bench
- F. Examples of street lamps

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Marion Ave. as a two-way street, c. 1925

the dining park – that give each street and park a distinctive identity (Coral Gables, FL. is a prime example of this type of development).

In general, store front display, signage, lighting, and landscape standards should be appropriate to a downtown main street environment providing appropriate standards and guidelines without preventing creativity, flexibility and expressiveness. Eclectic mixtures are the norm for main streets; therefore, a lot of care must be imposed to avoid uniformity of standards. Uniformity of standards may make the downtown main street look too much like a commercial strip center. Suburban landscape treatments such as hedges, boulders, berms, “ground cover” plantings, post-and-beam fences and railroad ties should be

prohibited, as should suburban street lighting such as cobra heads lighting, commonly found on arterial roadways and shopping center parking lots. All standards should conform to the very best elements of landscaping, lighting, signage and street furnishings found on great main streets, urban parks and plazas or, at least, the minimum standards found in historic photographs of the old downtown.

Revert Marion and Olympia Back to Two-Way Streets

Marion Avenue and Olympia Avenue must be converted back to their original two-way designs. Pedestrians tend to avoid the efficiency of one-way traffic; they are generally hard to navigate, provide great difficulties for way finding, and tend to promote one side of the street more than the other (generally the side of the driver). One-way streets speed traffic *through* the



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downtown rather than bring people to the downtown and do not provide opportunities to slow down and look around.

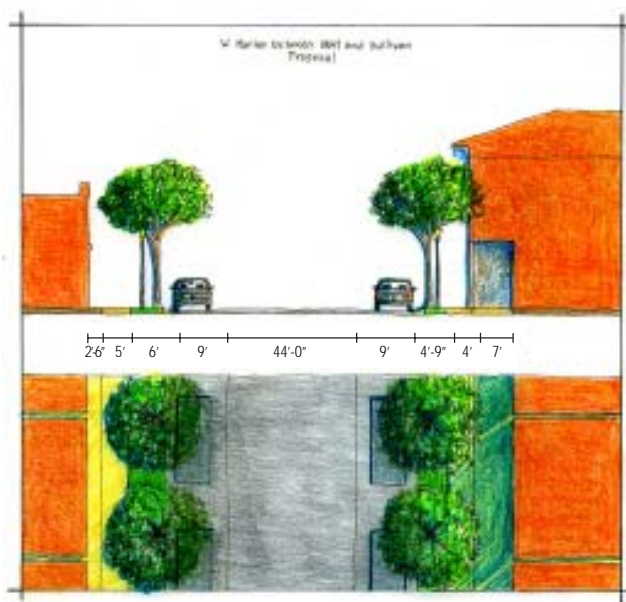
To avoid the fragmentation of the downtown, to slow down the automobile traffic, and to decrease the pedestrian barriers caused by the one-way system, Marion Avenue and Olympia Avenue must be converted back to their original two-way designs.

State Road 41 South Gateway

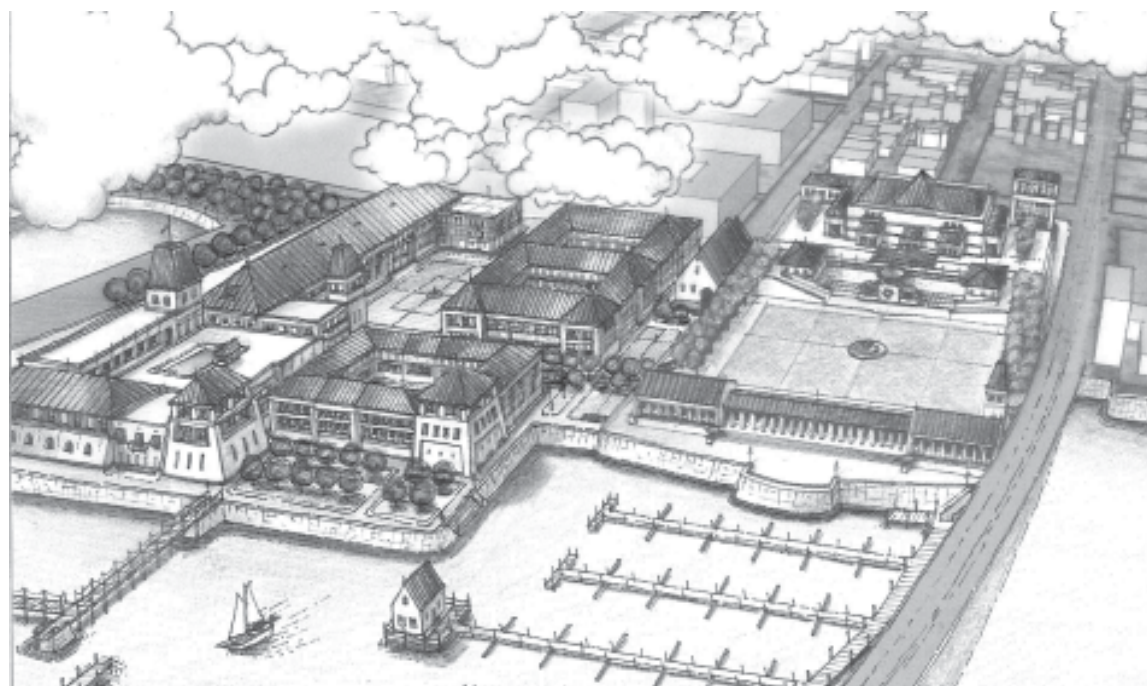
The principal gateway into the downtown area of the City of Punta Gorda is State Road 41 South. The proposed central plaza, the multiple fountains, the arcades, the sequence of plazoletas (small public spaces on one side of a block), and the pergola with its open air market around the new auditorium building will create a striking and very inviting public face for the downtown.

This sequence of spaces should also be accentuated with distinctive light posts along both sides of the bridge and with two or three (strategically located) tall towers – creating a wholesome event of a simple entry point. These towers should have a distinctive architecture and should not be placed on the same building but at various locations –in accordance with a study of potential perspectives and terminations of vistas.

- B. Marion Ave. proposed street section
- C. Gateway view from US 41 southbound



B.



C.

Master Plan Parking Diagram Key

-  Continuous Parallel Parking
-  Off-Peak Parallel Parking
-  Proposed Parking Structure
-  Proposed Ground Level Parking



Downtown Parking

The repertoire of parking options should include: diagonal and/or parallel parking around open spaces, on-street parallel parking, parking courtyards inside blocks, or parking garages protected with liner buildings and not visible from the streets.

Surface parking lots should be acceptable over the short-term; but, ideally all parking surfaces should be located within the interior of blocks and should be sized appropriately to convert to parking garages lined with shops, offices and residences -as soon as the land values and the market dictate.

Parking garages will be required for the new Auditorium building and the proposed waterfront hotel. These garages, also known as a Park One Shared System, could

assign a portion of their capacity to supply the requirements of the rest of the downtown area.

The City Market Place site requires its own parking garage. Nevertheless, parking should always be contained within the interior of the blocks and should never be visible from the street.

The city should also adopt a long-term "Park Once" strategy for the downtown planning for adequate parking within a 5-minute walk of each major center and destination within the downtown. As lots redevelop along State Road 41 North and South plans should be made for parking lots and structures behind these buildings at strategic locations. The Citizens Master Plan

has allocated sites behind the proposed library and in some other locations (please refer to attached drawing).

A park-in-lieu system shall also be implemented. These system will allow developers and property owners to contribute to a pre-arranged parking fund which will subsidize the construction of parking garages and parking courts rather than forcing individual property owners to provide all parking on or near their buildings.

Finally, the City of Punta Gorda should keep the maximum amount of on-street parking in place and should count these spaces as part of the on-site required parking –this is an essential pool of parking for the downtown. It will provide a convenience for shops and restaurants during off-peak hours.

A. Parking diagram

- A. Blending civic and commercial uses (CityPlace, FL)
- B. View of proposed green in front of the old courthouse
- C. Blending civic, cultural and commercial uses

Blending Civic, Cultural, and Commercial Activities:

The City of Punta Gorda should not force all of its civic buildings, parks and waterfront areas to be single-use islands. Urban retail place-making relies on the synergy of people going to libraries, concerts, art shows, and waterfront recreation in conjunction with dining, shopping, and commercial entertainment. For instance, the bistros and restaurants along one of the sides of the Mediterranean revival church in City Place, or Bryant Park in New York City could be understood as two analogical paradigms. In these two cases, there is a good synergy amongst civic/cultural buildings, dining, and great public spaces.

In the City of Punta Gorda, the old courthouse, the auditorium, and other of its quasi-civic uses should blend with the arts, culture, entertainment, dining, the cafes and the shops. Under all circumstances, the City shall avoid single-use islands with very limited hours of operation. Never assume

that it cannot be done; many other cities have already figured out how to make it work. Think “CAN DO” and research what legal and intergovernmental arrangements are required.

Don't accept “NO” for an answer.



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C.



D.

Movies on the Green and Youth Center

During one of the public workshops, a group of teenagers articulated their concerns regarding the downtown area. They expressed their desire for things to do and mentioned a Drive-in Movie Theater and a Teen Center. The lawn proposed in the rear of the new Auditorium would provide an exciting setting for families, teens and movie fans; they could sit on the lawn and watch movies on a gigantic temporary movie screen. In fact, this could become a weekly event; a combination of classic films, art films, and contemporary

movies could be managed by a cultural organization or by a small art house movie theater located in one of the new buildings within the City Marketplace, the new Auditorium, or one of the nearby sites. This type of activity is not unusual; there is a successful model in the village center of Southern Village in Chapel Hill, North Carolina -where a small cinema house manages the weekend movie night on the green.

The teen center concept was translated into its downtown equivalent. The design team proposed a large coffee house with flexible

space for musical performances and dances, and with enough wall space to display student art at either the historic Ice House or at one of the warehouse locations nearby. This establishment could be run as a co-op where students would donate time to help run and staff a coffee-pastry shop and where they could also program their own events and learn business and management skills from retired business people managing the whole operation.

The City of Punta Gorda could also exercise the option of asking any large scale development to provide for a small community-teen coffee shop.

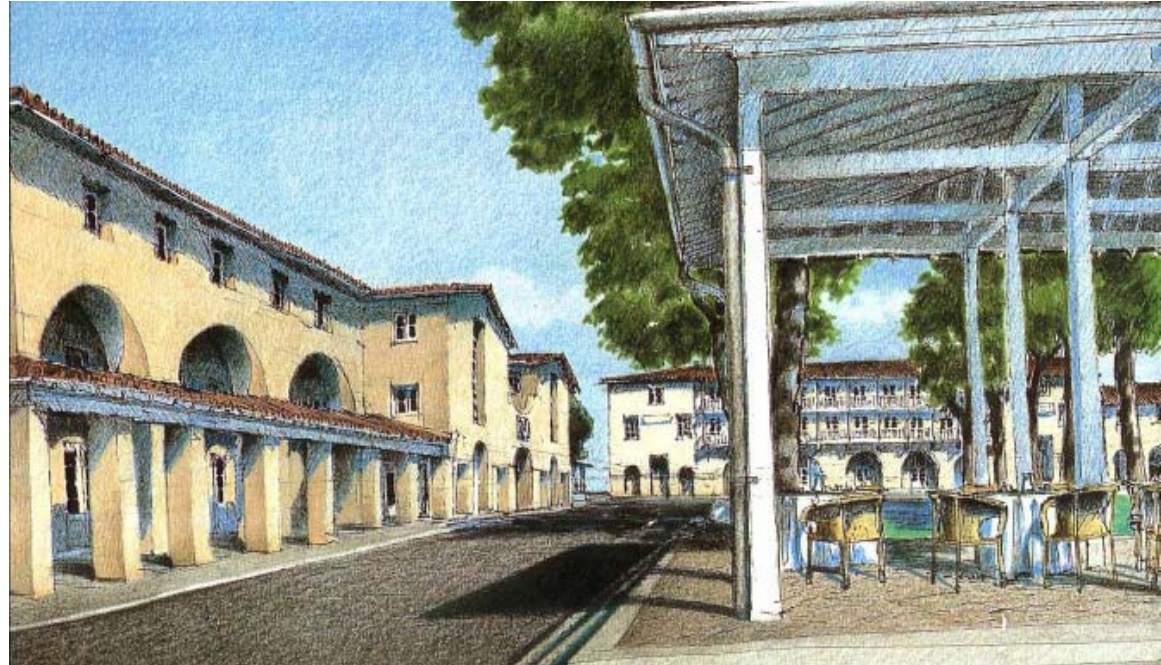
D. Example of movies in the park (Bryant Park, NY)

A. View of a potential retail center

Avoid Retail Sprawl

There are growing pressures for large-scale retail development at the southern and eastern edges of the city, primarily in areas controlled by the County. Residential growth, demographic trends, higher income households, tourism, and growth pressures -in other parts of the Gulf Coast, will turn the Punta Gorda region into attractive locations for big box retail development and shopping centers.

The citizens of Punta Gorda must decide how much and what type of commercial development they would prefer outside of the downtown. Unless the City of Punta Gorda creates a coordinated and complementary approach to growth management with Charlotte County or, unless it pursues outright annexation of some of the areas along this corridor, it will have very limited ability to control its sprawling growth.



A.

Punta Gorda and Charlotte County residents are expected to welcome some types of larger format retail but it must be well planned to satisfy long-term needs. For instance, there is an unmet need for home improvement goods (hence the arrival of Home Depot), home furnishings, discount retail (as Walmart's arrival reveals), and many other types of goods and services; and, this might just be the beginning of what will be a much larger influx in the coming decade. The areas outside of the downtown should

be planned to include concentrated neighborhood, village, and town centers to accommodate retail that does not compete with the downtown and that provides a configuration different to the sprawling retail in "suburban *Genericana*". Today, dozens of examples of Town Center projects might serve as paradigms for new land development regulations.

For instance, limiting the amount, quality, and type of development has been a



B.

successful strategy to complement existing and proposed uses in downtown areas. This type of strategy has been successfully used in the revitalization of the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica as well as in Reston Town Center in Virginia. The only caveat is that this type of strategy requires a proactive approach to growth management on the part of Punta Gorda's leadership.

Time is of the essence.



C.

Colonnades and Porches:

In an attempt to restore the pedestrian friendly image of the downtown, the 2005 Citizens Master Plan calls for the reconstitution of public colonnades (arcades) along sections of Olympia and State Road 41 (particularly around the Old Courthouse and in the arts district). The colonnades shall be

incorporated into the new Land Development Regulations as allowed encroachments on the public right of way (ROW). These encroachments should be no less than 10 feet deep and shall have a minimum frontage of 80%.

The disappearance of the porch as a semi-public space may have come from many sources, including the invention of

- B. Example of retail town center (Santa Monica, CA)
- C. Proposed arcade building

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

- A. Historic arcaded bank in downtown
- B. Arcades throughout Downtown
- C. Porches and arcades in downtown, c.1920



A.



B.

residential air conditioning, but its consequences have been devastating for the social structure of our communities. The 2005 Citizens Master Plan calls for the re-introduction of porches into residential and live/work units. Porches must be incorporated into the new Land Development Regulations as allowed encroachments into the front and corner setbacks. These encroachments shall be no less than 8 ft. and shall occupy a minimum frontage of 50%.



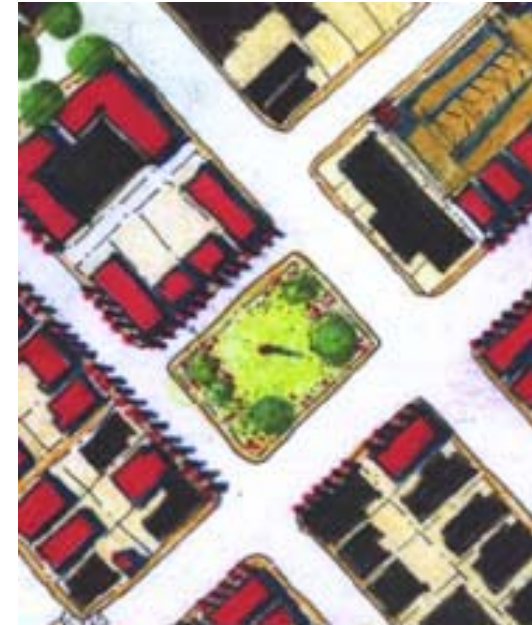
C.

Branch Library and Historic Archives:

A portion of the old County Courthouse could be restored to keep an archival collection of historic maps, photographs, and documents concerning the long-standing traditions of the City of Punta Gorda and its environs. The rest of the building could be used as a local County Branch Library facing a new public space. The branch library could be run as a pure volunteer effort by citizens concerned with

the preservation of American culture, the dissemination of knowledge, and the achievements of education.

The 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes a small arboretum (a collection of local landscape specimens) as part of the new public space. A parking garage in the rear of the building would take care of the library parking as well as some of the overflow downtown parking.



F.

- D. Pictures of the old courthouse
- E. View of the proposed library
- F. Site plan for the proposed library



D.



E.

A. Plan of proposed event center (Auditorium)

New Auditorium and Event Center:

The New Auditorium building must be designed as a contributing structure to the rest of the downtown area. For instance, the 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes a sequence of public spaces delivering pedestrians from the central plaza on Taylor and Marion to a city-scaled green in the rear of the New Auditorium building. The idea of the rear green is nothing but a reconstitution of the same kind of space in the old Hotel Punta Gorda. This new green would be used for scheduled activities such as: block parties, theater on the green, movies on the green, political events and rallies, fresh produce open-air market, etc.

The parking requirements for the Auditorium building must be solved out of public sight and preferably on a podium lined by commercial uses or convention center facilities. A parking podium would liberate the rear of the building and could

be shared, as overflow parking, with the rest of the downtown –as a part of the Park Once system.

In the rear of the Auditorium property,

the 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes an open-air loggia. This loggia faces a new marina for small sail boats and could be used for open-air seafood and fresh produce markets.



A.

Open Space:

The master plan includes a variety of vehicular thoroughfares as well as a network of green spaces for the livelihood of the regional natural ecology. It shall be understood that open space provides the greater part of the public realm at all scales, from the region to the lot; and that it includes a wide range of types, from

thoroughfares or roof gardens to greenbelts and farmlands.

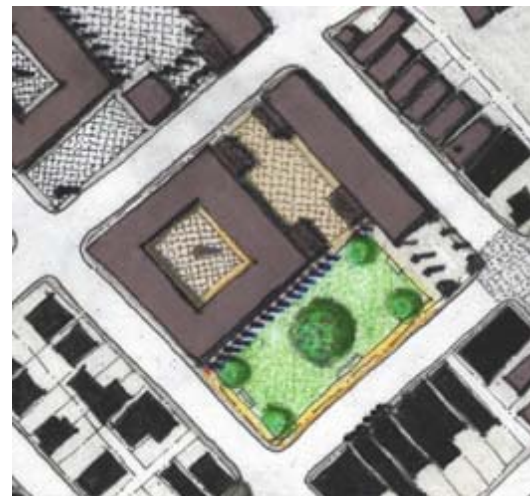
In conventional development systems, open space is typically expressed as a ratio of some function, such as population or land area. This practice may result in large, misplaced open areas, which are

underutilized by the community. In fact, in conventional development systems, the only types of open space which are carefully considered are determined by either environmental regulations or by parking requirements.

Open spaces, to be effective at an environmental scale (including human beings), must be specialized in function, distinguished by size, landscaping characteristics, frontage requirements, equipment, and should be located in appropriate sites. Open spaces range from rural to urban and from watershed to patches.

Moreover, to be truly public, open spaces must be fronted by building facades, which is to say, circumscribed by thoroughfares. To be fully used, open spaces should straddle pedestrian and natural trajectories (including natural migratory patterns, nesting locations, etc.) or be adjacent to meaningful destinations.

B. Examples of open space from the master plan



B.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

- A. Trolley routes
- B. Parks and recreation diagram



A.

The Trolley Routes:

The tourism industry and the residents of the City of Punta Gorda would benefit immensely with the implementation of a historic trolley route. This trolley could initially cover the downtown and its surrounding historic areas and could eventually expand its routes to the various City neighborhood centers.

Waterfront Parks and Recreation:

With the help of the various Garden Clubs, the 2005 Citizens Master Plan calls for a network of waterfront parks, green spaces, buffer zones, protection and conservation areas, plazas, greens, pocket parks, waterfront piers, and other defined public spaces –including boulevards and streets.

The waterfront along Gilchrist Park is understood as a passive area with possibilities for small piers dedicated to kayaks or sailing boats –as part of a small Sailing School for children and the handicapped. In addition to the existing services, the park will contain facilities associated with these functions.

The Master Plan calls for a mooring ball



B.

field between Alice Pitman and Shreve Park and the Fisherman's Village Municipal Pier –with a new dingy boat pier somewhere within this location. In addition to this, the park shall be enhanced with shower, laundry and bathroom facilities. A small gas dispensing facility may be provided at the location of the existing Nautical Club.

Another marina is proposed on the East side

of the South State Road 41 Bridge, in front of the proposed Auditorium building. This marina would complement the existing hotel marina at the tip of this location.

Reconstruction and up-dating of existing marinas is essential to the success of downtown Punta Gorda. Particular attention must be paid to the marinas in Fisherman's village and Laishley Park.



C.



D.



E.

- C. Waterfront amenities diagram
- D. Plan of garden plots
- E. Example of community garden

Community Gardens:

The Citizens Master Plan calls for a grouping of garden plots available for small-scale cultivation, to residents of historic houses, downtown apartments or other types of dwellings without private gardens. These community gardens, located in the Linear Park along the old railroad tracks and extending to the Martin Luther King area, shall accommodate individual storage sheds and be valuable for their recreational and communal role, similar to that of a club.

A. Historic District

Historic District:

The City of Punta Gorda has one of the most eclectic historic districts in Central Florida. Its historic importance encompasses more than one hundred years

of residential and civic experience. Nevertheless, the historic district is under severe stress of new construction incompatibility.

Under FEMA flood regulations, new

buildings must be raised to comply with Federal policies within flood areas. Therefore, the new Land Development Regulations must include design guidelines to avoid the production of the typical “mega-mansion on concrete poles” with

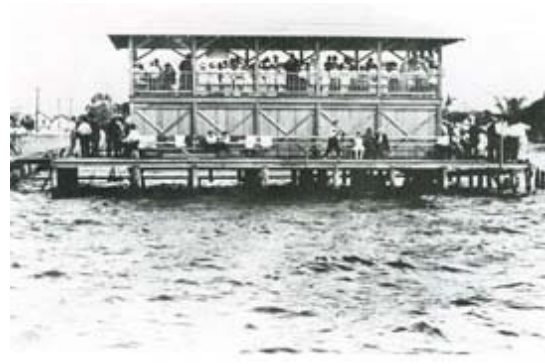


A.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005



B.



- B. Historic Punta Gorda buildings
- C. Sanborn Map, c. 1925
- D. Residential historic district boundaries
- E. Sanborn map, c. 1909



C.



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parking underneath. The new LDR's must emphasize the gradual raising of the houses by means of porches, terraces, loggias, courtyards, and other similar design devices.

Strong remains of a traditional landscape scheme are still evident within the public grounds of the historic district. The 2005 Citizens Master Plan suggests the over-stressing of these archaeological remains (i.e.: lighting fixtures, benches, planters, etc.) and the production of inventive landscape schemes with an emphasis in color, paving materials, texture, tree spacing, and similarities/idiosyncrasies (see proposed landscape scheme here depicted).

A. Historic park area



A.

History Park Neighborhood:

The neighborhood around History Park has the potential to become one of the most desirable communities within the downtown area. The 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes: compatible infill housing,

the reconfiguration of streets and street-landscape, the relocation of historic buildings into the fabric of the neighborhood, the encroachment of residential porches and other semi-public

spaces into the front lot setbacks, and the endorsement of live/work units to attract professional activities and residential variety.



B.



B. Community Garden

Landscape Standards:

Twentieth century modernism has attempted to reinvent the city, its architecture, and its urban landscape. Nevertheless, in Punta Gorda the notions of rational planning and functionalism, by themselves, have proven inadequate to suppress historical associations, regional eclecticism, ecological appropriateness, and beauty. The Citizens of Punta Gorda desire a new landscape narrative based on historic models and the manifestation of what is appropriate to the climate and to this part of the world. In a constant search for appropriateness, the 2005 Citizens Master

Plan proposes the following general landscape standards:

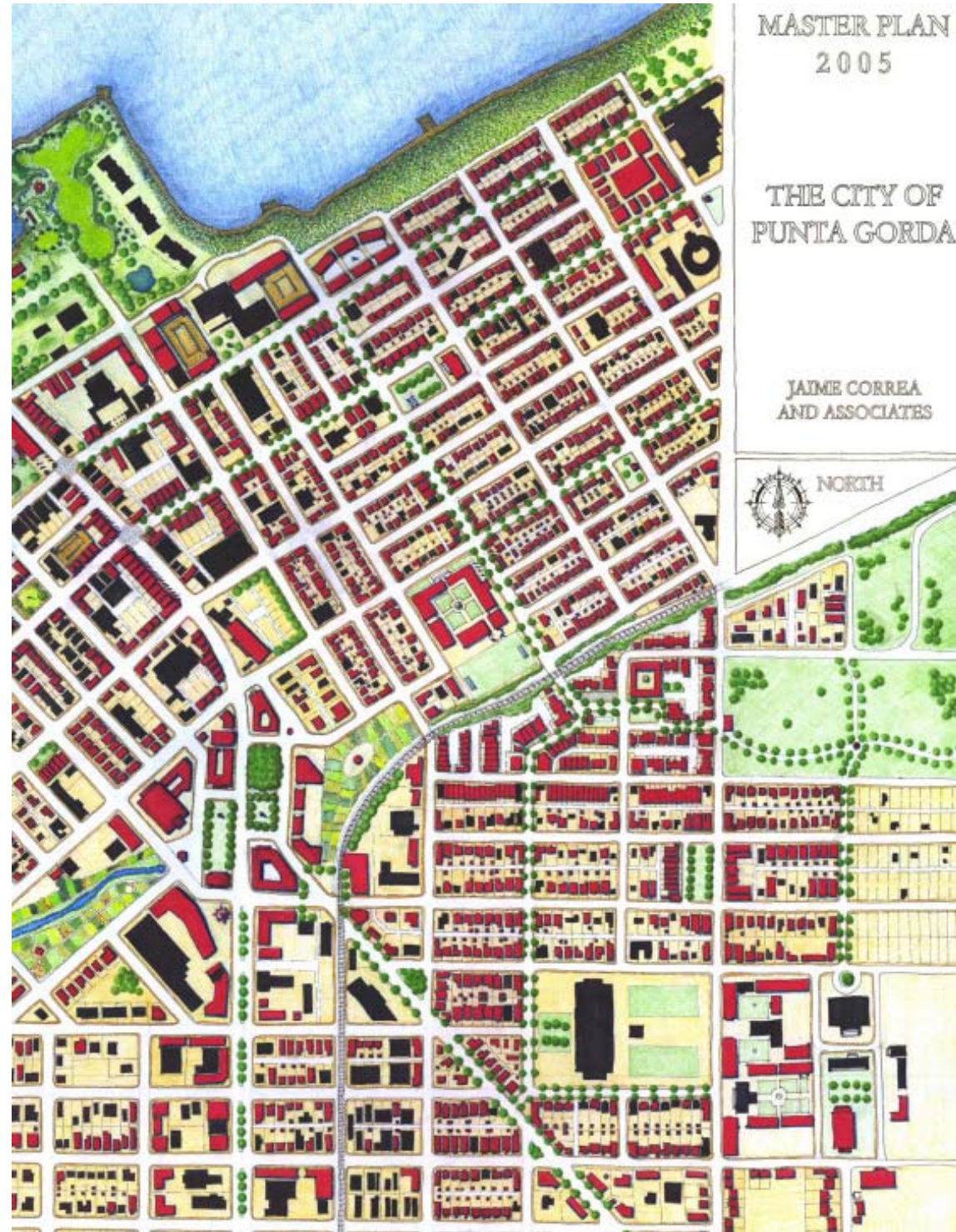
1. All shade trees and flowering trees located on the right of way must be planted at 25 -30 feet on center; all palm trees shall be planted at 15 – 20 feet on center.
2. All trees must have a minimum height of 8 feet and 3-6 inch caliper at time of planting; hedges shall have a minimum of 3 feet in height.
3. The following flowering trees are suggested: Red silk cotton, Wild cinnamon, Buttercup tree, Green

buttonwood, Guiana chestnut, Jamaica Dogwood, and Golden Tabebuia.

4. The following shade trees are suggested: Black ironwood, Wild tamarind, West Indian cherry, Live oaks, Mahogany, Bald cypress, and Pond cypress.
5. The following palm trees would be appropriate: Alexandra palm, Coconut palm, Silver palm, Cabbage palm, Florida Thatch palm, and Royal palms.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

- A. East Punta Gorda
- B. Preliminary sketches of Trabue Woods



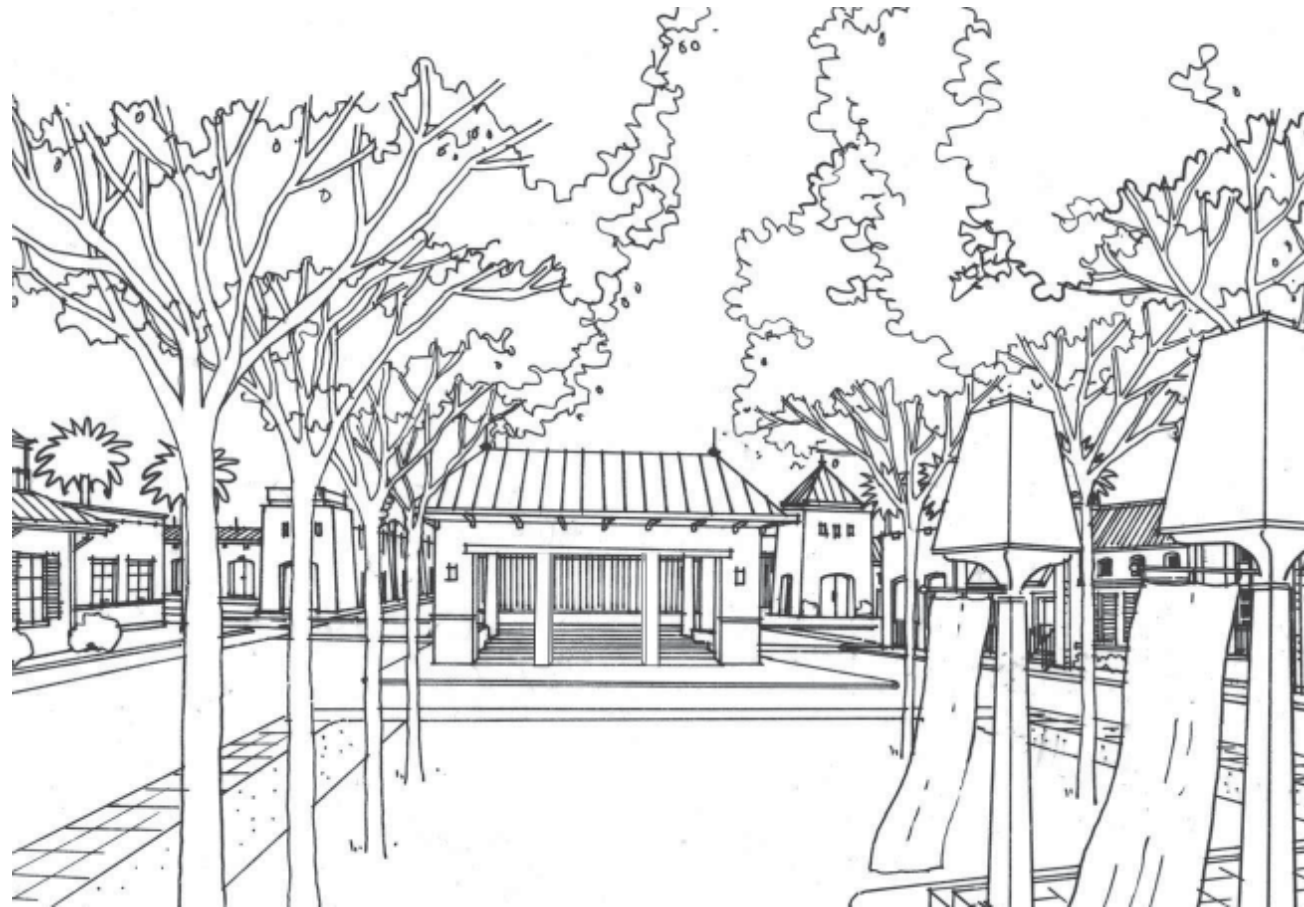
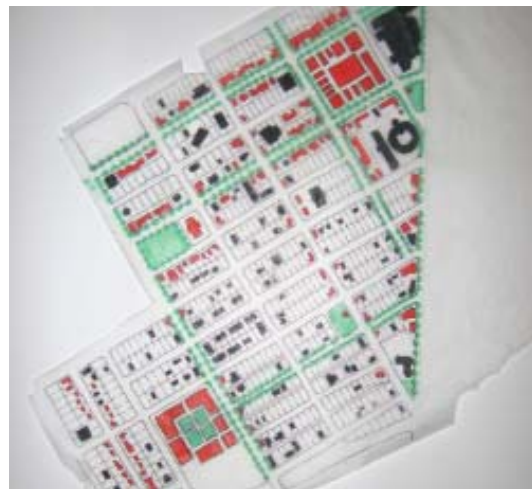
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Eastern Neighborhoods (Trabue Woods and More):

Walking downtowns with a variety of mixed-use buildings and flats over businesses are a rarity these days. The City of Punta Gorda is fortunate to have a unique collection of residential neighborhoods at no more than 2,600 feet (10 minutes walking distance) from the center of its downtown area. In fact, the



C. Preliminary sketches of East Punta Gorda area
D. View of proposed green on MLK Dr.

C.

charm and beauty of its downtown and the eclecticism of its residential neighborhoods are placing the City of Punta Gorda amongst the most livable cities on the West Coast of Florida.

The City of Punta Gorda must create an incentive program for residents and developers of new and existing projects (i.e.: Downtown Delray Beach affordable

D.

housing programs). For residents, it should implement programs to subsidize down payments and promote residential ownership –to increase the level of maintenance and pride. For developers, it should help them reduce their cost of construction by allowing them to have density bonuses based on specific performance criteria; and, it should also establish public/private partnerships with

the existing Housing Agencies and with other City Agencies that could benefit with the existing real estate boom.

The 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes infill and new development compatible with the type of traditional housing increments that have characterized the City of Punta Gorda during its long history.

- A. Proposed public housing project
- B. Existing public housing project

Affordable Housing:

Affordable housing shall be integrated seamlessly into the neighborhoods. Small projects tend to be more successful than projects with large concentrations of units; the latter tending to become ghettos with various degrees of inconsistencies and safety problems.

The project here depicted (counterproposal to Trabue Woods) attempts to restore the fabric of the traditional city with a combination of apartments, town houses, detached houses, live/work units, communal amenities, and neighborhood commercial uses located around a central public space.

Contrast this project with the existing neighborhoods on adjacent areas: one with only apartment buildings (100%) and the other with multi-family units or duplexes and apartments (65%). It is obvious that, the degree of aliveness of the proposed incremental project is greater than



A.



B.

the apparent life of the two other projects.

This project provides approximately 200 units on the 13 acre site –where only 154 units need to be replaced. Therefore, the Housing Authority could use its powers to sell the remaining 46 units at market rate; the result of this new cash flow could be used to finance better infrastructure, more trees, or other affordable housing projects.

The City of Punta Gorda must be flexible in zoning and concentrate on design issues. Once developers experience the quality of the first two or three projects, others will certainly follow. But, the toughest part is to enforce a desire for quality at the very beginning.



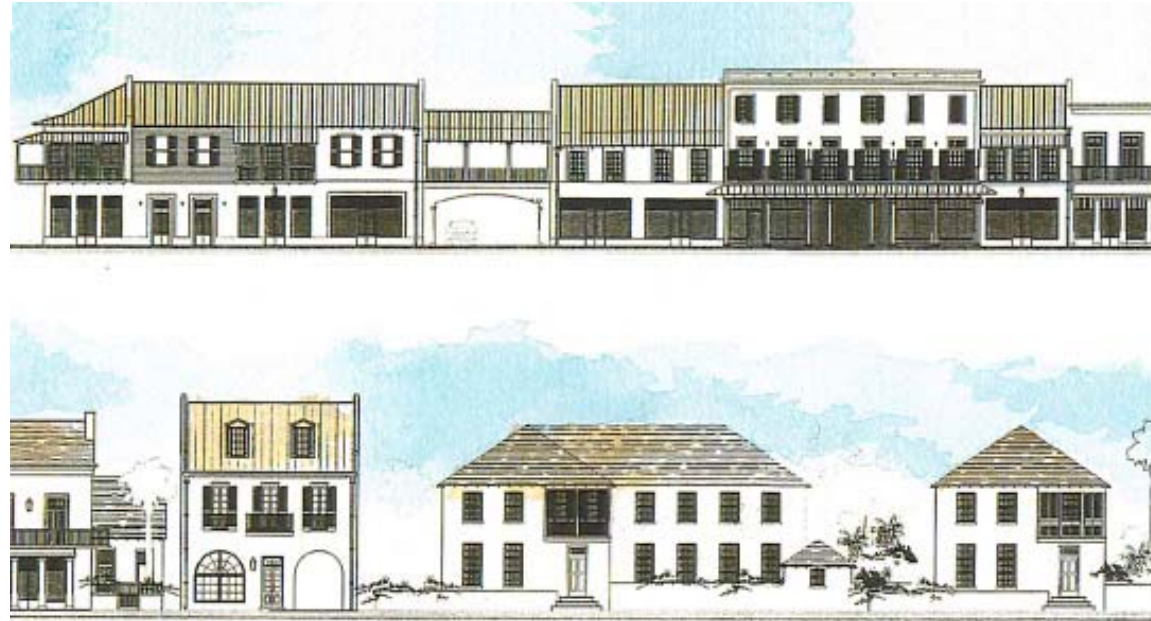
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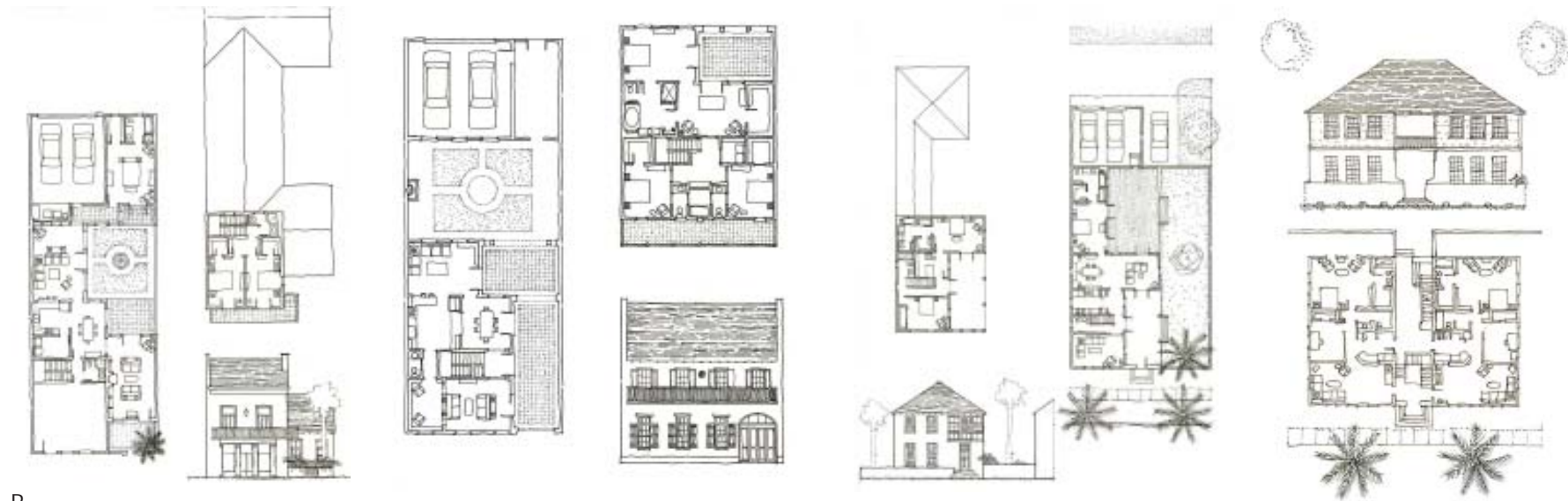
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- C. View of proposed housing
- D. Aerial view of proposed project

- A. Architectural syntax
- B. Examples of housing types



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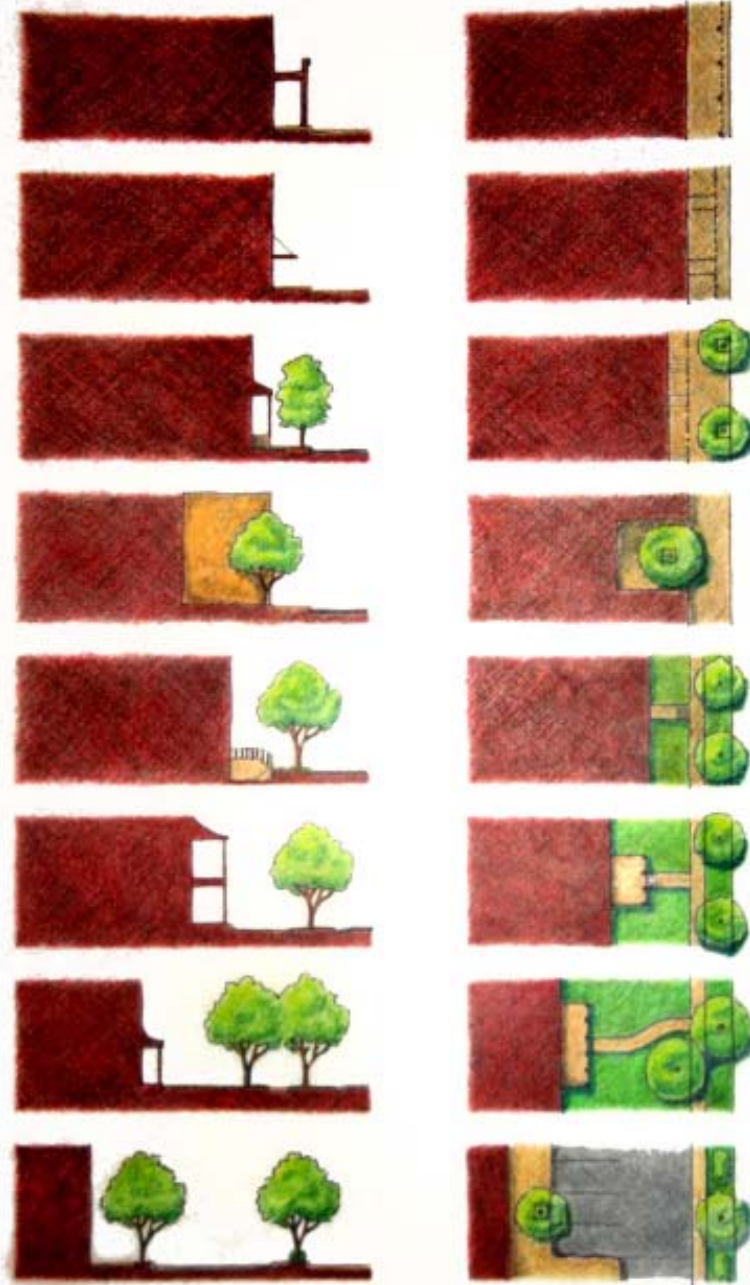
Residential Building Types and Open Spaces:

A repertoire of building types is here provided including: townhouses, courtyard buildings, side-yard houses, patio houses, detached houses, apartment buildings, etc. A similar architectural syntax of its elements (windows, doors, balconies, roofs, etc.) and its proportions (including building heights) produces a certain degree of economy, propriety, and general efficiency.

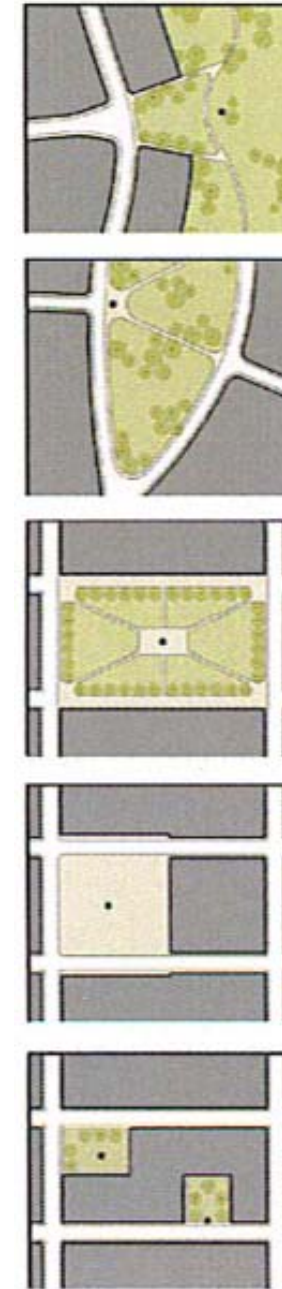


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In a similar fashion, a series of public spaces (from the most urban to the most rural) have been identified. These public spaces include: front/rear/side yards, courtyards, plazoletas, plazas, greens, parks, etc. More importantly, the Master Plan assumes a correlation between the open space / street type and the type of building frontage (within the same gradient – from urban to rural). Buildings which are more rural in character require larger front and lateral setbacks; more urban buildings assume smaller front setbacks and very small or null lateral setbacks.



D.



E.

- C. Public space syntax
- D. Building frontage transect
- E. Examples of public space

Master Plan Traffic Study Key



Two-Way Traffic



Off-Peak Street Parking



Reconfigured Intersection



Traffic & Transportation Studies

The following paragraphs summarize some of the most important traffic issues within the Punta Gorda Region:

State Road 17:

The City of Punta Gorda must execute its first annexation phase within the first year of implementation of this plan. This strategy would return the power of traffic decisions, along State Road 17, back to the City. Only at this point, the City of Punta Gorda will be able to take control over the

two-way reconfiguration (Marion and Olympia Avenues) and the relocation of State Road 17 to Florida Street. The reconfiguration of Marion and Olympia Avenues would require new traffic lights.

State Road 41:

The portion of State Road 41 between the waterfront and the Sacred Heart Church could be reconfigured during off-peak hours. This proposal provides new parallel parking areas and is essential to the vitality and

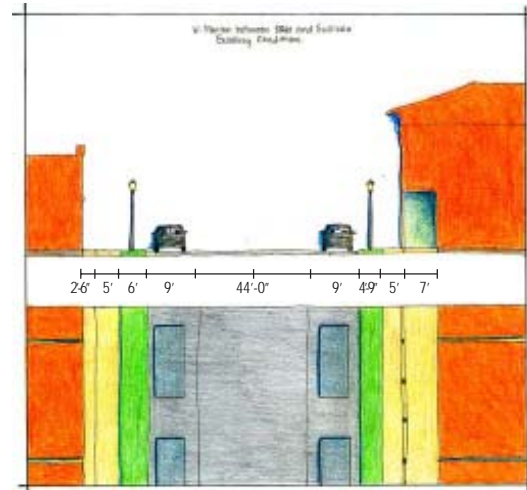
success of the 2005 Citizens Master Plan downtown as a pedestrian friendly environment.

“T” Sections:

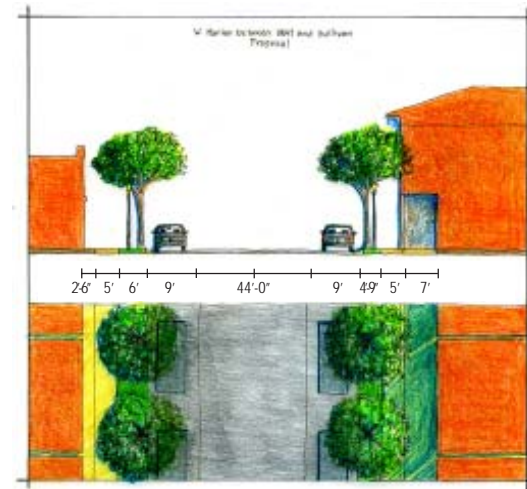
A number of difficult intersections have been re-drawn to provide for modern traffic standards at straight angles (“T” intersections). Other intersections have been solved with the creation of new public spaces and the reclamation of land for public space i.e.: intersection of Taylor and SR41.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

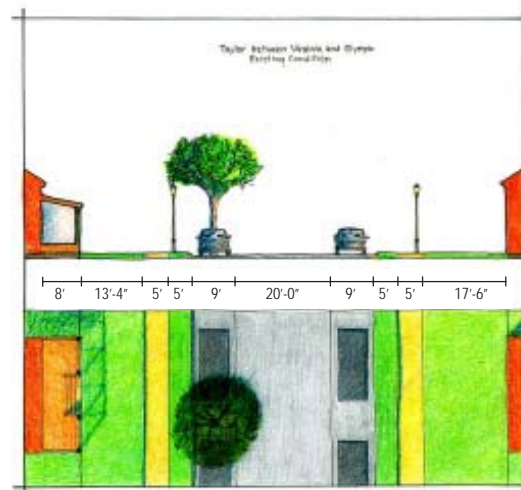
- A. Marion Ave existing
- B. Marion Ave proposed
- C. Taylor St. existing
- D. Taylor St. proposed
- E. US 41 existing
- F. US 41 off-peak proposed
- G. US 41 peak proposed



A.



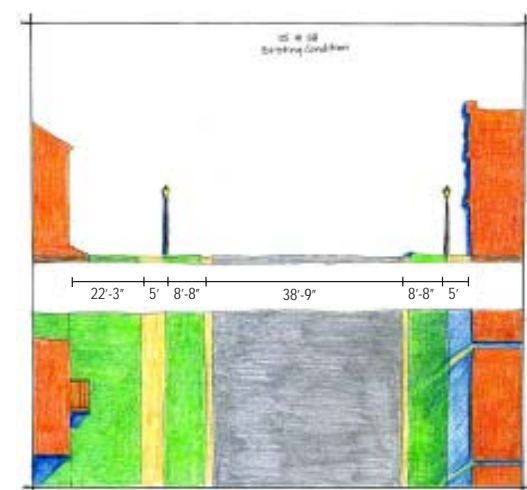
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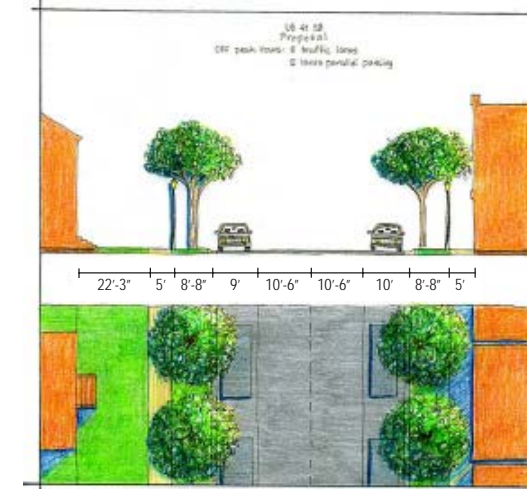
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G.

New Sections:

The 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes the pedestrian friendly reconfiguration of some of the street sections –particularly in the downtown area (see drawings here provided). These sections would require

wider sidewalks, the presence of parallel parking (for the protection of pedestrians), the planting of semi-mature trees (min. 6" caliper and 8' tall at time of planting), the addition of arcades, porches, hedges, and fences, etc.



H.

H. Regional trolley map with traffic areas highlighted

Jones Loop Road:

A traffic study is required to determine the appropriate road configuration of Jones Loop Road between State Road 41 and Interstate Road 75 –location of the proposed Mega-Box Destination Shopping Area.

Dedicated Lanes:

A dedicated truck-only lane shall be reserved along State Road 41 between Tuckers Grade and Jones Loop Road. This lane would create difficulties for truckers attempting to avoid the Interstate Road 75 weight station. The dedicated lane would require a posted speed of no more than 25MPH.

Trolley System:

A public trolley system would solve some of the most difficult traffic problems encountered by the elderly and teenage population within the City of Punta Gorda. The routes must be planned to hit every neighborhood and district center, to capitalize on ecological assets, and to bring local pride through the exploitation of historic resources.



Land Development Standards & Architectural Guidelines

GENERAL PURPOSE:

This chapter is an integral part of the proposed 2005 Punta Gorda Citizens master plan. It prescribes general Land Development Standards. It describes clear parameters for the implementation of the master plan, set up the goals and objectives of the design vision, and illustrates the design rules guaranteeing its delivery.

The master plan calls for a mixed-use development -with districts where shopping, working, and living facilities co-exist in predetermined proportions. The

proposed land use mix insures the security and livability of its public spaces on a twenty-four hour basis.

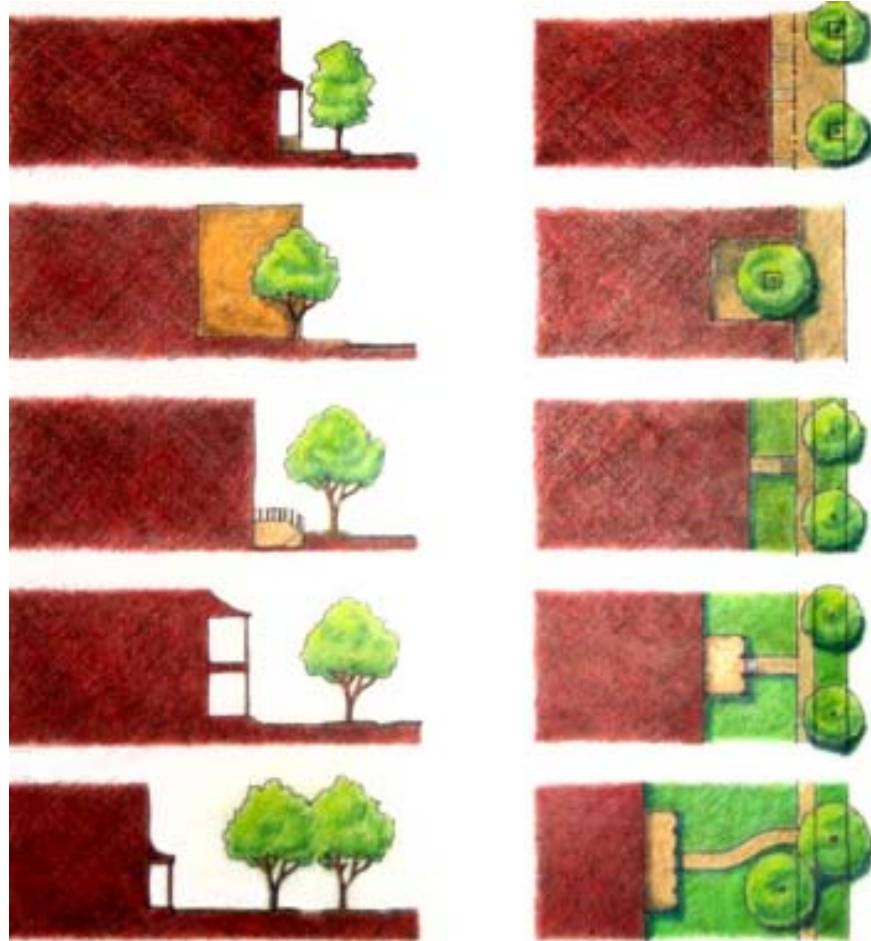
These standards are written to provide a set of minimum requirements for the management and implementation of projects within the Regional Center area. The standards here proposed describe the vision, its building types, streets, public spaces, spatial configuration, parking, landscape, and architecture.

A. Urban to rural housing transect

THE VISION:

The Punta Gorda region must be conceived as a designed environment where housing, civic services, landscape, historic architecture, generic big-boxes, boutique retail, convenience services, out-parcels, live/work units, and offices are fused to produce an exciting pedestrian experience.

Its conceptual basis denotes a fundamental departure from the contemporary model. Plans shall NOT be configured as typical housing or shopping areas with: a repetitive number of units of similar design, a linear single-loaded arrangement of anchor stores and boutique retail, front-loaded parking,



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or front out-parcels with highway visibility. On the contrary, this “Regional Center” shall be configured as a collection of architecturally defined public spaces enhancing the experience of pedestrians and creating automobile interest -at lower speeds.

Therefore:

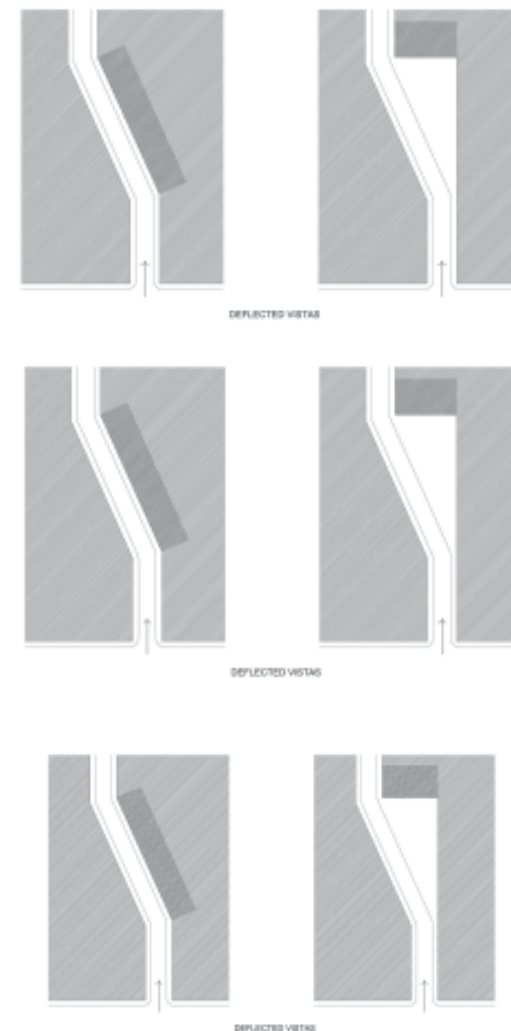
1. It is crucial to differentiate every building unit from its neighbor. No two buildings of the same design shall be placed side by side.
2. Housing units shall achieve a variety in design, area, provided amenities, style, and other features. Housing units shall adhere to the urban-to-rural gradient described within the text of this report.
3. In commercial districts, it is important to preserve the anchor store – boutique retail relationship of the conventional shopping center. Nevertheless, this traditional configuration shall give shape to pedestrian-friendly streets and identifiable public spaces.

B. Terminated and deflected street vista diagrams

4. Building types shall be recognizable and composed of: detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses, and apartments; office buildings; civic buildings; park and recreation facilities; anchor stores, retail-only buildings, mixed use retail/office buildings, live/work units, and out-parcel buildings designed to supply the needs of the automobile.
5. A collection of public open spaces shall be joined by the Punta Gorda street network. These public open spaces may contain retail-only buildings and/or buildings encouraging the creation of community. All public spaces shall be delineated by mixed-use buildings (with at least a combination of retail and offices), live/work units, and housing.

6. Parking shall occur in the rear of buildings. Clear connections must be provided between the parking areas and the front of the building. Parallel parking areas shall be provided on primary streets in order to create the perception of parking availability. Parking garages shall be invisible from the public space. The use of liner-buildings along the perimeter of parking garages is highly encouraged.
7. Architectural diversity shall be accomplished by means of: color contrast, construction materials, the inclusion of semi-public space in live-work units and stores, roof composition, signage, proportions, and miscellaneous landscape.

8. Spatial perception must take priority. The use of perspective, termination of vistas, and purposeful changes of direction must be exploited to enhance the pedestrian experience.



B.

- A. Anchor store example
- B. Live/Work example

BUILDING TYPES:

The 2005 Punta Gorda Citizens master plan shall have a diversity of building types including, but not limited, to the following:

Anchor Stores:

An anchor store is also known as a conventional generic Big-Box or as a destination shopping structure.

Anchor stores shall occupy no more than 75,000 sq. ft. of gross area.

Their building height shall have a minimum of 25 ft. and shall not exceed 35 ft. to the top of the parapet or to the cornice line.

An unobstructed semi-public roofed open space, with a minimum of 25 ft. and a maximum of 35 ft. in depth, shall occupy at least 75% of its building frontage.

Electronic signs, LED screens, and painted billboard iconography are allowed only on the surface walls of the unobstructed semi-public roofed open space.



A.

Roof signs shall not exceed one-half the overall building height.

The distance between the main entrances of two different anchor stores shall not be less than 650 linear feet.

Mixed-use Retail/Office Building:

Limited retail and office uses are allowed on all floors of a mixed-use retail/office building.

A mixed-use retail/office building shall have a maximum length of 300 ft. A building separation of no less than 12 ft. shall exist between two adjacent mixed-



B.

use Retail/Office buildings.

The height of a mixed-use retail/office building shall be a minimum of 25 ft. Maximum height limitations shall comply with those of the existing Punta Gorda LDR's (Land Development Regulations). The ground floor shall be no less than 14 ft. from finished floor to finished ceiling and shall have no less than a 75% transparency. The transparency requirement shall be configured as a storefront with the following components: a shaft, a bulkhead, a transom, a display window, an entry, and a base.



C.

Letter signs or electronic signs shall occupy the storefront bulkheads. Watermark signs may be attached to the display windows or to the entries.

Live/Work Buildings:

Limited retail, home office, and residential uses are allowed on a live/work unit. However, only residential uses are permitted above the second floor.

A live/work building shall have a maximum length of 300 ft. A building separation of no less than 12 ft. shall exist between two adjacent live/work buildings.

The height of a live/work building shall be a minimum of 25 ft. Maximum height limitations shall comply with those of the existing Punta Gorda LDR's (Land Development Regulations). The ground floor shall be no less than 14 ft. from finished floor to finished ceiling and shall have no less than a 75% transparency.

Signage shall be limited to the storefront bulkheads, if any. Watermark signs may be attached to display windows or entries. Electronic signs are not allowed.

Retail-Only Buildings:

Only limited retail is allowed on a retail-only building.

A retail-only building shall be located facing an open public space (green, plaza, square, or plinth). However, a retail-only building shall not be placed in the geometric center of any open public space.

A retail-only building shall be limited to a

maximum gross ground floor area of 2,000 sq. ft. –or whatever limits are imposed by the existing Punta Gorda LDR's (Land Development Regulations).

Maximum height limitations shall comply with those of the existing Punta Gorda LDR's (Land Development Regulations). The ground floor shall be no less than 14 ft. from finished floor to finished ceiling.

Electronic signs and lettering signs shall be limited to the storefront bulkheads, if any. Watermark signs may be attached to display windows or entries. Painted billboard iconography is allowed on the surface walls of buildings.

Houses and Apartment Buildings:

Attached, semi-detached, townhouses, and apartment buildings are allowed.

Maximum lot coverage and height limitations shall comply with the existing Punta Gorda LDR's (Land Development Regulations).

C. Retail Only example

- A. A Green
- B. A Plazoleta
- C. A Plaza
- D. A Plinth

OPEN PUBLIC SPACES:

The 2005 Punta Gorda Citizens master plan shall have a variety of enclosed open public spaces including, but not limited to the following:

Green:

A medium size open public space available for unstructured recreation and circumscribed by building facades. Its landscape should consist of grassy areas and well maintained bushes and trees.

Corner Open Setback (*Plazoleta*):

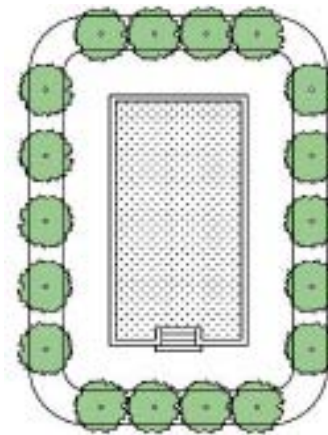
An open public or semi-public space circumscribed by building frontages occupying a corner lot. A *plazoleta*, also known as a *parvis*, should be typically located at the intersection of two important thoroughfares. The minimum depth of a *plazoleta* should be equivalent to 1/2 the height of the building located on its longest side. *Plazoletas* should be paved a minimum of 75%. Its landscape should consist of durable pavement or trees and benches requiring little maintenance.

Plaza:

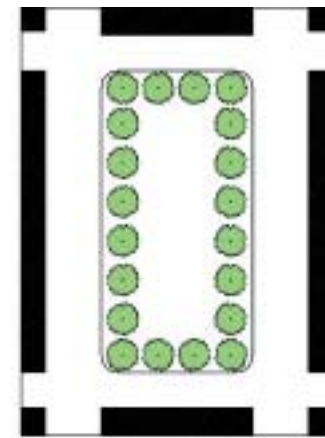
A public space generally located at the center and circumscribed by building facades. Its landscape should consist of durable pavement materials and trees requiring little maintenance and arranged formally. Strong attention should be paid to its variety of pavement materials and textures.

Plinth:

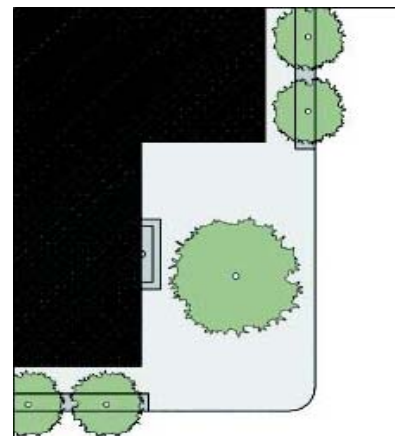
A raised platform occupying a maximum of 1/3 of the gross area of a green, plaza, or square. Its landscape should consist of grassy areas, paved walks, lawns, and trees requiring substantial maintenance. A plinth shall be circumscribed by a wall at least 18 inches high.



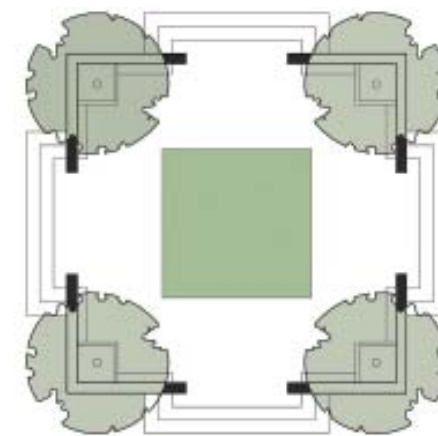
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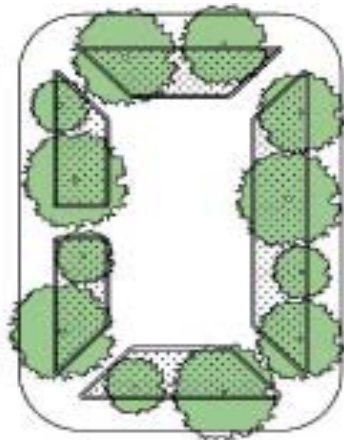
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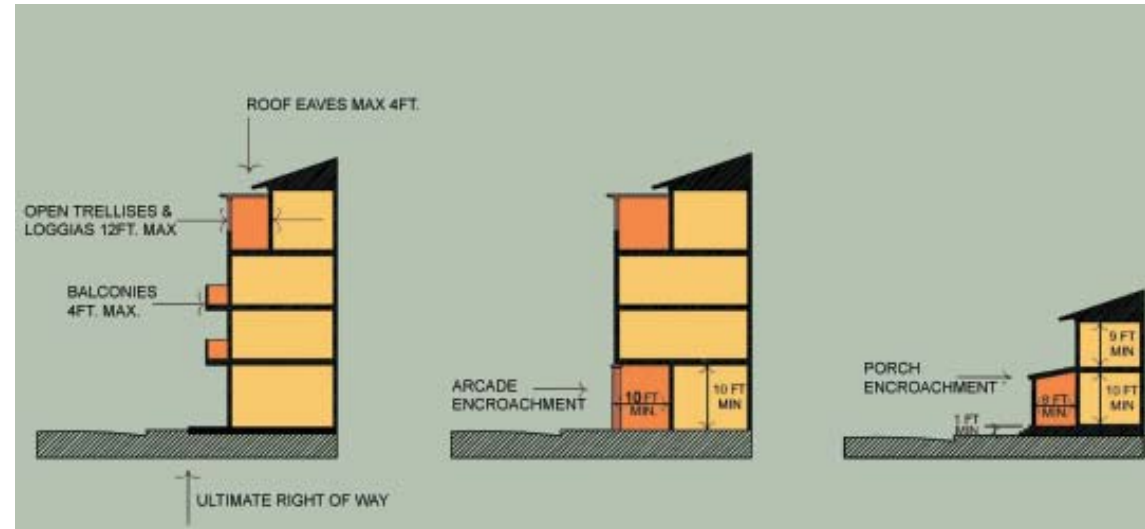
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Square:

A public space surrounded by arcades and rarely larger than a block. A square is circumscribed spatially by building frontages. Its landscape should consist of durable paving materials and trees requiring little maintenance or paved walks, lawns, and trees requiring substantial maintenance.



E.



F.

- E. A Square
- F. Encroachment Diagram

ENCROACHMENTS:

The buildings in the 2005 Punta Gorda Citizens master plan shall acquire their character from a variety of allowable encroachments, including:

Arcades:

A colonnaded building projection into the right of way.

Arcades shall be permitted to encroach onto the public right of way a distance equivalent to the width of the sidewalk.

Balconies:

An above-ground projection into the right of way.

Balconies shall be permitted to encroach onto the public right of way.

Roof Eaves:

An above-cornice line projection into the right of way.

Roof eaves shall be permitted to encroach onto the public right of way a distance equivalent to a maximum of four feet.

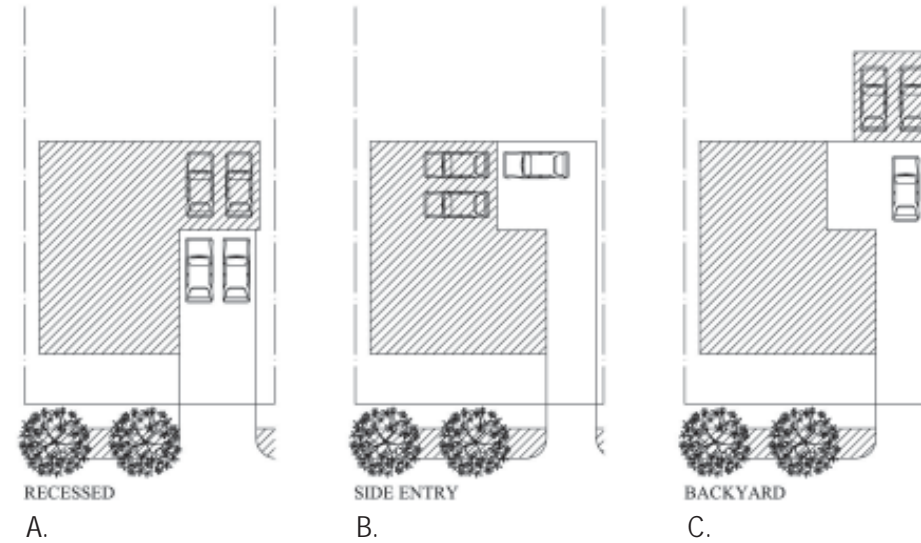
- A. Recessed Parking
- B. Side Entry Parking
- A. Backyard Parking
- B. Parking/Servicing in Urban Setting

PARKING REQUIREMENTS:

Prior to the issuance of any building, paving, grading and leveling or other permits, certificates of occupancy or certificates of final inspection, a parking plan and a driveway plan, if applicable, must be approved by the City of Punta Gorda and its regulatory agencies. This approval shall be granted on the basis of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Punta Gorda.

All parking, with the exception of allowed on-street parking, shall occur in the rear of buildings or enclosed parking garages.

Servicing shall occur in the rear of buildings. Servicing shall not be visible from the public right of way.



D.

ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

1. WALLS

- **Arches and piers:** shall be stone, wood, brick, exposed concrete, or stucco. Arches over columns/piers shall have a minimum depth of 12 inches.
- **Building walls:** shall be finished in stone, stucco, wood, brick, exposed concrete, or hardiplank clapboard. There shall be a maximum of two (2) primary building wall materials, excluding windows, doors, accents and trims. These materials shall be appropriate to the building style / building type and shall be consistent on all sides of the building. Building materials used to simulate other building materials shall count as separate building materials provided there is a change in texture, color, and pattern of the finish.
- **Columns and posts:** shall be stone, wood, brick, exposed concrete, steel, cast iron, or stucco. The spacing between columns or posts shall have a height to width ratio of 1:1, 2:1, 2:3, 3:1 or 5:1 or

another proportion that emphasizes the verticality of the building and the verticality of the spacing between columns (intercolumniation). There shall be a maximum spacing of twelve feet (12') between columns/piers. Steel, cast iron, or wood columns or posts shall have a minimum of four inches (4") in width or depth; all other columns or posts shall have a minimum of twelve inches (12") in width or depth.

- **Garden walls and fences:** shall use wood, aluminum pickets, stone, stucco, or landscaped hedges (see below). Gates to garden walls shall be wood or metal.
- **Hedges:** landscape hedges along the public right-of-way shall not exceed three feet (3'); landscape hedges on the required setbacks, on the lot sides, and the lot rear shall not exceed six feet (6') in height.

2. ATTACHMENTS

- **Arcades/galleries or porches:** shall be stone, wood, brick, exposed concrete, steel, cast iron, or stucco. They shall be no less than eight feet (8') in depth.
- **Awnings:** shall have a metallic armature covered with a canvas membrane. Awnings shall be sloping rectangles without bottom soffit panels. Awnings shall not be internally backlit.
- **Balconies and railings:** shall be made of wood, cast iron, or aluminum. Balconies that cantilever shall be structurally supported by brackets.
- **Decks:** shall be located in rear yards only, and painted or stained –except walking surfaces which may be unpainted. Decks shall be wood or exposed concrete.
- **Loggias:** shall occupy no more than 80% of the building frontage (loggias shall occur on the upper floors of any building).
- **Stoops:** shall be made of wood, stone, or exposed concrete.

- **Trellises:** shall be wood or metal. Spacing between columns or posts shall emphasize vertical proportions (see: columns and posts).

Yard equipment: including HVAC, utility meters, clotheslines, cisterns, satellite dishes, play equipment, hot tubs, shall not be permitted at building frontages and shall be screened from public view with hedges or garden walls.

3. ROOFS

- **Dormers:** shall be habitable and operable and shall have gable, shed or hipped roofs.
- **Eaves and rafter tails:** eaves shall be continuous. Eaves which overhang less than 8 in. shall have a closed soffit. Eaves which overhang more than 8 in. shall have exposed rafters. The tip of any rafter tail shall not exceed 6 in. in depth.
- **Flat roofs:** shall be commercial type roofing. Decorative parapets are encouraged. Roof mounted electrical, mechanical, air conditioning, and communication equipment shall be screened from adjacent properties and streets.
- **Skylights:** shall be flat mounted -only on the rear slope of the roof.
- **Gutters and downspouts:** Roof eaves shall be guttered to promote a pedestrian friendly environment. Gutters must be built of durable materials and integrated into the architectural design of the building.

4. OPENINGS

- **Sloped roofs:** shall be clad in slate, galvanized metal, concrete tiles, or wood shingles. Flat asphalt shingles are not permitted. Roof penetrations shall not occur on the front slope of the roof.
- **Splash blocks:** shall be stone, gravel, concrete, or brick.
- **Vents and attic ventilators:** shall be painted to match the color of the roof except with those made out of metal which may be left natural.
- **Blank walls:** where blank walls are unavoidable, due to the requirements of a particular land use or structural needs, they shall not exceed a length of twenty-five feet (25'), or twenty percent (20%) of the length of the building facing the street, whichever is less. Blank walls shall be treated with signage, trellises, built-in benches in front of the walls, with climbing vines, or with other planting materials covering at least 30% of the blank wall surface.
- **Doors:** shall be made of painted wood, embossed steel or fiber-glass with wood veneer.
- **Glass:** shall be clear. The use of colored glass shall require an administrative approval from the City of Punta Gorda.
- **Garage doors:** shall have a maximum of 9 ft. in width.
- **Screens:** shall cover the exact openings. Screens may cover a porch area from roof to ceiling.
- **Sills and Lintels:** should generally align to create a harmonious façade. Window sills shall receive more emphasis than window lintels to produce a stronger shadow line. The window sill should extend no more than 2 in. beyond the window opening and any surrounding trim.
- **Shutters:** shall be made of wood, cooper, aluminum or any other durable metal. Shutters must be operable and shall cover entire window area. Shutters shall be either louvered or paneled.
- **Storefronts:** shall be made of wood or metal. They shall be composed of a base, an entry, a display window, a transom, a bulkhead, and a building shaft.
- **Window frames:** shall be made of wood, metal, or vinyl and shall be glazed with clear glass. Storm widows, shutters, and screens, if provided, shall be operable and cover entire window area.
- **Window louvers:** shall be made of wood, metal or any other durable material.

5. GENERAL NOTES:

- **Railings:** shall have horizontal top and bottom rails centered on the spindles or balusters. The openings between spindles and balusters shall not exceed 4 inches.
- **Sidewalk seating and benches:** shall not distract or impede the normal circulation of pedestrians. There shall be an unobstructed space of no less than five feet (5') between a storefront and a bench or a table. Benches shall be oriented to afford clear views of storefronts.
- **Storefront lighting:** the inside of a store shall be brighter than its front lighting.
- **Street lighting:** street lights shall be simple rather than ornate and their placement shall not obstruct storefronts. A down light or cut-off lens, with no glare, shall be used whenever possible. Globe-type and cobra-head lighting is preferable.
- **Stucco:** shall be smooth hand-finish; only cement stucco is permitted.
- **Trim:** shall be highest grade lumber; and shall be 3.5 to 6 inches.
- **Wall painted signage:** shall not exceed one half the permitted height of the building. Wall painted signage is limited to letters without pornographic or political content.
- **Wood:** if visible shall be painted or stained with an opaque or semi-solid stain, except walking surfaces which may be left natural.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. All trees must be planted 24 – 32 ft. on center
2. Shade trees or palm trees shall not obstruct storefront views
3. All shade trees must have a 6 in. caliper minimum at time of planting
4. All shade trees must be 8 ft. min. at time of planting
5. Hedges must be 3 ft. min. at time of planting
6. Shade trees shall be limited to sidewalks and parking areas. Shade trees shall be selected from the suggested shade tree list
7. Open public spaces shall have no less than one flowering tree. Flowering trees shall be selected from the suggested flowering tree list
8. Palm trees and ground cover are reserved for parks, open spaces, medians, or important axial entrances
9. There shall be no exemptions

PERMITTED MEDIUM SHADE TREE LIST:

- African Tulip Tree - (*Spathodea campanullata*)
- Apple Blossom Shower - (*Cassia javanica*)
- Bridalveil - (*Caesalpinia granadillo*)
- Buttercup Tree - (*Cochlospermum vitifolium*)
- Ceylon senna - (*Cassia roxburghii*)
- Cockspur Coral Tree - (*Erythrina crista-gallii*)
- Coral Cassia - (*Cassia grandis*)
- Copperpod - (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*)
- Golden Tabebuia - (*Tabebuia chrysostricha*)
- Golden Shower - (*Cassia fistula*)
- Green Buttonwood - (*Conocarpus erectus*)
- Guiana Chesnut - (*Pachira aquatica*)
- Jacaranda - (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*)
- Jamaican Dogwood - (*Piscidia piscipula*)
- Queen's Crape Myrtle - (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*)
- Red Silk Cotton Tree - (*Bombax ceiba*)
- Sapodilla - (*Manilkara zapota*)
- Shavingbrush Tree - (*Pseudobombax ellipticum*)
- Silk Cotton Tree - (*Ceiba pentandra*)
- Spanish Cherry - (*Mimusops elengi*)
- Tulipwood - (*Harpulia arborea*)
- Wild Cinnamon - (*Casimiroa edulis*)
- Ylan Ylan - (*Cananga Odorata*)

PERMITTED LARGE SHADE TREE LIST:

- Black Olive - (*Bucida buceras*)
- Black Ironwood - (*Krugiodendron ferreum*)
- Gumbo Limbo - (*Bursera simaruba*)
- Live Oak - (*Quercus virginiana*)
- Mahogany - (*Swietenia mahogani*)
- Paradise Tree - (*Simarouba glauca*)
- Pigeon Plum - (*Coccoloba diversifolia*)
- Pitch Apple - (*Clusia rosea*)
- West Indian Cherry - (*Prunus myrtifolia*)
- Wild Tamarind - (*Lysiloma latisiliqua*)

PERMITTED GATEWAY TREE LIST:

- Australian fan palm - (*Livistona australis*)
- Central Australian fan palm - (*Livistona mariae*)
- Chinese fan palm - (*Livistona chinensis*)
- Coconut Palm - (*Cocos nucifera*)
- Florida royal palm - (*Roystonea elata*)
- Queen palm - (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*)
- Sabal palm - (*Sabal palmetto*)
- Taraw palm - (*Livistona saribus*)

PERMITTED PALM TREE LIST:

- Alexandra Palm - (*Archontophoenix alexandrae*)
- Bailey Palm - (*Copernicia baileyana*)
- Belmore Palm - (*Howea bel*)
- Cabbage Palm - (*Sabal palmetto*)
- Christmas Palm - (*Veitchia spp.*)
- Coconut Palm - (*Cocos nucifera*)
- Date Palm - (*Phoenix dactylifera*)
- Date Palm, Cliff - (*Phoenix rupicopla*)
- Date Palm, Pygmy - (*Phoenix roebelinii*)
- Foxtail Palm - (*Wodyetia bifurcata*)
- Hurricane Palm - (*Dictyosperma album*)
- Montgomery Palm - (*Veitchia montgomeryana*)
- Silver Palm - (*Coccothrinax argentata*)
- Pindo Palm - (*Butia capitata*)
- Royal Palm - (*Roystonea elata*)
- Thatch Palm - (*Thrinax radiata*)
- Washington Palm - (*Washingtonia Robusta*)

PERMITTED FLOWERING TREE LIST:

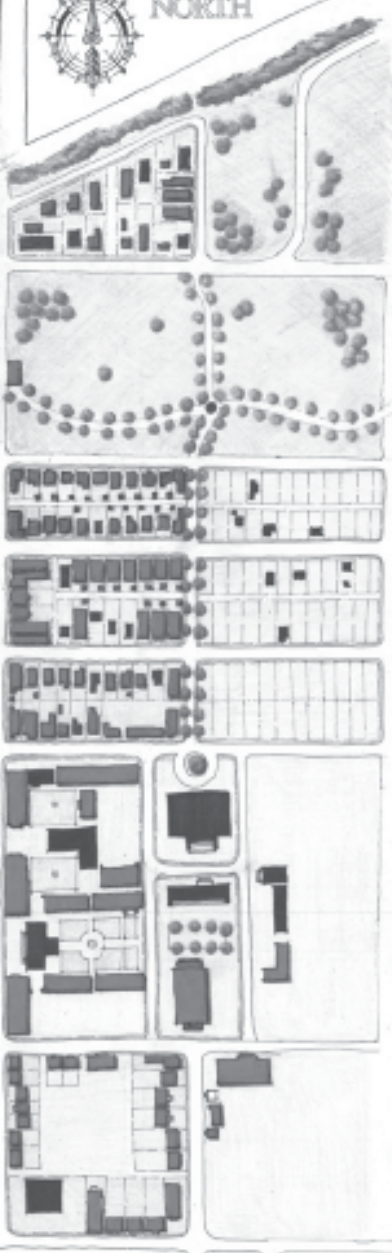
- Golden Tabebuia - (*Tabebuia chrysostricha*)
- Jacaranda - (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*)
- Pink Tabebuia - (*Tabebuia heterophylla*)
- Royal Poinciana - (*Delonix regia*)
- Royal palm - (*Roystonea regia*)
- Red Silk Cotton Tree - (*Bombax ceiba*)
- Wild Cinammon - (*Casimiroa edulis*)



THE CITIZENS'
MASTER PLAN
2005

THE CITY OF
PUNTA GORDA

JAIMÉ CORREA
AND ASSOCIATES



Conclusion

The citizens of Punta Gorda have spoken clearly. The 2005 Citizens Master Plan is not another scream into the void; it is the most comprehensive summary of the natural, physical, spiritual, and human goals of a community hurt by the devastation of a natural disaster.

Please do not be put off by the elegance and excellence of its drawings.

The dichotomy wherein the workable plans are mediocre in their presentation, while

the beautifully done plans are impossible to implement, is not present here. This Master Plan is both; the Punta Gorda 2005 Citizens Master Plan is a testimony of the superb urban traditions established by its City Founders at the end of the nineteenth century.

We certainly hope that this book is influential beyond the region, and that its working method becomes a paradigm for the rest of America.



Implementation Schedule

The following action list shows specific strategies for: management, urban design, and policy. An implementation timeline has also been provided -with potential deadlines for the completion of particular tasks. The

implementation timeline here described is not definite; it has been tailored, in more or less the same order of the report, to the various areas within the 2005 Citizens Master Plan.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

ITEM

0-1 YEAR 2-5 YEARS 6-10 YEARS

Rural Corridors

- Initiate Acquisition of Land for Rural Activity Centers
- Traffic/Police Enforcement
- Define Rural Development Goals and Objectives (Citizens Workshop)
- Decide Annexation Goals (Citizens Workshops)
- Acquire Land for Rural Activity Centers
- Create and Implement New Rural LDR's
- Create a Local Community Development Corporation
- Implement Greenway and Rural Landscape Protection Policies

- X
- X
- X
- X

- X
- X
- X
- X



Jones Loop Power Center

- Create and Implement New LDR's
- Initiate Marketing and Education Efforts to Attract Appropriate Developers

- X
- X

Industrial Districts

- Create and Implement New LDR's

- X



Ecological Greenbelt

- Acquire Potential Preservation/Conservation Areas
- Implement Regional Preservation and Conservation Policies

- X
- X

Gateways

- Identify Potential Locations for Future Gateways
- Amend Comprehensive Plan to Reflect Community Desire for Gateways
- Acquire Land or Negotiate Encroachments with DOT
- Establish National Design Competition Program
- Build First One at 75 and 17
- Build Second at Taylor Road and 41
- Build Other Gateways

- X
- X
- X
- X

- X
- X

- X



ITEM

0-1 YEAR 2-5 YEARS 6-10 YEARS

Annexation

First Phase: Eastern Neighborhoods

X

Second Phase: Aqui Esta Neighborhoods

X

Third and Fourth Phase: Industrial Districts

X

Fifth Phase: Rural Neighborhoods

X



Punta Gorda Isles

Bal Harbor Plaza (Neighborhood Center Reconstitution)

X

Improvement of Waterfront Canal at Ponce de Leon Park

X

New Waterfront Connection at Mangrove Point

X

New Waterfront Canal at Aquatic Preserve

X

New Waterfront Canal Exit at Proposed Residential Project

X

Neighborhood Center Design and Implementation

X



Transportation

Water Taxi

X

Trolley System

X

Revert Marion Avenue to two-way street

X

Reconfiguration of 41 (Parallel Parking at Off-Peak Hours)

X

Reconfiguration of 41 and Taylor Avenue (New Public Space)

X

Reconfiguration of Taylor Avenue (two-way street)

X

New "T" Intersections

X

Downtown Punta Gorda

Harbor Inn Resort and Yacht Club

X

Save Old Courthouse Building

X

Initiate Branch Library Negotiations

X

Create Mechanism to Insure a Continuous Public Waterfront

X

Create Park-in-lieu Mechanism

X

Acquire Land for Park-Once Systems

X

Consult National Main Street Program

X

Secure Land for a Central Square at Marion and Taylor

X

Re-Design Natural and Material Landscape (i.e.: trees, benches, lamps, etc.)

X

Plant Mature Trees - Install Benches - Install New Lamps

X



The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

ITEM

0-1 YEAR 2-5 YEARS 6-10 YEARS

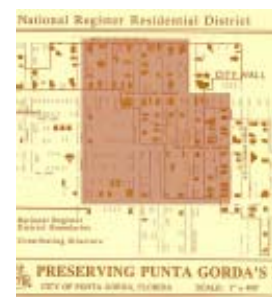
Downtown Punta Gorda (continued)

- Create a Model Sidewalk Program (Selling Pavers with Name Imprints to Donors) X
- Implement Sidewalk Program (Start with One Block Only) X
- Create a Model Crosswalk Program (Selling Crosswalks to Sponsors or Artists) X
- Implement Model Crosswalk Program X
- Initiate Storefront Competitions and Public Space Award Program X
- Write Site Specific LDR's (restaurant row, gallery district, designer row, retail, etc.) X
- Create Landscape Standards for Empty Sites (i.e.: fences, hedges, etc.) X
- Plant Hedges and Install Fences Along Missing Teeth (Public Project) X
- Create a Management Program to Attract Specific Business to Specific Locations X
- Create a Local Commercial Development Corporation X
- Acquire Land for Old Courthouse Plaza X
- Write Architectural Guidelines for Mixed-Use Buildings and Live/Work Units X
- Create Façade Improvement Program X
- Reconfigure Street Sections X
- Start Business Incubator Program X
- Build New Auditorium, Green, and Public Loggia X
- Build New Marina X
- Restore and Re-design Laishley Park X
- Create and Design Youth Center or Co-Op House/ Performance Center (Fire House) X
- Build Municipal Parking Garages (Park-Once System) X
- Create Incentive Program for Housing in Church Sites (i.e.: Sacred Heart, etc.) X
- Complete the Downtown Build-out X



Historic District

- Create LDR's and Architectural Regulations for FEMA Compliance X
- Expand the Boundaries of the Existing Local Historic District X
- Create New Local Restoration/Preservation Tax Incentive Program X
- Create Historic Façade Improvement Program X
- Establish Historic Archives (i.e.: Old Courthouse Building) X
- Design a Historic Environment Street Landscape Scheme X
- Create a Local Community Development Corporation X
- Establish Sailing School X
- Design and Implement a New Marina Facility with Mooring Piles and Services X



ITEM

0-1 YEAR 2-5 YEARS 6-10 YEARS

History District (continued)

Implement Historic District Landscape Scheme
Reconfigure Gilchrist Park

X

X



Old Tracks and History Park

Create Community Garden Plot Program
Reconfigure Traffic Intersections

X

X



East Side Neighborhoods

Create Incentive Program for Live/Work Units on Martin Luther King
Reconfigure MLK Landscape Scheme and Street Section
Reconfigure and Re-design Trabue Woods Affordable Housing Project
Create Façade Improvement Program
Monitor the Hospital Expansion
Attempt a Land Swap with Central Core Property Owners
Create LDR's for Compatible Infill Development and Public Housing
Create a Local Community Development Corporation
Acquire Land for Neighborhood Center
Resolve Land Use Encumbrances
Study Potential Expansion Configurations for Existing School Buildings
Build a Theater on School Grounds

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X



Education/Marketing/Public Relations

Citizens Master Plan TEAM Presentations
Attract a National Symposium on Traditional Development
Pros and Cons of Conventional and Traditional Development
Advantages of Community/Commercial Development Corporations
Land Development Regulations Staff Presentations
Local History Conferences (Location: Various Historic Buildings)
Hands-on Preservation/Conservation Strategies (i.e.: convince Home-Depot, etc.)
Retailing Strategies for Main Streets and Suburbia
Main Street Management (Main Street Program)
Landscape Preservation and Conservation Programs
Other

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X



CREATING A COMPETITIVE DOWNTOWN

By Charles C. Bohl, Jeff Speck and Andres Duany

After decades of decline, in recent years many American downtowns and Main Streets have been experiencing an extraordinary revival. Americans have become fatigued by 50 years of cavernous shopping malls and endless miles of look-alike commercial strips and are increasingly attracted by the simpler pleasures of open air, pedestrian-oriented marketplaces in urban settings. Not all downtowns are succeeding in tapping this trend, however, and suburban developers are already responding by incorporating Main Street and town center formats with conventional shopping centers. These newfangled suburban town centers are poised to directly compete with both aging shopping centers and older downtowns, and it is crucial that historic downtowns like Punta Gorda learn how to maximize their historic urban assets and effectively contend in areas in which the suburbs have excelled. Areas in which suburbs have typically outperformed cities include their amenity package, civic decorum, physical design, retail management, marketing, investment security and permitting. Downtowns must identify what makes them unique and how best to compete in each of these areas.

THE AMENITY PACKAGE

The suburban amenity package includes generous private yards, golf courses, climate-controlled environments (including shopping malls) and private swimming pools and health clubs. To successfully compete with the suburbs, the city must offer a comparable – but distinctive – package of amenities. The most significant amenity the city can offer that suburbs cannot is a public realm, with the vibrant street life that phrase implies. In the case of Punta Gorda, the city is blessed with a rare coincidence of a waterfront located within a short walk of a historic Main Street, which provides the makings of an extraordinary public realm. The city should continue to focus its efforts on creating a high quality public realm that extends throughout the historic downtown core and beyond, and links these two key areas.

CIVIC DECORUM

The first job of city government, as any resident or business owner will tell you, is to “keep it clean and safe.” Suburban developers have excelled at providing both scrupulous security and excellent maintenance through commercial property management practices and homeowners associations. In order to compete, cities have been successfully adopting business improvement districts and neighborhood associations to develop effective strategies for handling trash pickup, removing graffiti, maintaining the appearance of streets, sidewalks and the frontages of properties, and discouraging panhandlers, drugs and prostitution. The faceless bureaucracy of a large city tends to become accessible and responsive if it is broken down into neighborhood, street and district scale increments. Indeed, some issues that seem irresolvable at the city-wide level, such as parking and noise policies, are best addressed street-by-street.

PHYSICAL DESIGN The skeletons of once great cities provide evidence that urban places cannot compete by adopting the physical design of the suburbs, which is antithetical to everything that makes urban life distinctive and attractive. High quality urban settings include a combination of pedestrian-friendly streets and a public realm defined by a fundamentally *urban* architecture. Streets should accommodate two-way traffic to evenly distribute vitality. Street widths should be minimized and on-street parking provided to calm traffic and shield pedestrians. Street trees, awnings and arcades should be provided for shade, shelter and to beautify the street without obscuring the views of shop fronts. Sidewalks should be generous in width, but fancy pavements, banners, bollards and street furniture are much less important than the presence of a consistent streetwall, a mix of uses and activities, and quality gathering places such as urban parks, plazas, courtyards and squares. The buildings of the city should define the streets and urban open spaces of the city, providing a sense of enclosure and the great outdoor rooms that the suburbs lack. The Punta Gorda plan proposes the creation and refinement of several public gathering places, each with their own distinctive character in relation to the types of buildings, mix of retail, civic, residential and workplace activities, and urban landscaping.

RETAIL MANAGEMENT

In order for Main Street to compete with the mall, it must be run with all the expertise lavished on shopping centers. Fortunately, many of the concepts and techniques that mall designers use can be adapted easily for the benefit of the downtown. First and foremost is the establishment of centralized management that can:

- assemble an effective mix of shops, restaurants and services, including anchors such as cinemas and well known retailers to draw customers to the downtown;

- concentrate related retail, arts, dining and entertainment businesses together to create distinctive shopping and dining districts within the downtown as proposed in the retail strategy;
- •strategically arrange anchors and parking to establish a steady flow of foot traffic past smaller shops;
- •carry out joint advertising, merchandizing and events programming;
- •maintain the continuity of retail shop fronts along the full extent of main streets;
- •enable the use of push carts and open air markets as forms of business incubators that contribute to the liveliness and commerce in public gathering places and along streets.

PREPARING THE URBAN MARKET

Suburban developers direct their efforts at the largest market segments only, providing huge tracts of housing and big-box retail. This approach may make sense in the urban periphery, where a critical mass is necessary to attract customers, and where homogeneity is considered a virtue. In the city, however, this approach erases the very diversity of form and activity that makes the best urban places so attractive. In the city, development must be approached on a smaller scale, and with a thorough understanding of the customer base. One of the most effective ways to revitalize an under-built city core is to subdivide undeveloped superblocks into smaller increments affordable to individual investors. In addition to operating at the correct scale, renewal efforts must proceed with realistic expectations about who will move downtown, and market accordingly. To encourage urban pioneers, cities must be prepared to bend the rules a little. Zoning that prohibits housing in commercial and industrial areas – often largely empty and therefore affordable – must be replaced with a mixed-use classification. The on-site parking requirement can be waived, as pioneers can be expected to park on the street, if they own cars at all. Additional municipal initiative is required in order to improve schools that help attract families with children to the city, and to dampen gentrification pressures.

These methods imply the need for a pro-active municipal government acting in the role of the developer. Civic leaders must develop a physical vision for their city which they commit to and then actively promote. Rather than being victimized by the self-interests of the private sector, they must determine the type, scale, and quality of new growth and then act as the lead booster for that growth.

INVESTMENT SECURITY AND PERMITTING

Due to single-use zoning and deed restrictions, suburbia offers developers and purchasers enormous predictability regarding their investment. The best way to ensure predictability in downtown neighborhoods is with an urban code; a physically based code that visually describes the building's volume, articulation, and relationship to the street – in other words, its building type. This code should ensure that all building types are pedestrian-friendly, and that buildings are located near buildings of similar type. It should also specify the building's alignment, in order to shape public spaces. Because these codes specify what a city wants, rather than what it does not want, buildings that correspond to their specific physical criteria can be permitted automatically, and allowed to move forward immediately. To assist in this process, city planning and building departments must be encouraged to see themselves as an enabling staff rather than a regulatory staff. The implementation of such a process would be an important step in leveling the playing field between suburban and urban development, so that suburban developers could be enticed back into the inner city.

MAINTAIN THE COMPETITIVE EDGE OF URBANITY

Although much of the advice here is to co-opt the methods of contemporary retail management in order for downtown Punta Gorda's revival to be successful and sustainable it is crucial to emphasize that *downtown retail development is NOT about making shopping centers; It is about place-making.* The successful downtown is a place that is an attractive destination with great streets and public spaces where people enjoy walking, shopping, dining, and spending time together. People do not typically come to downtowns for everyday shopping needs, they come for the special experience of a walkable place with interesting architecture, an attractive waterfront, interesting things to see and do, to explore, to meet, to be entertained, to dine in places with attractive views, to be around other people in warm, friendly public settings. *People come to downtowns to experience a city, not shop in a mall or strip center. For retail to be successful in Punta Gorda, it must deliver this experience.*

Acknowledgments

We want to thank the all members of the community who have devoted their time and energy to working with us in developing the Citizens' Master Plan 2005. Many of your ideas have been incorporated into this plan and will enhance the City for generations to come.

A much deserved thank you to the board members of TEAM PUNTA GORDA and all their dedicated volunteers.

CITY OF PUNTA GORDA OFFICIALS

Mayor ~ Stephen M. Fabian, Jr.
Vice-Mayor, Larry Friedman
Councilmember, Dr. David Phelen
Councilmember, Marilyn P. Smith-Mooney
Councilmember, Thomas D. Poole
City Manager Howard Kunik
Cherry Cash Prewitt
Rick Burgess
Michael Blair
Bob Crispin
David Hilston
David Hennis, AICP
Dan Douglas
Dennis Murphy, Director

Isaac Thomas , Recreational Director NOCS, Inc

CHARLOTTE COUNTY OFFICIALS

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David F. Milligan,
Laura Kleiss
Jorge Perez
Becky Bovell
Tom D'Aprile
Adam Cummings
Thomas G. Moore
Matthew D. DeBoer
Sara Devos
Benjamin Alexander, FEMA Charlotte County

AND MANY OTHERS

Thomas J. Tumminia, State Department
Community Affairs
Paul Homes, Peace River Audubon Society
Vernon & Edna Jane Peoples
Punta Gorda Historical Society

Charlie Shoe, Seaview 104.9 FM
Dan Bowens, Charlotte Bureau Reporter
Steve Reilly

The Bonita Bay Group, Daniel Delisi
Ronald J. Oskey
Bill Robinson
Geri Waksler
Gabriel Bove, Bove Company
Barry Eisenberg, Vivante

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Father Jerry Kaywell
All of the supportive staff volunteers

Downtown Retail Merchants
Chamber of Commerce Punta Gorda
Chamber of Commerce Charlotte County
Rotary Club, Punta Gorda
Students from the local Schools

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Marta Mejia, *Landscape*
Oscar Machado, *Housing*
Rick Hernandez, *Affordable Housing*
Jorge Lopez, *Affordable Housing*
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