Punta Gorda

July, 2007

Economic Development Strategy

Prepared by:

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Executive Summary

The following is a synopsis of a detailed economic development analysis and strategic program for Punta Gorda and nearby areas of Charlotte County, prepared by The Chesapeake Group, Inc. under contract to the City of Punta Gorda. Funding for the effort was provided by the federal government and local sources including the City of Punta Gorda, Charlotte County through its Economic Development Office, the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce, Team Punta Gorda, and Charlotte County's Visitor's Bureau.

The effort included significant primary data derived from field reconnaissance, face-to-face interviews with stakeholders, public input sessions, surveys of part and full-time residents, and a survey of business owners and operators. In addition, computer modeling and other forms of research and analysis of secondary information were used to identify and develop opportunities to enhance the economic sustainability of the area.

Goals

Based on the input and the various analyses, a set of goals for the economic development strategy evolved. Those are to:

1. Enhance the utilization of the area's assets in a manner conducive to achieving other goals.
2. Create sustainable economic diversity.
3. Alter employment patterns and area demographics.
4. Decrease the exportation of dollars.
5. Establish a unique niche in the market for downtown Punta Gorda.
6. Differentiate Punta Gorda and its downtown from other communities and areas.
7. Enhance the quality of life for current and future residents.
8. Enhance the business climate.

Opportunities

The analysis indicates that there are substantial opportunities for:

A. Retail and retail related services for which the analysis either identified gaps or demand. These retail services often locate in downtowns and, thus, provide opportunities for the core of Punta Gorda. Some of these are also likely to locate in suburban non-downtown locations.

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1. Baked Goods Stores (about 10,000 square feet of space)
2. Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores (between 12,000 to 20,000 square feet of space)
3. Pharmacies and Drug Stores (about four additional operations)
4. Men's Clothing Stores (about 9,000 to 12,000 square feet of space)
5. Pet and Pet Supplies Stores (one or two operations, may have specialized product lines)
6. Video Tape and Disc Rental (two operations in different locations)
7. Full-Service Restaurants (between 7 to 12 new establishments)
8. Limited-Service Restaurants (between 7 to 15 new establishments)
9. Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars (2 to 4 operations, location with heavy foot traffic critical)
10. One-Hour Photofinishing (3,000 square feet of space)
11. Sporting Goods Stores (one marine related, one large "junior" or "box" operation)
12. Floor Covering Stores (11,000 to 15,000 square feet of space)
13. Shoe Stores (20,000 to 25,000 square feet, several operations likely)
14. Jewelry Stores (14,000 to 25,000 square feet of space)
15. Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores (5,000 to 10,000 square feet of space)
16. Dry-cleaning Services (4,000 square feet of space)

B. Retail and retail related services for which the analysis either identified gaps or demand most often locating in suburban non-downtown locations.

- ✓ Automotive Parts & Accessories Stores
- ✓ Radio, Television, & Other Electronics Stores
- ✓ Home Centers and Hardware Stores
- ✓ Nursery, Garden Center, & Farm Supply Stores
- ✓ Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores
- ✓ Office Supplies & Stationery Stores

C. Retail and retail related services for which the analysis indicates growth in demand will be sufficient to support additional operations in the future. These retail services often locate in downtowns and suburban non-downtown locations.

- ✓ Supermarkets
- ✓ Dairies
- ✓ Department Stores
- ✓ Discount Department
- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Home Furnishings
- ✓ Women's and Girl's Apparel
- ✓ Family Apparel
- ✓ Barber/Beauty shop
- ✓ Book Stores
- ✓ Optical Goods/Optician
- ✓ Printing
- ✓ Paper/Paper Products
- ✓ Gifts/Cards/Novelties
- ✓ Newsstands

D. Financial services for which the analysis identified gaps. These financial services often locate in downtowns and suburban non-downtown locations.

- ✓ Credit Unions
- ✓ Mortgage & Other Financing
- ✓ Savings Institutions

E. Professional services for which the analysis identified gaps. These professional services often locate in downtowns and suburban non-downtown locations, with the latter most often in quality business parks.

- ✓ Offices of Certified Public Accountants
- ✓ Landscape Architectural Services
- ✓ Human Resources and Executive Search Consulting Services
- ✓ Environmental Consulting Services
- ✓ Advertising Agencies

F. Other services for which the analysis identified gaps. These services can and often do locate in business parks. Some are consumer oriented. Others have a business-to-business orientation.

- ✓ Janitorial Services
- ✓ Wired Telecommunications Carriers
- ✓ Remediation Services
- ✓ Commercial & Industrial Machinery & Equipment Repair & Maintenance
- ✓ Home & Garden Equipment Repair & Maintenance
- ✓ Re-upholstery and Furniture Repair
- ✓ Internet Service Providers
- ✓ Telecommunications Resellers
- ✓ Surveying and Mapping Services
- ✓ Temporary Help Services
- ✓ Security Guards and Patrol Services
- ✓ Landscape Services
- ✓ Offices of Mental Health Practitioners
- ✓ Home Health Care Services
- ✓ Services for the Elderly & with Disabilities
- ✓ Food Service Contractors & Caterers

G. Commercial recreation services for which the analysis identified gaps. These services can and often do locate in either downtowns or commercial strips near consumers, although the second can also often be found in larger business parks with large numbers of employees.

- ✓ Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
- ✓ Bowling Centers

G. Types of transient accommodations for which gaps were defined by the analysis.

- ✓ Hotels and Motels
- ✓ Bed-and-Breakfast Inns

It is noted that both types of operations can be accommodated in many different settings and locations. Synergy with and near other visitor activity is often of benefit. This would include locations near meeting and conference facilities, boat docks, and those with quality access.

Growth in households in Charlotte County is expected to yield an increased opportunity to boost local employment by 9,200. About 40% or 3,680 employees could be added in the service sector in managerial, paraprofessional, and professional positions. The total amount of office space that could be marketable, based on the employment growth opportunity, would be roughly 616,000 square feet. This office space can and often is locate in downtowns, commercial strips near consumers, and in quality business parks.

Eleven areas for potential R & D activity have been identified as holding promise. The areas should be interpreted as examples based on the criteria associated with use of natural and economic resources in the area, transportation access, preservation of a quality environment and way of life, and a reasonable likelihood of interest and funding. These eleven areas are:

- ✓ Chitin use as derived from crab, shrimp and other crustacean shells.
- ✓ Control and use of invasive species for energy, medicine, etc.
- ✓ Expansion of rehabilitation and study associated with the Peace River Wildlife Center.
- ✓ Study of hypoxic events and the ability to use the brevetoxins.
- ✓ Study of neuronal architecture and episodic memory.
- ✓ The role of limestone in coal gasification technology and other areas.
- ✓ Eco-environmental research and monitoring.
- ✓ Deteriorating conditions and reversal of the decline of the honeybee.
- ✓ The role of seagrasses in projecting environmental conditions and in management of the environment.
- ✓ Comprehending interaction between benthic and pelagic animals.
- ✓ Utilization of animals in predicting future natural disasters and enhancing human predicting capacity.

Six areas of focus for Punta Gorda were defined for culture and arts as an economic development tool to create a unique regional niche for visitors and to provide for downtown sustainability and enhanced employment skills. These six areas are

- ✓ Murals. (This is an area upon which there is already a focus. Pursuit would differentiate Punta Gorda from other West Coast communities to visitors and nearby residents.)
- ✓ An Extensive Art in Public Places Program.
- ✓ A created themed art exhibition for branding purposes. (Much like the "Cow Parade.")
- ✓ Other Outdoor "Juried" Activity.
- ✓ Evolutionary art. (Evolutionary art is a recent art form and is virtually exclusively generated on computers.)
- ✓ Organic Art. (Organic art involves the unique experience of creating art supplies making them from natural materials and utilizing area "products" in the development of the art.)

Based on the anticipated employment growth and without a change in the basic structure of employment in Charlotte County, potentially 1,700 new jobs in non-service sector employment would be required to fulfill the opportunities presented by the anticipated household growth. These could be in light industry & related areas.

Anticipated growth in households is directly correlated with growth in demand for new housing units. While recognized that there may be a surplus of supply compared to current demand, such imbalance is only a temporary market condition resulting from larger regional, state, and national market issues. Over the next ten or more years, conservatively estimated demand will result in the absorption of at least 8,000 to 9,800 additional housing units with Charlotte County. Punta Gorda and its downtown could attract a significant share of this market since the population seeking housing in less suburban settings that offers quality of life and a pedestrian environment is increasing among niche age groups and other clusters. In fact, a 15% to 20% capture would be reasonable.

Strategy Components

The following are the components of the proposed economic development strategy for Punta Gorda and areas of Charlotte County that are adjacent to or surround the City. It is noted that it is unlikely that all components will be implemented even with phasing activity. Thus and in a sense, each individual component is a contributor to the defined collection of goals, but is somewhat, although not totally exclusive of the others.

Punta Gorda and Charlotte County collectively should:

1. Insure that vehicular access be provided and the land adjacent to the airport be developed as quality business parks, with appropriate landscape and other visual components.
2. Insure the amount of retail, transient accommodation and retail related services allowed in the business parks is severely limited to preserve the land for other activity.
3. Maintain (where it exists or is under-construction) or create (where it does not now exist) vehicular access to and from the airport that results in enhanced appeal to the interstate and state highway network.
4. Maintain or improve the interstate and state highway access to areas beyond Charlotte County and Punta Gorda. The intent is to assist with facilitating the economic development potential of the business parks for services and distribution facilities, create quality linkages to other West Coast communities in Florida for R & D activity, and to enhance general aviation and other aircraft usage.
5. Provide, maintain, and enhance public infrastructure, including state-of-the-art communications technology for the business parks.

In addition, Punta Gorda should consider:

6. Adjustments to its boundaries that ultimately brings any land around the airport and land in between the airport and the City's current boundaries into the City's domain.
7. Developing and maintaining appropriate land use plans for the above areas.

8. Examining the feasibility of developing the area as one Planned Unit Development or through an “overlay district” and legislatively establishing such.
9. Establishing high quality business park standards and apply such standards to appropriate business park locations.

(It is noted that elements #7 through #9 could likely occur through the County planning process as well.)

The Punta Gorda area is in the process of adding significant commercial space in the Jones Loop Road area. Benefits will be enhanced and potential negatives mitigated if such development works in tandem with downtown Punta Gorda. It is suggested that:

10. Vehicular transportation linkages should be established to move people from Jones Loop to downtown and also the reverse direction, without requiring the parties to use their personal vehicles.
11. A trolley or other small capacity vehicle should be employed on a very frequent regular schedule at least during the winter months and during downtown event activity.
12. The route that was indicated in the past presentations of the trolley concept linking the two areas should be studied in detail. It is critical that the trolley link Jones Loop activity to both the traditional main street area in downtown and the Fisherman’s Village area of downtown.
13. Cooperative events and marketing should occur between downtown business interests and those at Jones Loop, promoting both interests and range of activities.

It is suggested that for Intersate-75:

14. Signage should be placed near the entrance/exit, indicating the historic district, downtown and the new auditorium/meeting facilities.

In addition:

15. Punta Gorda should pursue Research & Development opportunities identified. ***16.*** The preferred method for doing such is to form a partnership or consortium, including ***17.*** establishing a relationship with one or more higher education institutions.

Punta Gorda in cooperation with Charlotte County should:

18. Recruit professional and other services for which the analysis identified gaps.

The above as well as other parts of the analyses and strategy indicate opportunities to expand business and residential activity in Punta Gorda and Charlotte County that is likely to involve recruitment. Those to be recruited might or will include:

- ✓ Developers
- ✓ Education Institutions
- ✓ Retail Operations
- ✓ Hotel Operators
- ✓ Service Providers
- ✓ Artists

19. In some ways, the success with the proposed economic strategy is dependent upon recruitment. A recruitment program should be developed. Preliminary steps to establish a successful recruitment effort include.

- ✓ Deciding who will administer and provide staff support for the effort in general.
- ✓ Developing marketing materials oriented toward the types of entities to be solicited.
- ✓ Assuring the ability to reproduce the materials on demand.
- ✓ Developing lists of those to be solicited and update such lists regularly.
- ✓ Developing a set schedule for phasing of the process so that the work load is distributed over time.
- ✓ Establishing funding to insure that the effort is continual for at least five years.

Expansion of employment opportunities into new areas and recruitment of activity for which there is demand or opportunities are ways to alter employment patterns. However, so too is focusing upon opportunities for current residents to economically advance. Several methods are suggested for assisting existing residents in having greater participation in the future economic health of the Punta Gorda area. These are:

20. Creating new ownership for existing and new businesses through entrepreneurship, both as an adjunct and an alternative to recruiting new activity. It can be effectuated through the community college, technical oriented higher education schools, and other colleges throughout Charlotte County and the larger Southwest Florida multi-county area. The areas of focus for new efforts and programs could include:

- ✓ Computer Arts and graphic skills.
- ✓ R & D.
- ✓ Business Training & entrepreneurship in general.
- ✓ Select Retail & hospitality activity.

21. Expansion of business development activity and strengthening the fledgling business development center efforts in City Hall. The entrepreneurship could be a primary focus of a business development center for the area. Business development activity might include the above as well as:

- ✓ Mentoring, composed of area retirees through SCORE.
- ✓ Volunteer "Ambassadors" to assist with recruitment and composed of existing business owners and area retirees.

In the minds of many area residents, economic development is synonymous with downtown activity. Concern was frequently expressed for the speed of recovery or change in downtown Punta Gorda. Much of this concern focused on three projects. These are the anticipated new auditorium, the reuse of the former courts building, and the "marketplace" project. In at least two of the three projects, major momentum has been building or is now visible. It is within this context as well as the significant assets that the components of the strategy for downtown Punta Gorda were developed. The assets upon which program elements are based include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- ✓ The Peace River.
- ✓ Significant public dollars spent to enhance the waterfront.
- ✓ Quality open spaces.
- ✓ Continued expansion of facilities for boating interests.
- ✓ A range of activity generators.
- ✓ Regulations to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- ✓ The history of artistic and cultural endeavors.
- ✓ The historic character along the traditional "main street" area and elsewhere.
- ✓ Environmentally sensitive areas for observation and educational purposes.
- ✓ The existence and linkage of Fisherman's Village that has helped to attract visitors to the area and has contributed to marketing of the community.
- ✓ Opportunities for expanded retail that includes 300,000 to 600,000 square feet of space.

To create a unique place that is competitive in the regional market and to effectively utilize the assets, downtown Punta Gorda should focus on:

22. Re-establishing previous artistic niches within downtown. These include both murals and "Art in Public Places." At a minimum, Punta Gorda should:

- ✓ Identify public and private building facades for potential mural applications.
- ✓ Identify sites for placement of art.
- ✓ Purchase or provide insurance under the "city's blanket" for placement of art in public right-of-way or other areas on private property, but visually part of "public" areas.
- ✓ Providing juried art contests at schools and in the community for mural designs and art.
- ✓ Commission murals and art for public spaces and buildings.
- ✓ Establish funds for matching or leveraged efforts on private buildings or provide bonus densities for incorporation of pedestrian and vehicular level murals and art.
- ✓ Incorporate murals into designs of new structures through incentives at the planning phases.

23. Creating a "city market" and market atmosphere, linking the waterfront with the traditional main street area and Fisherman's Village. From the City's and downtown interests' perspectives, an outdoor market is not only appropriate for the climatic conditions, but in creating taxes, employment, excitement, and entrepreneurial activity in a period of pre-major private sector development. This latter is critical to downtown for psychological, economic, and physical reasons. It is suggested that:

- ✓ The previous market development proposal be accepted and pursued with some minor changes.
- ✓ The market's area, to the extent possible, run from Fisherman's Village, along the waterfront areas, to 41 and up to Marion Avenue in the traditional "main street" area.
- ✓ An oversight committee be formed that is composed of downtown business interests, individuals with artistic jury experience, and City representatives, both administrative and legislative.
- ✓ A specific purpose non-profit entity be formed to manage the market either by itself or in partnership with another for or not-for profit entity.
- ✓ The project, in some form, be given the highest priority and be pursued in some manner as soon as possible, even if this means starting as an event with only a few days scheduled.
- ✓ An experienced operator be pursued/recruited as either a manager or owner of the market.

Essentially the market could be viewed as an evolution of the current Fisherman's Village artistic oriented events (only juried), coupled with the farmer's market. This activity could be linked as well to the proposed entrepreneurial activity.

While many of the design elements and placement of murals and art are intended to create a visually appealing atmosphere for the pedestrian, and the application of the market is intended to create constant and changing activity; still other steps should be considered. These include:

24. Promoting active first floor activity (office, retail, service, etc.). The total first floor space for any retail or related service operation should be limited to 7,500 square feet.
25. Providing sufficient and dispersed off-street parking structures.

A waterfront development conceptual plan has been brought forth by The Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance called "Pieces Of A Vision." The program calls for, among many elements, two "marketing" efforts that would assist with differentiating Punta Gorda from other waterfront locations. These are certification or recognition as a: "Clean Marina" and "Blue Flag Marina." The combination of the two would result in the waterfront being "a totally certified waterfront."

In concept, the composite of the proposal put forth is clearly beneficial to the downtown and Punta Gorda. However, it is possible that some proposed locations and concepts may be in conflict with or result in environmental concerns. It is therefore suggested that:

26. The concepts, not site specific details of the Boaters Alliance vision, should be incorporated into the economic development strategy.
27. The marketing concepts should be endorsed and adoption and certification pursued.
28. A "waterfront development group," under the auspices of economic development, should be formed or appointed.
29. Resources should be provided or obtained to analyze specific proposed concepts in detail.
30. A review of the practicality and legality of a "Marine Overlay District" or alternatives along the waterfront in general or specific pieces of it, if inappropriate for the whole, should take place.
31. Active waterfront recreation for non-boaters, particularly as it relates to the youth market, should be expanded along the Peace River waterfront.

The pedestrian oriented amenities and Peace River enhancements are also part of the larger transportation system or infrastructure that impacts the viability of downtown. There are additional components of the strategy for the transportation network as well. In an effort to improve the network, the following suggestions are made.

32. Conduct an engineering and traffic analysis of the potential to convert the paired one-way streets of West Marion and West Olympic to a two-way system from Henry Street to 41.
33. Determine the feasibility of developing a trolley, tram, or like system that will move people throughout the downtown area on a regular basis, during season and for special events, at a minimum.
34. If feasible, implement the system in a phased manner.

There are several additional elements that would enhance the infrastructure and competitive position in downtown. Those suggestions include.

35. Offering free access within the downtown area through wireless, broadband, or other future widely accepted or used communications technology.
36. Recruiting national chain affiliated operators for one or two additional hotels/motel facilities in downtown.
37. Considering mitigation of parking requirements on existing commercial space for conforming commercial uses. Also, expansion of space by a maximum of 25% to allow for adjustments should not cause significant parking duress. These changes should help to enhance efforts to preserve existing structures, maintaining the character of downtown.
38. Preserving existing natural areas within the downtown, but with accommodations for public access and viewing in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Additional suggestions include:

39. Making Punta Gorda and surrounding areas in Charlotte County a hub for eco-tourism activity associated specifically with birding. This would include developing:

- ✓ Packages for bus trips to other areas while staying overnight in Punta Gorda. The packages would include accommodations, meals, and entertainment when available.
- ✓ Packages, including tours of places/natural areas internal to Punta Gorda-Charlotte County, including accommodations, meals, and entertainment when available.
- ✓ Special weekend "city market" art and photography events associated with wildlife.
- ✓ Focused activity in both the "season" and "off-season."

40. Establishing a consistent and quality business retention effort with and through the two Chambers of Commerce, the County's economic development arm and the new economic development program associated with the City of Punta Gorda and this strategy.

Labor force expansion will be required to pursue almost any economic development effort that expands activity because the unemployment rate is low. This will require housing that is affordable to workers at a variety of levels. ***41.*** To make additional housing available in the future, incentives are likely to be required. Incentives should be analyzed to determine their potential impact. Possible incentives to support building affordable housing that have met with success in other communities include:

- ✓ Waiver of utility hook-ups and related fees.
- ✓ Waiver of impact fees on affordable units when part of larger developments or when self-contained.
- ✓ Leasing or selling of public land and buildings.
- ✓ Write-downs of property.
- ✓ Tax deferrals.
- ✓ Bonus densities for affordable units.

The community has two other assets or resources that are underutilized. These are the large number seniors and the medical institutions found both in Punta Gorda and Charlotte County. The large concentration of seniors in this area could become a focal point for innovation with regard to heart, cancer, Alzheimer's and other disease treatments for which the numbers inflicted in the future will grow substantially on a national basis. ***42.*** Expansion of medical research into this population should be sought in cooperation with and through the medical institutions, physicians and potential higher education institutions.

Furthermore:

43. Cooperation with respect to land use, marketing, developer recruitment processes and other components of this strategy will require more and broader involvement between the County and City. This could occur through regular meetings at the administrative, planning and elected official levels.

New funding or establishing different priorities will be necessary to effectuate change.

44. It is suggested that Punta Gorda, Charlotte County and the Chambers pursue an "Economic Development Capital Fund" in concept that is similar to the following. The Economic Development Capital Fund would be identical to any traditional "mutual fund," with a few critical exceptions. The fund would be established by and as part of any traditional brokerage or mutual fund family.

Punta Gorda Florida

Punta Gorda
Economic Development Strategy

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Contents

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Introduction

The following economic development analysis and strategic program for Punta Gorda and nearby areas of Charlotte County was prepared by The Chesapeake Group, Inc. under contract to the City of Punta Gorda. Funding for the effort was provided by the federal government and local sources including the City of Punta Gorda, Charlotte County through its Economic Development Office, the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce, Team Punta Gorda, and Charlotte County's Visitor's Bureau.

The effort included significant primary data derived from field reconnaissance, face-to-face interviews with stakeholders, public input sessions, surveys of part and full-time residents, and a survey of business owners and operators. In addition, computer modeling and other forms of research and analysis of secondary information were used to identify and develop opportunities to enhance the economic sustainability of the area.

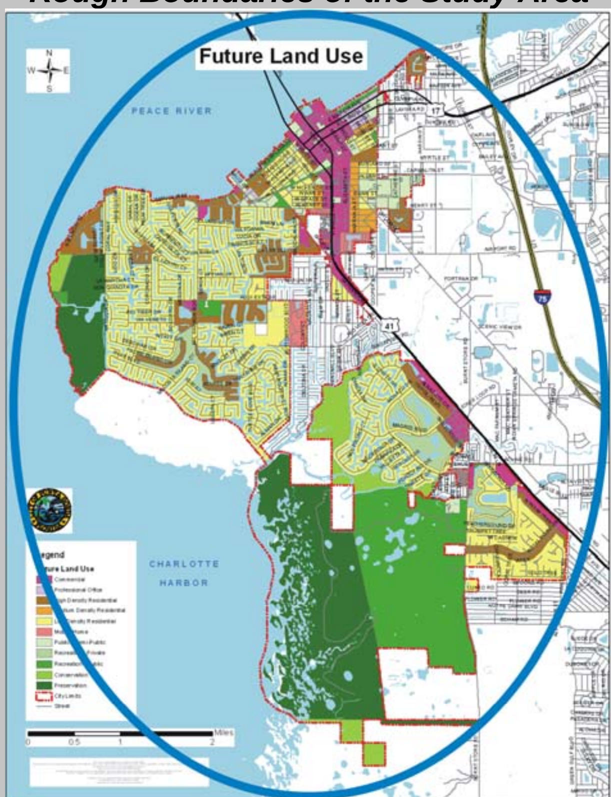
Estimates of demand found in the document are considered conservative in nature, tending to understate rather than overstate opportunities. They and all other suggestions and recommendations represent only TCG's opinion based on the presented information and experiences. It is noted that success of any geographic area, collection of activity, or individual components is dependent upon other factors as well as marketability. Some of those other factors are management practices, financial feasibility, regulations and collective cooperation.

The analysis indicates that there are substantial opportunities for:

- ✓ Retail and retail related services to enhance downtown Punta Gorda.
- ✓ Retail and related services to support development at Jones Loop and elsewhere in Charlotte County.
- ✓ Expansion of financial, professional and other services.
- ✓ Additional hotel/motel and other transient accommodations.
- ✓ Absorption of multi-tenant office space.
- ✓ Research and Development related activity based on the area's natural resources.
- ✓ Other "industrial" activity.
- ✓ Additional work force housing.

Based on the input, the various analyses, and the defined opportunities, a set of goals for the economic development strategy evolved. Those are to:

Rough Boundaries of the Study Area



1. Enhance the utilization of the area's assets in a manner conducive to achieving other goals.

2. Create sustainable economic diversity.

3. Alter employment patterns and area demographics.

4. Decrease the exportation of dollars.

5. Establish a unique niche In the market for downtown Punta Gorda.

6. Differentiate Punta Gorda and its downtown from other communities and areas.

7. Enhance the quality of life for current and future residents.

8. Enhance the business climate.

Components of the proposed economic development strategy for Punta Gorda and areas of Charlotte County that are adjacent to or surround the City were defined. Most of the components address more than one goal.

Additional elements or sub-components associated with these major components are detailed in the text. The responsibility for implementation, as defined, includes many entities, not the least of which are the City and the County, individual business groups and the State of Florida.

While it is unlikely that all elements associated with the major concepts will be implemented, movement on all in some manner will contribute to long-term viability and sustainability.

Throughout this analysis and strategic suggestions, names of specific businesses may be mentioned. Their inclusion represents neither an endorsement by The Chesapeake Group nor any indication of interest on their part.

TCG believes that this strategy can be instrumental in undertaking economic enhancement and continued implementation that is sensitive to the needs of businesses and residential community interests. The suggestions are based upon sustainable economic development principals, recognizing that economic development is a dynamic long-term process and commitment.

Punta Gorda
Economic Development Strategy

July, 2007

Background

Significant background information was reviewed and developed during the strategic economic development program process for Punta Gorda and incorporated areas that surround the city. The following is a synopsis of the information that was critical to the process.

General State & National Economic Conditions

Placing the City of Punta Gorda and Charlotte County within the overall economy is important to understand local economic conditions. It is noted that:

- ✓ Florida is estimated to have a population of just above 18 million. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is in excess of $673 billion, and the median household income for a family of four is estimated to be about $35,800. The civilian labor force is estimated to be about 9 million, with a 3.3% unemployment rate. There are about 552,000 business establishments. Services, retail and construction represent a larger proportion of Florida's GDP than they represent for the country's GDP.
- ✓ Florida's job market has been constantly expanding. During all of 2006, the United States' economy added about 2.5 million jobs. Of these jobs, about 255,500 were created in Florida, representing more than one out of every ten new jobs in the country. Professional services, business services, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality services were the leading sectors in terms of Florida's new job growth. Florida has the fastest job creation rate and lowest unemployment rate among the nation's ten most populous states.

Population & Household Trends and Patterns

- ✓ According to the 2000 Census, the City of Punta Gorda consisted of about 14,340 people living in 7,165 households. Punta Gorda's population represented about 10% of Charlotte County's population and 11% of the households. Charlotte County consisted of about 141,630 people living in 63,680 households. The Punta Gorda Metropolitan Statistical Area is estimated to contain about 160,000 people.
- ✓ Projections of the future population, released by the Charlotte County Economic Development Office and in consideration of the impact of Hurricane Charley in 2004, indicated that Charlotte County's population rose to about 164,000 in 2006. It is expected to be in the range of 172,300 to 177,800 by 2010. Further increases are expected to result in a population in the range of 189,500 to 193,700 in 2015, and 209,400 by 2020. Charlotte County's annual growth rate is estimated at 2.55%, in the foreseeable future, making it the 4th fastest growing county in Florida.

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- ✓ Punta Gorda's average household income is estimated to be about 20% above the average household income for residents of the county not living in the Punta Gorda.

- ✓ There is significant data that indicated that Punta Gorda recovered from the hurricanes within a short-time. Some of those indicators are:

  1. Retail Sales - Retail sales tax collections showed healthy increases.
  2. Building permits - Building permit values were up more than 50% for both single-family & commercial.
  3. Population – As already noted, the county's population, in particular, was estimated to be up.
  4. Home sales – While there was a decline in existing home sales, there was also an increase in value.
  5. Unemployment – The 2006 unemployment rate is estimated to be about 2.7%. This is well below both the national rate of 4.7% and the previously noted rate for Florida of 3.3%.
  6. Employment – Employment from June, 2005 to 2006 was up. Furthermore, the increases were across the board, with the exception of Professional & Business Services. However, there was a decline of only 100 jobs in this category.
  7. Housing Starts - From 2000 through 2005, the average number of housing starts in Charlotte County ranged from a low of 1,327 in 2000, to a high of 3,911 in 2005. The total housing starts increased each year, with the exception of 2002. The total number of starts was 15,497 between 2000 and 2005.

- ✓ It is noted that while the above figures do show a rebound from the hurricanes. However, as with many other locations in Florida and other parts of the country, there has been diminished demand for housing and certain commercial activity the last few years that, when coupled with rising property values and other factors, has caused a slow down in development. Once again, this slowdown is not a result of hurricane disruption.

- ✓ In 2006, the average cost of a new home was $208,090 in Charlotte County. The median existing single-family home was valued at $244,797; the median existing condominium sales price was $516,700, according to the Florida Association of Realtors; and the average apartment rent was $574.

Visitor Activity

Critical to the current (and future) economic structure of Punta Gorda is visitor-based activity. While trends are much more difficult to discern, it does not appear that the hurricane disruption created long-term issues for such activity. The following are data that indicates such.

1. There were 287,946 visitors to the area in 2005. This was below previous estimates for each year since 2000. These visitors resulted in $1.323 million in tourist tax revenues and $283.7 million in direct and induced tourism impact.
2. The largest number of tourists came in 2001.
3. Between 2000 and 2003 (non-hurricane impact, but "911" impact), there was an increase of 4.8% in the number of visitors.
4. Direct expenditures peaked in 2004, while number of visitors peeked in 2001.
5. Occupancy or "units for rent" peaked in 2004 at 72.5%, but fell in 2005 to 64.9%. However, this figure was still above each year in the rest of decade.

All of the above results are in spite of significant restraints. These include: no retreat/conference facility; a limited number and range of hotel rooms, particularly in downtown Punta Gorda; constrained marketing dollars; resource constrained activities; and coordination issues for activities and events.

✓ There is every indication that visitor activity is and will continue to be a key if not the key element in the economic structure of Punta Gorda and Charlotte County for the near future. However, the role of the visitor in the overall economy is also likely changing. Information in Table 1 indicates that local residents likely represent an increasing share of the market for major retail and service activity. The dollars attributable to tourists of sales and use tax has been generally on a decline since at least 1997.

Table 1 – Restaurant Sales Tax and Dollars Attributable to Tourist of Total Sales and Use Tax for Select Years from 1997 to 2004*

Year	Restaurant Sales Tax (As Example)	$ Attributed to Tourist as % of Total Sales & Use Tax
2004	$10,542,330	11.9
2000	$9,654,670	12.9
1999	$8,765,249	12.7
1998	$8,358,254	13.39
1997	$8,162,831	14.11

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., based on information provided by Charlotte County.

Issues, Attitudes, Opinions & Perceptions

A variety of methodologies were used to solicit input from the community. These include, but are not limited to:

✓ Face-to-face interviews with individual stakeholders.
✓ Face-to-face interviews with small groups.
✓ Public input sessions.
✓ A telephone survey of area residents.
✓ A survey of existing businesses.

It is noted that

✓ There was substantial agreement that two of the major factors if not the major factors impacting business activity are:

1. Property tax increases that result not from increases in rates but property appreciation.

2. The cost and availability of insurance.

Both are issues that transcend Punta Gorda and Charlotte County. Attempts are being made at State and Federal levels to address these concerns.

- ✓ Perceptions are reality to those that hold them, irrespective of whether or not they are based on any facts.

The following is a synopsis of the issues identified through the input processes. They have been placed in general categories.

Downtown

- ✓ Small businesses being taxed out of downtown.
- ✓ Downtown parking shortage and the need for a parking garage.
- ✓ Flooding in downtown.
- ✓ The need to attract clothing stores, increase downtown retail diversity, hotel, and finish “marketplace.”
- ✓ Renew focus on murals, cultural attractions, and “art in public places.”
- ✓ Making “the loop” a destination.
- ✓ The need for a modern hospital.
- ✓ Maintenance of the small town flavor and “mom and pop” operations.
- ✓ Creation of a “walk around” community or pedestrian environment.
- ✓ Reinvestment being too slow.

Water, Marine & Waterfront Development

- ✓ Creation of a Maritime Overlay.
- ✓ Development of marinas and dry storage.
- ✓ Continued building of the riverwalk.
- ✓ Leveraging the waterfront better than in the past.
- ✓ Assurance of residential/public access and use in future waterfront development.
- ✓ Enhancement of Punta Gorda as a boater’s destination.
- ✓ Considering a water taxi, pump out boats and more waterfront and harbor services.
- ✓ Increasing boating regattas and other marine events.

Business Expansion & Recruitment

- ✓ Confluence of impacts on business that include insurances, taxes, and hurricane recovery.
- ✓ Attracting new businesses in general.
- ✓ Acceleration of business development.
- ✓ The need for more year-round activity, including cultural activity.
- ✓ Expansion of entertainment options and activities such as bowling, restaurants, movie theaters, hotels, bed and breakfasts, and recreation for youth and young adults.
- ✓ Recruitment of “professional” businesses, having white collar workers and executives.
- ✓ Developing Research & Development opportunities related to weather.
- ✓ Increasing the diversity of retail, such as big boxes.
- ✓ Attraction of new light, clean industry.
- ✓ Increasing medical research for seniors.
- ✓ Protection and preservation of Marion Avenue.

Marketing

- ✓ Development of a unique identity and theme for Punta Gorda.
- ✓ Development of a broad national marketing campaign for Punta Gorda.
- ✓ Development of a signature event that will brand the city.
- ✓ Utilization of historic and cultural assets.
- ✓ Promotion of natural resources and eco-tourism.
- ✓ Development of greater diversity of things to do.
- ✓ Promotion of Punta Gorda as a day trip destination and the creation of day trip activities.
- ✓ Promotion of Punta Gorda as a boater friendly community.
- ✓ Controlling negative media and promoting positives.

Implementation or Tools in General

- ✓ Development of a recruitment plan for businesses and tools for recruitment. Facilitation and provision of incentives for business.
- ✓ Retention of key businesses.
- ✓ Development of a business development incubator for entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Development of wireless access.
- ✓ Development of more affordable workforce housing and the creation of incentives for affordable housing.
- ✓ Recruitment of a university as a catalyst.
- ✓ Expansion of historic preservation education.

Public Policy

- ✓ Enhancing coordination and cooperation between City, County, Chamber and others.
- ✓ Overcoming the impression of stagnation and delays.
- ✓ Creation of realistic timelines for the economy and development.
- ✓ Preparation for inevitable growth.
- ✓ Recognition of the need for taxes and fees to pay for parking and other infrastructure required.
- ✓ Making Punta Gorda business friendly, including examination of impact fees, LDRs and incentives.
- ✓ Development of a fixed-route public transportation system and growth plan.
- ✓ Enhancement of the road to the airport and truck ramps.
- ✓ Completion of plans that are underway or have been put into place; finish what has been started.
- ✓ Taking advantage of hurricane opportunities.
- ✓ Requirements on property owners to maintain and develop empty lots.
- ✓ Setting guidelines and expectations for timely development.
- ✓ Prevention of the development of any more condos.
- ✓ Focusing activity based on existing assets, including hiking, boating, golfing and the airport.
- ✓ Protection of the environment.
- ✓ Beautification of entrance corridors.
- ✓ Prevention of the exportation of the community's retail sales dollars.
- ✓ Remembering that there is a diversity of income groups.
- ✓ Obtaining pre-annexation agreements and defining large areas to annex, including along 17 and 41 and near the airport.
- ✓ The need to push for a new interchange with the airport road.
- ✓ The establishment of equal representation for all constituencies, including youth.
- ✓ Encouraging water conservation and "zero-scaping."
- ✓ Creation of Punta Gorda as a living history museum.
- ✓ Improvements to infrastructure and sewers.
- ✓ Assuring adequate supply of water for residents before granting use to others.

Surveys

Two critical surveys were conducted to generate information and a new data base not found elsewhere during the information gathering efforts. One of those surveys was of current business operations located in and around the City of Punta Gorda. The other was a survey of households residing full and part-time in and around Punta Gorda within zip codes: 33947, 33948, 33950, 33952, 33953, 33954, 33955, 33980, 33981, 33982, 33983, and 34224.

The following is a synopsis of these surveys' findings.

Survey of Existing Businesses

Businesses were identified and contacted through the combined efforts of the City, the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, The County Economic Development Office, and The Chesapeake Group, Inc. Roughly 40% of all businesses responded to the survey. It is noted that:

- ✓ Seven out of ten (71%) individuals completing the survey were the owners of the establishments within the study area, while 21% work in a management position. The 8% classified as "Other" include Presidents, Partners, Administrative Assistants, Executive Directors, Customer Service Representatives, and Office Managers. On average, the non-owner employees responding to the survey worked for the businesses for just over eight years.

- ✓ More than one-third, (37%) of the businesses has been located in the area for ten years or longer. About 15% have been in the community over twenty years.

Table 2 – Length of Time Located in Punta Gorda*

Length	%
Less Than 1 Year	7
1 To 2 Years	15
3 To 4 Years	18
5 To 9 Years	23
10 To 19 Years	22
20 Years Or More	15
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ Forty percent (40%) of the businesses have been operating at their current location for a minimum of five years. It is estimated that the average tenure at their current location is over six and one-half years.

- ✓ As shown in the following table, a wide variety of business types responded. The "Other" category includes establishments involved in retirement communities or assisted living facilities, computer services and consulting, security, community affairs, scuba diving, equipment rental or leasing, modular homes sales, sign making, storage, museums, waste management and disposal, etc.

Table 3 – Length of Time Located at This Specific Location*

Length	%
Less Than 1 Year	13
1 To 2 Years	24
3 To 4 Years	23
5 To 9 Years	17
10 To 19 Years	15
20 Years Or More	8
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Table 4 – Nature of the Business*

Type Of Business	%
Retail	20
Real Estate, Condominium Management	13
Medical Services	13
Construction or Contractor	12
Non-medical Professional Services	9
Food Service Establishment	8
Insurance	7
Retail Related Services	6
General Recreation	5
Arts or Crafts	5
Vehicle Sales or Service	4
Financial Institution	4
Personal Services	4
Other Manufacturing	4
Health Spa / Fitness Center	3
Stone Concrete Products	3
Home Decor	3
Investment Advisors	2
Cruises / Tours / Fishing Charters	2
Hotel / Motel	1
Boat / Kayak / Canoe Rental	1
Education Provider	1
Wholesale Distribution	1
Other	12

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ The employment levels range from a single person to over 300 employees. As detailed in Table 5, 72% of the establishments represent small businesses with one to ten employees, while 2% have more than 100 employees. The average (mean) number of year-round employees per business is thirteen and one-half.

Table 5 – Number of Year Round Employees (Including Owner)*

Year Round Employees	%
1 To 2	17
3 To 5	38
6 To 10	17
11 To 20	14
21 To 50	9
51 To 100	3
101 To 200	1
More Than 200	1
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ A majority of 61% of the businesses use part-time employees. Those firms that do utilize part-time help maintain an average of four part-time employees each. Additionally, 23% of the businesses indicated that they employ people on a seasonal basis. The seasonal level of employment ranged between one and twenty-five workers. On average, firms that use seasonal help hire slightly fewer than six workers each.

Table 6 – Number of Part-Time Employees*

Part-Time Employees	%
0	39
1 To 2	36
3 To 5	17
6 To 10	4
11 To 20	2
More Than 21	2
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ Employers reported that the largest proportion of their employees reside outside of Punta Gorda but within the Charlotte County. However a large proportion (44%) have most or many of their employees residing within the Punta Gorda City limits as defined in Table 7.

Table 7 – Employees' Residence (multiple answers possible)*

Residence	%
In the Surrounding County	56
In Punta Gorda	44
Outside the County, in Neighboring Areas	7
Other	1

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ While not generally recognized as a major factor in the closure of businesses in established areas or communities, many business establishments in fact shut down not as a result of market factors, but because they were independently owned or franchised, and the owners retire or become unable to operate the businesses any longer. There were no succession plans or "lineage" for the establishments. No other family members were available or chose to continue the operation. Thus, age is an important factor in assessing the potential for retention, reinvestment and entrepreneurship with all communities. It is noted that one-quarter (25%) of the owners are sixty years of age or older. An additional 34% are between fifty and fifty-nine.

Table 8 – Owners' Age*

Owners' Age	%
Less Than 30	6
30 To 49	35
50 To 59	34
60 Or Older	25
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ Of those owners 60 years of age or older, more than four out of every ten (44%) of the owners have identified a successor, while 26% have not and 30% are unsure. Thus, there is a reasonable level of need or opportunity for replacement entrepreneurs.

- ✓ For those businesses that reported being situated in their present location for less than 10 years, there were many reasons or factors provided for the selection of the location. The information contained in Table 9 indicates that the businesses took multiple factors into account when selecting their locations. The most important factor considered was vehicular traffic volume. However, many others also played a role in the decision making process.

Table 9 – Primary Factors in Selecting Current Location*

Factors	%
Vehicular Traffic Volume or Access	24
Opportunity to Rent	20
Proximity to Other Businesses	19
Character of Buildings and Area	17
Opportunity to Purchase Building	16
Proximity to Residential Activity	13
Proximity to Home	13
Pedestrian Traffic Volume	10
Obtained Business from Another	7
Proximity to Like Businesses	5
Available Labor Pool	1
Other Reasons	20

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ Importantly, a majority of 78% of all businesses reported that their location had met their expectations. Only 11% expressed disappointment. Those businesses that expressed disappointment cited difficulties related to a shortage of space and parking, inadequate signage, less than expected vehicular and pedestrian traffic, road work disruptions, and a lack of promotional activity.

Table 10 – Location Met Expectations*

Met Expectations	%
Yes	78
Uncertain	11
No	11
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ About four of every ten (38%) businesses reported an increase in sales or revenues over the past two to three years, while 34% reported a decline. About one in four had stable sales or revenues. The proportion showing increases and stable sales are particularly significant given the hurricane disruption.

Table 11 – Sales or Revenue Trends Over the Past Two or Three Years *

Sales / Revenues	%
Up	38
Down	34
About The Same	24
Uncertain	4
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ About two-thirds (64%) of the businesses rent the space that houses their establishment, while 36% are owners. The businesses ranged in size from an office of several hundred square feet to establishments of more than 130,000 square feet. On average, the businesses occupy 5,683 square feet, and each business occupies roughly 53% of the space within their respective buildings.

- ✓ Of those businesses that rent their space, 14% expressed an interest in acquiring the property, while 16% were uncertain. Seven in ten (70%) lacked any such interest.

- ✓ Slightly more than one in ten (15%) of the property owners have an interest in selling their property.

- ✓ One-half (51%) of those who owned the property reported that there exists an outstanding debt on the property.

- ✓ Almost four out of ten or 39% of the firms reported that they have experienced difficulties in attracting employees. In general, these firms described the problems as being a shortage of qualified applicants, particularly skilled workers; the high cost of housing or the shortage of affordable housing and the fact that small firms find it difficult to offer competitive wages and benefits.

Table 12 – Challenges of Growing Their Business*

Challenges	%
Insurance Costs	77
Finding Qualified Employees	42
Natural Disaster Disruptions	26
Laws and Regulations	26
Marketing or Promotion	21
Cost of Materials	15
Lack of Cohesive Business Community	11
Lack of Complementary Activity	11
Level of Competition	8
Transportation or Accessibility	8
Availability of Resources	6
Telecommunications Infrastructure	5
Other Infrastructure	4
Too Few Similar Businesses	3
Other	23

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ A variety of issues or challenges that most impact the ability to "grow" their business within the area were identified. As detailed in the adjacent table, insurance costs were clearly viewed as the single largest impediment. The second greatest perceived challenge was finding qualified employees, while laws and regulations were ranked alongside natural disasters. The "Other" category included comments related to taxes, particularly property taxes; slow growth; and a perceived negative business climate.

- ✓ Whether a result of healthy sales or other reasons, there is a significant number of businesses that need to expand their physical facilities in the near future. About one-half (50%) need to expand their physical facilities.

Table 13 – Need To Expand Or Contract*

Anticipated Change	%
Expand	50
No Change	48
Contract	2
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ Less than one-half (43%) of those establishments that require or desire physical change feel that their current location would be able to accommodate such a change. Another 27% are uncertain of the ability of the current site or building to meet their needs.

Table 14 – Able to Make Change at Current Location*

Able To Make Change	%
Yes	43
No	30
Uncertain	27
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ Irrespective of the type of investment, 45% of the businesses have “definite” plans for new “investments and improvements” or would like to make such improvements within the next two years. One in five (20%) of the businesses reported that they would have an interest in taking advantage of financial and/or technical assistance to expand, change focus, replace capital, or make interior or exterior improvements to their businesses.

Table 15 – Interested in Financial or Technical Assistance*

Interested	%
Yes	20
No	54
Uncertain	26
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Survey of Part and Full-time Residents

The second survey was associated with residents. The market is the driving force behind economic viability, whether it is commercial or service opportunity. Commercial opportunity is dependent upon the ability of the consumer to make purchases that result in the generation of revenues and sales. In an effort to understand the market opportunities, a survey of those residing full and part-time in and around Punta Gorda within zip codes 33947, 33948, 33950, 33952, 33953, 33954, 33955, 33980, 33981, 33982, 33983, and 34224 was conducted. The following summarizes key elements of this survey’s findings.

Market Penetration

One of the primary factors in defining long-term economic viability of a commercial area or composite of commercial activity is market penetration. Market penetration is defined by the share of households that conduct business in an area with regular frequency. The survey generated information on how often households generally went out to shop for food or any other retail commodity and how often they visited Punta Gorda commercial establishments.

- ✓ More than nine out of every ten (93%) of the households indicated that someone went shopping at a frequency of at least once each week.
- ✓ Almost eight out of ten reported that they or a member of their household visited Punta Gorda, at least occasionally.
- ✓ The frequency of shopping trips on the part of households that do utilize Punta Gorda commercial establishments is more than reasonable. Eight of ten (80%) of these households have someone who visits the area with a frequency of at least once each week. Thus, the average market penetration in the combined zip code areas is estimated at 63%.

Table 16 - Proportion Making Purchases, Obtaining Services or Conducting Other Business in Punta Gorda*

Frequent Punta Gorda	%
Yes	79
No	12
Uncertain	9
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Table 17 – The Frequency of Trips to Punta Gorda*

Frequency of Trips	%
More Than Once / Week	71
About Once / Week	9
Few Times / Month	7
Once / Month	9
Less Often	4
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Synergy

Viability of most commercial areas is dependent upon synergism, or the sharing of patronage. This entails going to more than one type of business and making multiple “stops” whether within one center or in more than one location and whether by foot or vehicle.

- ✓ About three-quarters (74%) of the households having someone who utilizes services in Punta Gorda indicated that there trips generally involved shopping and over one-half (54%) visit an eating or drinking establishment. As detailed in the adjacent table, the surveyed households indicated that they frequent Punta Gorda for a wide variety of reasons.
- ✓ 82% normally go to more than one establishment when conducting business or visiting the community.

Table 18 – Purpose of the Trip*

Purpose	%
Shop	74
Eat /Drink	54
Obtain Medical Service	42
Financial Services	36
Cultural Event, Activity, Facility	25
Government Services	25
Personal Service	19
Non-Medical Professional Service	19
Work	10
School / Class	8
Other	11

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Select Demographics

- ✓ 69% of the households contain two people; 19% consist of one person; and the remainder contains three or more members. The average surveyed household consists of two members.

- ✓ The presence of pre-school age children within households has a significant impact on many aspects of the family unit's housing needs, shopping patterns, incomes and ability to purchase goods and services. Essentially, only 3% of the households contain a child six years old or younger.

- ✓ Employment trends and patterns are also significant factors in demand. They impact not just the ability to purchase goods and services through income generation, but also times and frequencies of purchases, locations of purchases, etc. More than one-half of the households of both full and part-time residents do not contain a member working on a full-time basis, while 10% contain two or more members working full-time. Over one-quarter (29%) of the households contain at least one member working on a part-time basis. Four percent (4%) contain multiple members with part-time employment. About 2% of the households contain a member who is either unemployed or working on a part-time basis that desired full-time work.

Table 19 – Total Annual Household Income*

Income Category	%
$15,000 To $24,999	8
$25,000 To $44,999	15
$45,000 To $74,999	26
$75,000 To $99,999	22
$100,000 To $124,999	12
$125,000 To $149,999	10
$150,000 To $174,999	4
$175,000 To $199,999	2
$200,000 Or More	1
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ More than one-half of the primary income earners are sixty years old or older, while 9% are younger than forty. The average (mean) reported age of the primary income earners is roughly 60 years.

- ✓ While all other demographic and lifestyle factors play a role, the dominant factor in determining the ability to make purchases for many, if not most households is income. (In areas with large proportions of seniors, assets are also of significance.) The households report average annual income of roughly $73,560. This figure includes income derived from employment as well as pensions and other related retirement sources. More than one-fourth (28%) have incomes above $100,000. On the other hand, 8% have incomes below $25,000.

Spending

There are essentially three commodities upon which households spend much of their incomes and assets over time. These are food, transportation, and housing. The type and variety of each commodity often changes with income and other fiscal resources. Respondents were asked or given both general questions about spending, such as how often they shopped for various merchandise, and specific spending questions, such as the amount generally spent at a certain type of operation or on a certain product. The former and latter information is used in computer modeling when combined with industry averages and other data. The following is some of the salient information on full and part-time resident household spending.

- ✓ Food for home consumption is generally purchased at supermarkets or other facilities that have a supermarket component, such as Wal*Mart. Twenty-one percent (21%) spend less than $50 in a normal week on groceries. On the other hand, 38% spend $100 or more per week on groceries. It is estimated that the typical household spends almost $85 each week on groceries and related merchandise.

- ✓ The most popular store for groceries identified was easily Publix Super Markets. In fact, 70% of the respondents indicated that they shopped at a Publix, primarily those located in Punta Gorda, but also the Port Charlotte store and, to a lesser extent, stores in Gulf Cove and North Port. Roughly 10% shopped at Winn Dixie either in Punta Gorda, Port Charlotte, or North Port. One in ten (9%) of the households preferred Wal*Mart, with the Super Center in Port Charlotte being more popular than the Punta Gorda store. Other stores utilized included Sweetbay Supermarkets, Sam's Club and Sav-A-Lot.

Table 20 – Average Amount Spent on Groceries and Related Merchandise Per Week*

Amount Spent	%
Less Than $25	1
$25 To $34.99	5
$35 To $49.99	15
$50 To $74.99	25
$75 To $99.99	16
$100 To $124.99	24
$125 To $149.99	10
$150 or More	4
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ Other food spending is associated with lunch and dinner trips and entertainment activity often sought simultaneously with food or beverage consumption. As revealed in Table 21, about six out of ten (59%) households have someone that eats lunch out at the rate of at least once a week. Almost three-fourths (73%) eat lunch out at a frequency of at least several times per month.

Table 21 – Frequency Lunch Is Consumed Outside the Home*

Frequency	%
Few Times / Week	32
Once / Week	27
Twice / Month	14
Once / Month	10
4 To 9 Times / Year	1
Few Times / Year	4
Less Often	5
Never	7
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ Only 10% of the lunch trips are work related. If a person is employed, there is a greater chance that lunch trips are made near work than near home, unless lunch trips are not associated with work or the person employed happens to work at or near home.

- ✓ There are relationships between meal costs, spending and the level of service provided at food service establishments. Full-service restaurants are the most popular type of establishment for lunch followed by fast food establishments as found in Table 22. The "Other" category includes yacht and country clubs, the Elk's club, salad shops, cafes, coffee shops, Chinese food, and Jewish delicatessens.

Table 22 - Type of Establishment Most Often Associated With Lunch*

Type Of Establishment	%
Full-Service Restaurant	75
Fast Food Operation	8
All You Can Eat Buffet	4
Sub Shop	2
Other	11

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ The most popular restaurant identified was River City Grill followed by the Turtle Club Restaurant, Elena's South Restaurant, Pies and Plates, Panera Bread, Olive Garden, Bob Evans and the Wood Street Grill.

- ✓ Household members go out to dinner slightly more often than they go out for lunch. About two-thirds (63%) have dinner outside the home once a week or more, and 78% eat dinner out at least a few times per month.

- ✓ Full-service restaurants were easily the most popular choice for dinner outside of the home. More than nine in ten (93%) household members preferred full-service establishments, while only 1% preferred fast-food establishments.

✓ Most popular restaurants for dinner were River City Grill, Turtle Club Restaurant, Carrabbas Italian Grill, Red Lobster, Outback, Thai Café, Bob Evans, Village Oyster Bar, Olive Garden, La Esperanza, Benedetto's Steakhouse, Village Fish Market, Whiskey Creek Steakhouse, Mamma Pasta, and Sam Seltzer's Steakhouse.

✓ As shown in the following table, 27% of the households go to the movies at a frequency of at least once a month, while 31% rent videos at the same frequency. The former often is linked to food consumption.

Table 23 - Frequency of Entertainment, Recreational Activities (In %)*

Activity	Once/ Week	Twice Month	Once Month	4 to 9 Year	Few/ Year	Once Year	Less Often	Never
Go to the Movies	5	9	13	12	16	5	12	28
Bowling or Skating	-	-	1	2	2	5	5	85
Rent / Purchase Movies	16	9	6	4	12	1	15	37

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Sporting activity, both as an observer and participant, is an important component of household entertainment, leisure, and recreation often blended with food services, retail and other commercial activity. Table 24 provides information on activities in which at least one household member watches either in person or on television. The "other" category includes, but is not necessarily limited to European football, bicycling, boxing, gymnastics, and racquetball.

Table 24 – Sports in Which Household Member Has an Interest *

Sport	%
Football	70
Golf	51
Baseball / Softball	35
Tennis	29
Basketball	24
Fishing	18
Auto Racing	16
Hockey	14
Swimming	11
Ice / Roller Skating	11
Diving / Snorkeling	7
Soccer	5
Hunting	4
Miniature Golf	3
Bowling	2
Other	11

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

The following table provides information on various sporting activities in which at least one household member participates. The "Other" category includes bicycling, running, walking, water aerobics, canoeing, boating, sailing, kayaking, water skiing, racquetball, shuffle board, bocce, and fitness club activities.

Table 25 – Event in Which Household Members Participates*

Sport	%
Golf	50
Swimming	40
Fishing	39
Diving / Snorkeling	18
Tennis	17
Basketball	3
Miniature Golf	3
Soccer	3
Bowling	2
Auto Racing	2
Baseball / Softball	2
Football	2
Hunting	2
Ice /roller skating	2
Other	38

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Transportation is the second major household expenditure reviewed. It is noted that:

✓ All but 1% of the households own or lease a personal vehicle, while 70% have more than one vehicle. On average, each household owns or leases 1.95 personal vehicles.

Table 26 – Number of Personal Vehicles Owned or Leased*

Number Owned/Leased	%
0	1
1	29
2	53
3	8
4 Or More	9
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

The third expenditure is housing. Factors associated with housing follow.

✓ Only about 4% of the respondents indicated that they were born within the State of Florida. The vast majority (88%) were born elsewhere in the United States, while 8% were foreign born. The foreign born residents include people from Canada, continental Europe, Great Britain, and Israel. Those Americans born outside of Florida identified thirty-two different states along with the District of Columbia as their place of birth. Fourteen percent (14%) came from New York, and 11% came from Pennsylvania. The “Other” category below includes, Missouri, Kentucky, California, Wisconsin, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, Nebraska, Louisiana, Maine, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Idaho, and the District of Columbia.

Table 27 – State of Birth*

State	%
New York	14
Pennsylvania	11
Michigan	8
New Jersey	8
Illinois	7
Ohio	6
Indiana	4
Minnesota	4
Connecticut	4
Rhode Island	3
Maryland	3
Massachusetts	3
Virginia	2
West Virginia	2
Texas	2
Other	19
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ About one-fourth of those surveyed lived in the Punta Gorda area part-time. 92% spend at least six months of the year in their Florida residence.

Table 28 – Number of Months in Florida*

Number Of Months	%
Seven or More	42
About Six	50
3 To 5 Months	4
Less Time	4
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Spending on housing over time is dependent upon a number of factors. One of those factors is the ownership pattern. In general and historically, mortgages have a tendency to increase at a slower pace, if at all, than do payments for rent.

- ✓ A significant majority of 98% of the households reported that they owned rather than rent their residences. Seventeen percent (17%) of those who own their local residence live within a condominium unit.

- ✓ The households reported residing at their current address for periods of time ranging from less than two years to more than twenty. Almost one in ten (8%) have lived at the same address for more than twenty years; and one-third (34%) have resided at the same location for ten years or more. (Certain surveys have a tendency to understate those living at a current address for less than two years due to the length of time it takes to list the number in telephone directories.) It is estimated that the average household has resided at their current address for approximately eight and one-half years.

Table 29 – Number of Years Living at the Address*

Number Of Years	%
Two Or Less	12
3 Or 4	22
5 To 9	32
10 To 19	26
20 Or More	8
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- ✓ As delineated in Table 30, a significant number of households (40%) do not have a monthly mortgage or rent payment. This finding is related to the high degree of homeownership and the noted age of some of primary income earners. The average monthly housing cost is estimated to be approximately $1,460 for the households with a monthly rent or mortgage payment.

Table 30 – Amount Spent on Rent or Mortgage Per Month*

Rent/Mortgage	%
None	40
Less Than $500	6
$500 To $749	3
$750 To $999	15
$1,000 To $1,249	4
$1,250 To $1,499	7
$1,500 To $1,999	12
$2,000 To $2,499	4
$2,500 To $2,999	5
$3,000 Or More	4
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

The survey also inquired about other purchases. The following provides information on clothing or apparel. (Apparel is essentially a surrogate for general merchandise and other “shopper” goods.)

- ✓ Bealls Department Stores and Outlets were most often identified as the place at which people purchase apparel. The most popular store was Bealls Department store in the Port Charlotte Town Center, followed by the Bealls Outlet in Punta Gorda. Dillard’s was the second most popular choice followed by Macy’s, both of which are located in the Port Charlotte Town Center. Anthony’s Inc. in Punta Gorda ranked ahead of Wal*Mart, Sears, Penney’s, Marshall’s, and K Mart.

- ✓ 28% of the households make on-line purchases on a monthly basis.

Table 31 – Frequency of On-Line Purchases*

Frequency	%
Few Times / Week	2
Once / Week	5
Twice / Month	10
Once / Month	11
4 To 9 Times / Year	12
Few Times / Year	15
Less Often	14
Never	31
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ 11% use catalogs at the same frequency.

Downtown Punta Gorda

Attention was also paid to downtown Punta Gorda.

✓ Those that do frequent Punta Gorda were asked what they liked most about the City's downtown area. The most frequently identified characteristic was the ambiance or small town charm. Other popular characteristics identified included:

- Its convenience. It is easy to get to; and once there, it is easy to get around.

Table 32 – Frequency of Catalog Purchases*

Frequency	%
Few Times / Week	1
Once / Week	1
Twice / Month	5
Once / Month	4
4 To 9 Times / Year	10
Few Times / Year	25
Less Often	20
Never	34
Total	100

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

- Dining choices including River City Grill, the Turtle Club, and Elena's.
- Shopping, particularly the quality of service.
- The waterfront.
- Gilchrist Park.
- The lack of high-rise buildings.

(It is also important to note that a reasonable number of people made very positive comments regarding the Punta Gorda's future and its potential to have a "charming city center.")

✓ The most frequently identified complaint related to the rebuilding or redevelopment taking place. A number of respondents disliked the pace of the rebuilding, feeling that it was too slow. Others feel that it is too ambitious and the downtown was in danger of losing its small town charm and ambiance. Other articulated dislikes included:

- The retail sector lacking a full compliment of stores and variety.
- The vacant, unfinished buildings and empty lots.
- Traffic problems, particularly the one-way streets.
- Parking.

✓ New establishments desired by residents include additional restaurant activity along with waterfront cafes, coffee and pastry shops, bars and lounges, ice cream and yogurt, and fast food. Movie theaters and new hotels were suggested with relative frequency along with tourist oriented establishments. Other suggestions included:

- Greater promotion of artistic events.
- Open air arts and crafts fairs.
- Outdoor concerts at the park or at a new permanent facility.
- Holiday events such as an old-fashioned Christmas festival.
- Boat cab service, bike rentals, and skateboarding facilities.

✓ Those households which had earlier indicated that they did not utilize the City's establishments identified the primary reasons they did not frequent the downtown area. While distance was a factor, it was secondary to the belief that there were not enough stores, shops, restaurants, or things to do in general. A limited number of people feel that traffic and parking were obstacles to their use of downtown Punta Gorda.

Analyses

There were several key analyses conducted as part of the process that assisted in defining opportunities for Punta Gorda and areas in Charlotte County that surround it. The following are synopses of several of these.

Comparative Assessment

A comparative assessment was performed as one of the primary means of identifying business "gaps" and opportunities. The U.S. Census Bureau provides annual information on Business Patterns throughout the nation in three different geographical formats. These are by counties, zip codes, and Metropolitan Statistical Areas. This analysis includes assessments of local business patterns on both a county level and by zip code. The identified business gaps defined in this process may or may not be appropriate for Punta Gorda or Charlotte County for a variety of reasons, including the nature of operations and scale.

Methodology

The methodology employed for the comparative assessments is identical for the analysis at both levels. The following describes that methodology for the county level comparison.

The assessment requires comparing Charlotte County's business structure to that associated with communities that are similar. In determining communities for which the comparison can be made, the following criteria were used.

- ✓ The population size and household numbers had to be similar to those associated with Charlotte County, since demand for goods and services are ultimately generally dependent upon the size of the market served.
- ✓ The selected counties all have median household incomes that are comparable to Charlotte County's reported incomes.
- ✓ All of the selected counties are adjacent to significant bodies of water and all have substantial visitor based or tourist activity.
- ✓ Transportation access, particularly vehicle access, had to be similar.

Based on these and some additional criteria, seven counties were identified for which the comparison in economic structures was made. These seven counties are:

Hernando County, Florida
Baldwin County, Alabama
Berkeley County, South Carolina
New Hanover County, North Carolina
Sussex County, Delaware
Berrien County, Michigan
Whatcom County, Washington

It is noted that all population and household estimates upon which the comparisons are made were derived from the same sources for comparability. Those sources are 2000 and 2005 U.S. Census Bureau data. Also for consistency purposes, a single source was employed to define the business structure and activity within all areas. That source was the U.S. Census Bureau's "2004 County Business Patterns." (It is recognized that Hurricane Charley may have diminished the comparable number of businesses in Charlotte County. However, this contributes to the conservative or underestimation of gaps and opportunities represented, not any overestimation.)

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) was introduced in 1997 as a more effective business classification system that identifies and groups establishments according to the activities in which they are primarily engaged. It replaced the older Standard Industry Classification (SIC) coding system that was first employed in 1938. NAICS identifies and groups 1,170 different types of "industries" or establishments into twenty major industry sectors, ranging from Agriculture (Sector 11) to Public Administration (Sector 92). This analysis examined and extracted data from eleven of the twenty sectors. These eleven sectors are:

- ✓ Retail Trade (Sector 44-45): Motor vehicle and parts, furniture and home furnishings, electronics and appliances, building material and garden equipment and supplies, grocery and beverage, health and personal care, gasoline stations, clothing and accessories, sports, hobby, books and music, general merchandise and miscellaneous store retailers.

- ✓ Information (Sector 51): Publishing, motion picture and sound recording and exhibition, broadcasting and telecommunications, information services and data processing.

- ✓ Finance and Insurance (Sector 52): Monetary authorities, credit intermediation, securities, commodities, insurance, funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles.

- ✓ Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (Sector 53): Real estate, rental centers and leasing services.

- ✓ Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (Sector 54): Lawyers, accountants, engineers, computer services, veterinary services, etc.

- ✓ Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services (Sector 56): Administrative and facilities support services, employment and business support services, travel arrangements, investigative and security systems and other business services.

- ✓ Educational Services (Sector 61): Public sector schools, business, technical, trade schools and instruction.

- ✓ Health Care and Social Assistance (Sector 62): Ambulatory health care services, hospitals, nursing and residential care facilities and social assistance.

- ✓ Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (Sector 71): Performing arts, spectator sports, museums, historical sites, amusement, gambling and recreation industries.

- ✓ Accommodation and Food Services (Sector 72): Accommodations, food service and drinking places.

- ✓ Other Services (Sector 81): Repair and maintenance, personal and laundry services, and religious, grant making, civic and professional organizations.

Under-represented Businesses at the County Level

Under-represented "industries" were then defined as those where Charlotte County had a lesser number of businesses than five or more of the other seven counties. Thus, the number of businesses in Charlotte County compared to the other communities was below what might be expected given the similarities in communities. It is also noted that in some cases, the differences are great, or no businesses in the under-represented categories were identified in Charlotte County. Once again, under-representation does not mean that the identified categories of businesses are desirable for Charlotte County or Punta Gorda.

Sixty-nine (69) under-represented "industries" are identified.

Table 33 – Under-represented Businesses at the County Level*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
441110	New Car Dealers
441120	Used Car Dealers
441310	Automotive Parts and Accessories Stores
443112	Radio, Television, and Other Electronics Stores
444110	Home Centers
444130	Hardware Stores
444220	Nursery, Garden Center, and Farm Supply Stores
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores
445291	Baked Goods Stores
445310	Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores
446110	Pharmacies and Drug Stores
447110	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores
447190	Other Gasoline Stations
448110	Men's Clothing Stores
451110	Sporting Goods Stores
453910	Pet and Pet Supplies Stores
454312	Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Bottled Gas) Dealers
511110	Newspaper Publishers
511120	Periodical Publishers
512191	Teleproduction and Other Postproduction Services
517110	Wired Telecommunications carriers
517310	Telecommunications Resellers
522130	Credit Unions
522220	Sales Financing
524126	Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers
531110	Lessors of Residential Buildings and Dwellings
531120	Lessors of Nonresidential Buildings (except Mini-warehouses
532210	Consumer Electronics and Appliance Rental
532230	Video Tape and Disc Rental

Table 33 Continued – Under-represented Businesses at the County Level*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
532310	General Rental Centers
541211	Offices of Certified Public Accountants
541320	Landscape Architectural Services
541380	Testing Laboratories
541612	Human Resources and Executive Search Consulting Services
541614	Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services
541620	Environmental Consulting Services
541810	Advertising Agencies
561720	Janitorial Services
562910	Remediation Services
611110	Elementary and Secondary Schools
611610	Fine Arts Schools
623210	Residential Mental Retardation Facilities
624110	Child and Youth Services
624410	Child Day Care Services
712110	Museums
712130	Zoos and Botanical Gardens
713110	Amusement and Theme Parks
713910	Golf Courses and Country Clubs
713940	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
713950	Bowling Centers
721110	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels
721191	Bed-and-Breakfast Inns
722110	Full-Service Restaurants
722111	Limited-Service Restaurants
722213	Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars
811111	General Automotive Repair
811121	Automotive Body, Paint, and Interior Repair and Maintenance
811122	Automotive Glass Replacement Shops
811192	Car Washes
811211	Consumer Electronics Repair and Maintenance (R & M)
811310	Commercial & Industrial Machinery & Equip. (except Auto & Electronic) R & M
811411	Home & Garden Equipment Repair & Maintenance
811420	Reupholstery and Furniture Repair

Table 33 Continued – Under-represented Businesses at the County Level*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
812320	Dry-cleaning and Laundry Services (except Coin-Operated)
812922	One-Hour Photofinishing
813110	Religious Organizations
813410	Civic and Social Organizations
813910	Business Associations
813930	Labor Unions and Similar Labor Organizations

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

It is noted that:

- ✓ Hotels and other like transient accommodations are under-represented.
- ✓ Numerous retail operations, both generally associated with large box stores or traditional downtowns, are identified.
- ✓ Restaurants and other food and beverage related operations are identified.

Over-represented at the County Level

Over-represented “industries” or business categories are defined as those where Charlotte County had a greater number of businesses than at least five of the other seven counties. Thus, the number of businesses in Charlotte County compared to the other counties was above what might be expected. Forty-three (43) are identified.

It is noted that over-representation could be a sign of niche activity that should be fostered. It is not necessarily a negative. However, for retail functions, it can be a predictor of future market issues for select businesses. The over-representation at this level appears to be directly correlated to a relative degree of affluence coupled with the large proportion of seniors and their medical needs.

The following are some of the “businesses” identified as being over-represented in Charlotte County.

Table 34 – Over-represented Businesses at the County Level*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
442291	Window Treatment Stores
444120	Paint and Wallpaper Stores
446191	Food (Health) Supplement Stores
452112	Discount Department Stores
454113	Mail Order Houses

Table 34 Continued – Over-represented Businesses at the County Level*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
518210	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services
522292	Real Estate Credit
523930	Investment Advice
524127	Direct Title Insurance Carriers
524291	Claims Adjusting
524292	Third Party Administration of Insurance and Pension Funds
531210	Offices of Real Estate Agents and Brokers
541191	Title Abstract and Settlement Offices
541310	Architectural Services
541330	Engineering Services
541340	Drafting Services
561431	Private Mail Centers
561510	Travel Agencies
561710	Exterminating and Pest Control Services
561730	Landscaping Services
562991	Septic Tank and Related Services
611430	Professional and Management Development Training
621111	Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)
621391	Offices of Podiatrists
621492	Kidney Dialysis Centers
621512	Diagnostic Imaging Centers
621610	Home Health Care Services
621991	Blood and Organ Banks
623110	Nursing Care Facilities
623311	Continuing Care Retirement Communities
722212	Cafeterias
812112	Beauty Salons
812113	Nail Salons

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Zip Code 33950

As noted, a second set of comparisons was made. The business structure of zip code tabulation area (ZCTA) 33950, which encompasses much of the City of Punta Gorda, was compared to that associated with other zip code tabulation areas that are “similar.” Once again, the most recent business census data available was utilized. In determining communities for which the comparison can be made, the following criteria were used:

- ✓ The selected areas all have population size and household numbers similar to those associated with ZCTA 33950.
- ✓ The selected areas all have median household incomes that are comparable to ZCTA 33950 reported incomes.
- ✓ All of the selected communities are located adjacent to significant bodies of water and all have substantial visitor based or tourist activity.
- ✓ Transportation access was required to be essentially the same.
- ✓ The area contained a central city.

Based on the criteria, eight cities defined by zip code tabulation areas were identified for which the comparison in economic structures was made. These eight communities are:

02536 Teaticket, Massachusetts
04005 Biddeford, Maine
04072 Saco, Maine
10566 Peekskill, New York
32137 Palm Coast, Florida
36532 Fairhope, Alabama
49707 Alpena, Michigan
98362 Port Angeles, Washington

Under-represented at the Zip Code Level

Under-represented “industries” were then defined as those where the ZCTA 33950 had a lesser number of businesses than at least five of the other eight communities. Thus, the number of businesses in ZCTA 33950 compared to the other communities was below what might be expected. Once again, under-representation does not mean that the identified categories of businesses are desirable for the City Punta Gorda.

The following are the businesses identified as being under-represented in the Zip Code Tabulation Area 33950. Thirty-nine (39) are identified. Please note that two uses, Landscaping Services (NAICS 561730) and Home Health Care Services (621610) appear as under-represented in the zip code comparison but over-represented in the previous comparisons of counties.

Table 35 – Under-represented Businesses at the Zip Code Level*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
441110	New Car Dealers
442210	Floor Covering Stores
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores
445120	Convenience Stores
448210	Shoe Stores
448310	Jewelry Stores
451110	Sporting Goods Stores
451140	Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores

Table 35 Continued – Under-represented Businesses at the Zip Code Level*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
453210	Office Supplies and Stationery Stores
453910	Pet and Pet Supplies Stores
454312	Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Bottled Gas) Dealers
518111	Internet Service Providers
522120	Savings Institutions
531120	Lessors of Nonresidential Buildings (except Mini-warehouses)
531311	Residential Property Managers
541320	Landscape Architectural Services
541370	Surveying and Mapping (except Geophysical) Services
541810	Advertising Agencies
541921	Photography Studios, Portrait
561320	Temporary Help Services
561612	Security Guards and Patrol Services
561720	Janitorial Services
561730	Landscape Services
621330	Offices of Mental Health Practitioners (except Physicians)
621420	Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Centers
621610	Home Health Care Services
623210	Residential Mental Retardation Facilities
623312	Homes for the Elderly
624110	Child and Youth Services
624120	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
624410	Child Day Care Services
713910	Golf Courses and Country Clubs
713950	Bowling Centers
721110	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels
722310	Food Service Contractors
722310	Caterers
811121	Automotive Body, Paint, and Interior Repair and Maintenance (R & M)
811310	Commercial & Industrial Machinery & Equip. (except Auto & Electronic) R & M
813312	Environment, Conservation, and Wildlife Organizations

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Over-represented at the Zip Code Level

Over-represented “industries” or business categories are defined as those where the ZCTA 33950 had a greater number of businesses than at least five of the other eight communities.

It should be pointed out that due to the differences in geography, there are only four uses that appear as under-represented in the county comparison but over-represented in the zip code comparison. These uses are: Automobile Parts and Accessories Stores (441310), Nursery, Garden Center, and Farm Supply Stores (444220), Video Tape and Disc Rental (532230), and Religious Organizations (813110). The following are the businesses identified as being over-represented within ZCTA 33950. Thirty-two (32) are identified.

Table 36 – Over-represented Businesses at the Zip Code Level*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
441310	Automotive Parts and Accessories Stores
443120	Computer and Software Stores
444220	Nursery, Garden Center & Farm Supply Stores
446191	Food (Health) Supplement Stores
448120	Women's Clothing Stores
448140	Family Clothing Stores
453220	Gift, Novelty, and Souvenir Stores
453991	Tobacco Stores
511130	Book Publishers
522110	Commercial Banking
522310	Mortgage and Non-Mortgage Loan Brokers
523120	Securities Brokerage
531190	Lessors of Other Real Estate Property
531210	Offices of Real Estate Agents & Brokers
531320	Offices of Real Estate Appraisers
532230	Video Tape and Disc Rental
532412	Construction, Mining, and Forestry Machinery & Equipment Rental and Leasing
541213	Tax Preparation Services
541410	Interior Design Services
541511	Custom Computer Programming Services
541512	Computer Systems Design Services
541611	Administration, Management, & General Management Consulting Services
541613	Marketing Consulting Services
561110	Office Administrative Services
561510	Travel Agencies
562991	Septic Tank and Related Services
621111	Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)
711510	Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers
722410	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)
812112	Beauty Salons
812113	Nail Salons
813110	Religious Organizations

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Under-represented by County and City/Zip Code

A total of seventeen (17) "industries" or business uses are identified as being under-represented on both the county level and the city/zip code level. These industries or uses are identified in Table 37.

Table 37 – Under-represented at Both the County and City/Zip Code Levels*

NAICS Code	Type of Business
441110	New Car Dealers
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores
451110	Sporting Goods Stores
453910	Pet and Pet Supplies Stores
454312	Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Bottled Gas) Dealers
531120	Lessors of Nonresidential Buildings (except Mini-warehouses)
541320	Landscape Architectural Services
541810	Advertising Agencies
561720	Janitorial Services
623210	Residential Mental Retardation Facilities
624110	Child and Youth Services
624410	Child Day Care Services
713910	Golf Courses and Country Clubs
713950	Bowling Centers
721110	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels
811121	Automotive Body, Paint, and Interior Repair and Maintenance (R & M)
811310	Commercial & Industrial Machinery & Equip. (except Auto & Electronic) R & M

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Demand Forecast

In an effort to define opportunities specifically for commercial activity for Punta Gorda and areas of Charlotte County that surround it, forecasting of demand for goods and services was performed. Demand for goods and services for any area is based on the market's ability to purchase the goods or services. One of the primary sources, but not the only source of information used to define spending patterns for the retail and related services demand components was the telephone survey. The following represents a review of demand for commercial activity. It is noted that:

- ✓ All estimates are in constant dollars. Inflation has been excluded from all estimates of future demand and associated sales or revenues.

Market Areas

- ✓ There are essentially two general markets from which Punta Gorda and surrounding areas draw. The two markets are: part and full-time residents of and visitors to Charlotte County, and residents of and visitors to surrounding areas. It is noted that employees of offices and other businesses are most often subsets of these markets, generally with higher market penetration capabilities.

Retail & Related Services Sales

✓ Aggregate retail goods and related services sales generated by the primary market, consisting of residents of Charlotte County, are estimated at about $2.25 billion in 2007. Aggregate retail sales figures represent a compilation of sales associated with ten major categories. The ten major categories of retail goods and related services demand are:

- Food, such as groceries and related merchandise generally purchased for home preparation or consumption.
- Eating and drinking, consisting of prepared food and beverages generally consumed on the premises or carried to another location.
- General merchandise, including variety stores, department stores and large value oriented retail operators.
- Furniture and accessories, including appliances and home furnishings.
- Transportation and utilities, including the sale of new and used automotive and other personal vehicles and parts and basic utilities for the home.
- Drugstores, including those specializing in health and beauty aids or pharmaceuticals.
- Apparel and accessories.
- Hardware and building materials, including traditional hardware stores and garden and home improvement centers.
- Auto services, including gasoline and vehicle repair.
- Miscellaneous, including a plethora of retail goods and services ranging from florists to paper goods.

✓ Some operations fall into more than one category. For example, many of the general merchandisers associated with the "big box stores," such as Wal*Mart, have more or less traditional supermarket components within their operations.

✓ Table 38 contains a breakdown of the estimated 2007 retail and related services sales for Charlotte County residents.

Table 38 – Estimated Aggregate Retail and Related Services Sales Associated with Residents of Charlotte County for 2007*

Category	2007 Sales
Food	$347,336,000
Eat/Drink	240,256,000
General Merchandise	382,880,000
Furniture	132,051,000
Transportation & Utilities	378,381,000
Drugstore	140,374,000
Apparel	74,011,000
Hardware	216,410,000
Vehicle Service	208,087,000
Miscellaneous	129,801,000
TOTAL	$2,249,588,000

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ From a public policy perspective, growth opportunities are critical. By focusing on opportunities that result from growth and assuming reasonable competitive positions, no sales or revenues are extracted from existing operations to create or attract new business or businesses. Thus and theoretically, expansions or new businesses do not come at the expense of existing ones.

✓ As a result of continued growth in households and housing units (albeit slower growth over the next few years than the most recent years), aggregate retail and related service sales are expected to increase by $398 million between 2007 and 2015. Growth is expected to generate increased sales of $620 million between 2007 and 2020.

Table 39 – Estimated Retail and Related Services Sales Associated with
Residents of Charlotte County for 2007 and Changes from 2007 to 2015 and 2007 to 2020*

Category	2007 Sales	2007-2015 Sales	2007-2020 Sales
Food	$347,336,000	$61,394,000	$95,746,000
Eat/Drink	240,256,000	42,467,000	66,228,000
General Merchandise	382,880,000	67,677,000	105,544,000
Furniture	132,051,000	23,341,000	36,401,000
Transportation & Utilities	378,381,000	66,882,000	104,304,000
Drugstore	140,374,000	24,812,000	38,695,000
Apparel	74,011,000	13,082,000	20,402,000
Hardware	216,410,000	38,252,000	59,655,000
Vehicle Service	208,087,000	36,781,000	57,361,000
Miscellaneous	129,801,000	22,943,000	35,781,000
TOTAL	$2,249,588,000	$397,631,000	$620,116,000

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ There are sub-categories, generally associated with particular types of businesses, found within each retail category. While not necessarily the largest in terms of sales, the miscellaneous category contains more sub-categories or types of establishments than any other major retail category. It is noted that irrespective of the strength, location factors, mass, or other issues, no community is able to attract all of the sales generated in a primary market area. As examples, people employed elsewhere often spend resources at or near their places of employment. At other times, people make visits and spend money with relatives and friends living elsewhere or while on vacations.

✓ The estimated retail and related services sales for 2007 and the change from 2007 to 2015 and 2015 and 2020 by sub-categories or types of businesses generated by full and part-time residents of the primary market or Charlotte County are found in Table 40 on the page that follows.

Supportable Space

Retail sales and related services revenues are converted to supportable space through the application of sales or revenue productivity levels. A sales or revenue productivity level is the level of sales or revenues per square foot at which it is assumed that the business will generate sufficient revenue to cover all costs of operation as well as provide a reasonable return on investment for the ownership or operating entity.

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Table 40 – Estimated Retail and Related Services Sales Associated with Residents of Charlotte County for 2007 and Changes from 2007 to 2015 and 2007 to 2020 By Sub-categories or Types of Businesses*

Sub-category	2007 Sales	2007-2015 Sales	2007-2020 Sales
Food	347,336,000	$61,394,000	$95,746,000
Supermarkets	290,025,560	51,263,990	79,947,910
Independents	27,786,880	4,911,520	7,659,680
Bakeries	7,641,392	1,350,668	2,106,412
Dairies	4,515,368	798,122	1,244,698
Others	17,366,800	3,069,700	4,787,300
Eat/Drink	240,256,000	42,467,000	66,228,000
General Merchandise	382,880,000	67,677,000	105,544,000
Dept. Stores	139,751,200	24,702,105	38,523,560
Variety Stores	27,567,360	4,872,744	7,599,168
Jewelry	26,418,720	4,669,713	7,282,536
Sporting Goods/Toys	41,733,920	7,376,793	11,504,296
Discount Dept.	139,368,320	24,634,428	38,418,016
Antiques, etc.	1,914,400	338,385	527,720
Others	6,126,080	1,082,832	1,688,704
Furniture	132,051,000	23,341,000	36,401,000
Furniture	31,164,036	5,508,476	8,590,636
Home Furnishings	45,953,748	8,122,668	12,667,548
Store/Office Equip.	28,787,118	5,088,338	7,935,418
Music Instr./Suppl.	5,678,193	1,003,663	1,565,243
Radios,TV, etc.	20,467,905	3,617,855	5,642,155
Transportation & Utilities	378,381,000	66,882,000	104,304,000
New/Used Vehicles	132,433,350	23,408,700	36,506,400
Tires, Batt., Prts.	166,866,021	29,494,962	45,998,064
Marine Sales/Rentals	20,054,193	3,544,746	5,528,112
Auto/Truck Rentals	59,027,436	10,433,592	16,271,424
Drugstore	140,374,000	24,812,000	38,695,000
Apparel	74,011,000	13,082,000	20,402,000
Men's and Boy's	9,695,441	1,713,742	2,672,662
Women's and Girl's	24,571,652	4,343,224	6,773,464
Infants	1,554,231	274,722	428,442
Family	20,575,058	3,636,796	5,671,756
Shoes	15,468,299	2,734,138	4,264,018
Jeans/Leather	296,044	52,328	81,608
Tailors/Uniforms	1,332,198	235,476	367,236
Others	518,077	91,574	142,814
Hardware	216,410,000	38,252,000	59,655,000
Hardware	104,742,440	18,513,968	28,873,020
Lawn/Seed/Fertil.	4,111,790	726,788	1,133,445
Others	107,555,770	19,011,244	29,648,535
Vehicle Service	208,087,000	36,781,000	57,361,000
Gasoline	70,749,580	12,505,540	19,502,740
Garage, Repairs	137,337,420	24,275,460	37,858,260
Miscellaneous	129,801,000	22,943,000	35,781,000
Advert. Signs, etc.	2,076,816	367,088	572,496
Barber/Beauty shop	7,917,861	1,399,523	2,182,641
Book Stores	5,970,846	1,055,378	1,645,926
Bowling	2,985,423	527,689	822,963
Cig./Tobacco Dealer	908,607	160,601	250,467
Dent./Physician Lab	5,192,040	917,720	1,431,240
Florist/Nurseries	9,735,075	1,720,725	2,683,575
Laundry, Dry Clean	4,413,234	780,062	1,216,554
Optical Goods/Opt.	3,115,224	550,632	858,744
Photo Sup./Photog.	8,956,269	1,583,067	2,468,889
Printing	10,513,881	1,858,383	2,898,261
Paper/Paper Prod.	5,581,443	986,549	1,538,583
Gifts/Cards/Novel.	18,561,543	3,280,849	5,116,683
Newsstands	1,038,408	183,544	286,248
Video Rent/Sales	16,874,130	2,982,590	4,651,530
Others	25,960,200	4,588,600	7,156,200
TOTAL	$2,249,587,000	$397,631,000	$ 620,117,000

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ As might be expected, sales or revenue productivity levels vary, sometimes greatly, for each sub-category, type of business operation, or store-type. The productivity levels vary from very low figures for bowling centers to hundreds of dollars for other users. Supportable space is derived by dividing the amount of sales by sales productivity levels.

✓ Table 41 contains the estimates of supportable square feet of space by category for the primary market component of demand and the anticipated change for the selected subsequent periods form 2007 to 2015 and 2007 to 2020. It is noted that:

- The increase in total anticipated supportable space between 2007 and 2015 is significant, at more than 1.1 million square feet.

- Between 2007 and 2020, the total supportable space will increase by about 1.8 million square feet.

- Supportable general merchandise, furniture and other shopper goods space will increase by more than 500,000 square feet.

Table 41 – Estimated Retail and Related Services Supportable Space Associated with Residents of Charlotte County for 2007 and Changes from 2007 to 2015 and 2007 to 2020*

Category	2007	2007-2015 Space	2007-2020 Space
Food	648,669	114,657	178,810
Eat/Drink	600,640	106,168	165,570
General Merchandise	1,248,917	220,755	344,275
Furniture	414,653	73,293	114,302
Transportation & Utilities	1,101,038	194,618	303,511
Drugstore	280,748	49,624	77,390
Apparel	230,303	40,706	63,486
Hardware	919,954	162,609	253,592
Vehicle Service	506,584	89,543	139,644
Miscellaneous	501,332	88,613	138,198
TOTAL	6,452,838	1,140,586	1,778,778

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ It is also once again noted that no one area is capable of attracting all sales and related supportable space from any market, irrespective of the dominance and viability of that area.

✓ The estimated retail and related services supportable space for 2007 and the change from 2007 to 2015 and 2015 to 2020 by sub-categories or types of businesses generated by full and part-time residents of the primary market or Charlotte County are found in Table 42 on the page that follows.

Table 42 – Estimated Retail and Related Services Supportable Space Associated with Residents of Charlotte County for 2007 and Changes from 2007 to 2015 and 2007 to 2020 By Sub-categories or Types of Businesses*

Sub-category	2007 Space	2007-2015 Space	2007-2020 Space
Food	648,669	114,657	178,810
Supermarkets	491,569	86,888	135,505
Independents	69,467	12,279	19,149
Bakeries	25,471	4,502	7,021
Dairies	12,543	2,217	3,457
Others	49,619	8,771	13,678
Eat/Drink	600,640	106,168	165,570
General Merchandise	1,248,917	220,755	344,275
Dept. Stores	465,837	82,340	128,412
Variety Stores	106,028	18,741	29,228
Jewelry	37,209	6,577	10,257
Sporting Goods/Toys	139,113	24,589	38,348
Discount Dept.	464,561	82,115	128,060
Antiques, etc.	8,323	1,471	2,294
Others	27,846	4,922	7,676
Furniture	414,653	73,293	114,302
Furniture	100,529	17,769	27,712
Home Furnishings	131,296	23,208	36,193
Store/Office Equip.	95,957	16,961	26,451
Music Instr./Suppl.	28,391	5,018	7,826
Radios,TV, etc.	58,480	10,337	16,120
Transportation & Utilities	1,101,038	194,618	303,511
New/Used Vehicles	331,083	58,522	91,266
Tires, Batt., Prts.	556,220	98,317	153,327
Marine Sales/Rentals	54,201	9,580	14,941
Auto/Truck Rentals	159,534	28,199	43,977
Drugstore	280,748	49,624	77,390
Apparel	230,303	40,706	63,486
Men's and Boy's	24,239	4,284	6,682
Women's and Girl's	66,410	11,738	18,307
Infants	5,181	916	1,428
Family	68,584	12,123	18,906
Shoes	56,248	9,942	15,506
Jeans/Leather	987	174	272
Tailors/Uniforms	6,661	1,177	1,836
Others	1,993	352	549
Hardware	919,954	162,609	253,592
Hardware	418,970	74,056	115,492
Lawn/Seed/Fertil.	12,094	2,138	3,334
Others	488,890	86,415	134,766
Vehicle Service	506,584	89,543	139,644
Gasoline	48,793	8,625	13,450
Garage, Repairs	457,791	80,918	126,194
Miscellaneous	501,332	88,613	138,198
Advert. Signs, etc.	7,552	1,335	2,082
Barber/Beauty shop	39,589	6,998	10,913
Book Stores	16,137	2,852	4,448
Bowling	29,854	5,277	8,230
Cig./Tobacco Dealer	1,817	321	501
Dent./Physician Lab	15,976	2,824	4,404
Florist/Nurseries	22,906	4,049	6,314
Laundry, Dry Clean	14,711	2,600	4,055
Optical Goods/Opt.	8,901	1,573	2,454
Photo Sup./Photog.	25,589	4,523	7,054
Printing	38,232	6,758	10,539
Paper/Paper Prod.	27,907	4,933	7,693
Gifts/Cards/Novel.	61,872	10,936	17,056
Newsstands	2,077	367	572
Video Rent/Sales	84,371	14,913	23,258
Others	103,841	18,354	28,625
TOTAL	6,452,838	1,140,586	1,778,778

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ The secondary markets include full and part-time residents of both the Sarasota and Naples general areas. While the ability to attract from these areas is significantly below the ability to attract from Charlotte County residents, it is nonetheless significant markets for the "right products."

✓ The following tables (43 and 44) contain estimates of supportable space by category associated with only the anticipated market penetration levels for both the Sarasota and Naples areas. These figures reflect that which could be supported in Punta Gorda from those markets, reflecting only a small portion of the potential growth in those markets. These tables assume a constant market penetration rate for all retail categories.

Table 43 – Estimated Market Penetration Level Retail and Related Services Supportable Space Associated with Residents and Visitors from the Sarasota Area for 2007 and Change from 2007 to 2020*

Category	2007	2007-2020
Food	295,159	49,232
Eat/Drink	273,305	45,588
General Merchandise	568,285	94,789
Furniture	188,676	31,471
Transportation & Utilities	500,997	83,565
Drugstore	127,748	21,308
Apparel	104,793	17,479
Hardware	418,602	69,823
Vehicle Service	230,507	38,448
Miscellaneous	228,119	38,054
TOTAL	2,936,191	489,757

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Table 44 – Estimated Market Penetration Level Retail and Related Services Supportable Space Associated with Residents and Visitors from the Naples Area for 2007 and Change from 2007 to 2020*

Category	2007	2007-2020
Food	171,706	28,641
Eat/Drink	158,993	26,520
General Merchandise	330,597	55,142
Furniture	109,762	18,306
Transportation & Utilities	291,452	48,615
Drugstore	74,316	12,396
Apparel	60,960	10,169
Hardware	243,517	40,618
Vehicle Service	134,096	22,368
Miscellaneous	132,705	22,135
TOTAL	1,708,104	284,910

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ Tables 45 and 46 contain estimates of supportable space by sub-category associated with only the anticipated market penetration levels for both the Sarasota and Naples areas. As was the case with Tables 43 and 44, these figures reflect that which could be supported in the Punta Gorda from those markets, reflecting only a small portion of the potential growth in those markets. These tables assume a constant market penetration rate for all retail categories.

Table 45 – Estimated Retail and Related Services Market Penetration Level Supportable Space Associated with Residents and Visitors from the Sarasota Area for 2007 and Change from 2007 to 2020 By Sub-categories or Types of Businesses*

Sub-category	2007	2007-2020
Food	295,159	49,232
Supermarkets	223,675	37,309
Independents	31,609	5,272
Bakeries	11,590	1,933
Dairies	5,707	952
Others	22,578	3,766
Eat/Drink	273,305	45,588
General Merchandise	568,285	94,789
Dept. Stores	211,966	35,356
Variety Stores	48,245	8,047
Jewelry	16,931	2,824
Sporting Goods/Toys	63,300	10,558
Discount Dept.	211,386	35,259
Antiques, etc.	3,787	632
Others	12,670	2,113
Furniture	188,676	31,471
Furniture	45,743	7,630
Home Furnishings	59,743	9,965
Store/Office Equip.	43,662	7,283
Music Instr./Suppl.	12,918	2,155
Radios,TV, etc.	26,610	4,438
Transportation & Utilities	500,997	83,565
New/Used Vehicles	150,651	25,128
Tires, Batt., Prts.	253,093	42,215
Marine Sales/Rentals	24,662	4,114
Auto/Truck Rentals	72,591	12,108
Drugstore	127,748	21,308
Apparel	104,793	17,479
Men's and Boy's	11,029	1,840
Women's and Girl's	30,218	5,040
Infants	2,357	393
Family	31,207	5,205
Shoes	25,595	4,269
Jeans/Leather	449	75
Tailors/Uniforms	3,031	506
Others	907	151
Hardware	418,602	69,823
Hardware	190,642	31,799
Lawn/Seed/Fertil.	5,503	918
Others	222,457	37,106
Vehicle Service	230,507	38,448
Gasoline	22,202	3,703
Garage, Repairs	208,305	34,745
Miscellaneous	228,119	38,054
Advert. Signs, etc.	3,436	573
Barber/Beauty shop	18,014	3,005
Book Stores	7,343	1,225
Bowling	13,584	2,266
Cig./Tobacco Dealer	827	138
Dent./Physician Lab	7,269	1,213
Florist/Nurseries	10,423	1,739
Laundry, Dry Clean	6,694	1,117
Optical Goods/Opt.	4,050	676
Photo Sup./Photog.	11,644	1,942
Printing	17,397	2,902
Paper/Paper Prod.	12,699	2,118
Gifts/Cards/Novel.	28,153	4,696
Newsstands	945	158
Video Rent/Sales	38,391	6,404
Others	47,250	7,882
TOTAL	2,936,191	489,757

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

Table 46 – Estimated Retail and Related Services Market Penetration Level Supportable Space Associated with Residents and Visitors from the Naples Area for 2007 and Change from 2007 to 2020 By Sub-categories or Types of Businesses*

Sub-category	2007	2007-2020
Food	171,706	28,641
Supermarkets	130,121	21,704
Independents	18,388	3,067
Bakeries	6,742	1,125
Dairies	3,320	554
Others	13,135	2,191
Eat/Drink	158,993	26,520
General Merchandise	330,597	55,142
Dept. Stores	123,310	20,568
Variety Stores	28,066	4,681
Jewelry	9,850	1,643
Sporting Goods/Toys	36,824	6,142
Discount Dept.	122,973	20,511
Antiques, etc.	2,203	368
Others	7,371	1,229
Furniture	109,762	18,306
Furniture	26,611	4,438
Home Furnishings	34,755	5,797
Store/Office Equip.	25,401	4,236
Music Instr./Suppl.	7,515	1,253
Radios,TV, etc.	15,480	2,582
Transportation & Utilities	291,452	48,615
New/Used Vehicles	87,640	14,619
Tires, Batt., Prts.	147,235	24,559
Marine Sales/Rentals	14,347	2,393
Auto/Truck Rentals	42,230	7,044
Drugstore	74,316	12,396
Apparel	60,960	10,169
Men's and Boy's	6,416	1,070
Women's and Girl's	17,579	2,932
Infants	1,371	229
Family	18,154	3,028
Shoes	14,889	2,484
Jeans/Leather	261	44
Tailors/Uniforms	1,763	294
Others	527	88
Hardware	243,517	40,618
Hardware	110,904	18,498
Lawn/Seed/Fertil.	3,201	534
Others	129,412	21,586
Vehicle Service	134,096	22,368
Gasoline	12,916	2,154
Garage, Repairs	121,180	20,214
Miscellaneous	132,705	22,135
Advert. Signs, etc.	1,999	333
Barber/Beauty shop	10,479	1,748
Book Stores	4,272	713
Bowling	7,903	1,318
Cig./Tobacco Dealer	481	80
Dent./Physician Lab	4,229	705
Florist/Nurseries	6,063	1,011
Laundry, Dry Clean	3,894	650
Optical Goods/Opt.	2,356	393
Photo Sup./Photog.	6,774	1,130
Printing	10,120	1,688
Paper/Paper Prod.	7,387	1,232
Gifts/Cards/Novel.	16,378	2,732
Newsstands	550	92
Video Rent/Sales	22,333	3,725
Others	27,487	4,585
TOTAL	1,708,104	284,910

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.

✓ Market penetration levels are likely to be lower for many categories and sub-categories. This is particularly true for convenience shopping associated with groceries, transportation, drugstores, hardware and certain miscellaneous and other types of operations. Table 47 contains the anticipated growth in market penetration level space for Naples residents and visitors to Punta Gorda associated with either or both categories and sub-categories of retail activity associated with food services or selected shopper goods activity. It is noted that 68,500 square feet of space from residents and visitors to the Naples area are likely supportable in the Punta Gorda area.

Table 47 - Select Generated Retail Supportable Space Estimates from Naples Area for 2007 & Change for 2007 to 2020*

Select Categories & Sub-categories	2007 Space	2007-2020 Space
Food		
Independents	18,388	3,067
Bakeries	6,742	1,125
Others	13,135	2,191
Eat/Drink	158,993	26,520
General Merchandise		
Jewelry	9,850	1,643
Sporting Goods/Toys	36,824	6,142
Others	7,371	1,229
Furniture		
Home Furnishings	34,755	5,797
Apparel		
Men's and Boy's	6,416	1,070
Women's and Girl's	17,579	2,932
Shoes	14,889	2,484
Miscellaneous		
Barber/Beauty shop	10,479	1,748
Florist/Nurseries	6,063	1,011
Laundry, Dry Clean	3,894	650
Optical Goods/Opt.	2,356	393
Photo Sup./Photog.	6,774	1,130
Printing	10,120	1,688
Paper/Paper Prod.	7,387	1,232
Gifts/Cards/Novel.	16,378	2,732
Video Rent/Sales	22,333	3,725
TOTAL	410,726	68,509

*Developed By The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007

✓ Table 48 contains the anticipated growth in market penetration level space for Sarasota area residents and visitors to Punta Gorda associated with either or both categories and sub-categories of retail activity associated with food services or selected shopper goods activity for Sarasota. It is noted that 118,000 square feet of space from residents and visitors to the Sarasota area are likely supportable in the Punta Gorda area.

Table 48 - Select Generated Retail Supportable Space Estimates from Sarasota Area for 2007 & Change for 2007 to 2020*

Select Categories & Sub-categories	2007 Space	2007-2020 Space
Food		
Independents	31,609	5,272
Bakeries	11,590	1,933
Others	22,578	3,766
Eat/Drink	273,305	45,588
General Merchandise		
Jewelry	16,931	2,824
Sporting Goods/Toys	63,300	10,558
Others	12,670	2,113
Furniture		
Home Furnishings	59,743	9,965
Apparel		
Men's and Boy's	11,029	1,840
Women's and Girl's	30,218	5,040
Shoes	25,595	4,269
Miscellaneous		
Barber/Beauty shop	18,014	3,005
Florist/Nurseries	10,423	1,739
Laundry, Dry Clean	6,694	1,117
Optical Goods/Opt.	4,050	676
Photo Sup./Photog.	11,644	1,942
Printing	17,397	2,902
Paper/Paper Prod.	12,699	2,118
Gifts/Cards/Novel.	28,153	4,696
Video Rent/Sales	38,391	6,404
TOTAL	706,033	117,767

*Developed By The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007

- ✓ While there are several significant conclusions that can be drawn from the demand forecast that addresses opportunities for Punta Gorda and surrounding areas, it is important to note that growth in demand will be sufficient, when coupled with existing demand in the primary markets, for proposed development in the Jones Loop area to occur and meet with success simultaneous with growth and a strengthening of retail and related service activity in downtown Punta Gorda.

- ✓ It is also noted that there were about 288,000 visitors to Punta Gorda this past year. It is uncertain as to the number that also visited the other surrounding areas outside of Charlotte County as well. Therefore, in order to avoid double counting, their direct contribution to retail demand has not been separately estimated. Thus, the estimates of demand are conservative or likely understated.

Labor/Entrepreneurial Analysis

On the surface, the labor force and employment activity in Punta Gorda and Charlotte County would appear to be vibrant and healthy with expanding opportunities. The following are some highlighted indicators of this health, potential services, and current and future conditions. (Some of the characteristics have been previously identified.)

- ✓ As of July, 2006, total nonagricultural employment for Charlotte was at roughly the 41,000 level. This was 2.2% better than the level in June, 2005.
- ✓ 34,000 of the nonagricultural employees were associated with the provision of services. The bulk of these were concentrated in retail trade, the hospitality industry and health and education services.
- ✓ In 2006, the total labor force was estimated at 63,862, with the number employed at 62,142. The unemployment was below the United States' average as well as the average for Florida.
- ✓ The "goods producing" segment of the labor force was estimated to be at a 7,100 level, representing an increase of 6% over the previous year.
- ✓ Only Professional and Business Services show a decline over the previous year. However, that decline was very small, representing a negative of 100 jobs in total.

Table 49 - Charlotte County Nonagricultural Employment (Not seasonally adjusted)*

Nonagricultural Employment	June 2006	May 2006	June 2005	Change	
				May 06- Jun 06	Jun 05-Jun 06
Total Nonagricultural Employment	41,100	41,900	40,200	-1.9%	2.2%
Goods Producing	7,100	7,100	6,700	0.0%	6.0%
Natural Resources, Mining, Construction	6,200	6,200	5,800	0.0%	6.9%
Manufacturing	900	900	900	0.0%	0.0%
Service Providing	34,000	34,800	33,500	-2.3%	1.5%
Wholesale Trade	700	700	600	0.0%	16.7%
Retail Trade	7,700	7,700	7,700	0.0%	0.0%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	500	500	400	0.0%	25.0%
Information	600	600	600	0.0%	0.0%
Financial Activities	2,400	2,300	2,300	4.3%	4.3%
Professional & Business Services	3,200	3,200	3,300	0.0%	-3.0%
Education & Health Services	7,200	7,300	7,200	-1.4%	0.0%
Leisure & Hospitality Services	4,000	4,100	4,000	-2.4%	0.0%
Other Services	2,000	2,000	1,900	0.0%	5.3%

*Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, released July 21, 2006.

- ✓ Based on the anticipated household growth, employment in Charlotte County would need to increase by roughly 9,200, at a minimum, to meet the needs of the anticipated household growth between 2007 and 2015 alone. This figure could be as high as 11,000.
- ✓ Of the anticipated additional employment needs, about 40% would likely be in related services at managerial, paraprofessional, and professional levels. Many others would be associated with retail and sales activity.

- ✓ Meeting such local employment needs will depend upon the opportunity to potentially upgrade the skills of existing residents and also the likelihood of two critical factors. These are:

  - A change in demographics by increasing the number of younger households.

  - An adequate range of housing opportunities for households with a variety of different income levels.

- ✓ Truly one of the greatest assets that Charlotte County and Punta Gorda in particular have is an abundance of business and entrepreneurial talent. To a large extent, this capacity is found within the population associated with what has been described as the "baby boomer" generation and beyond. Current efforts and available resources providing assistance to present and future business activity include:

  - The Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce and the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce.
  - The Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands Visitor's Bureau.
  - The Charlotte County Economic Development Office.
  - The Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board, Inc., with offices in Bonita Springs and Port Charlotte. (Their purpose is "to support and promote economic growth through workforce development.")
  - Charlotte County SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) in Port Charlotte.

  - The predominant Business Development Center in Florida is affiliated with the Florida Small Business Development Center Network (FSBDCN), which was created as an original Small Business Administration (SBA) Small Business Development Center through a pilot program funded in 1976. The SBA-funded SBDC program throughout the country and Florida is intended to link "higher education, economic development organizations, Chambers, and others to and through local service centers." The Florida Network's website shows 33 SBDC sites statewide. All are affiliated with colleges and universities.

  - Charlotte County and Punta Gorda are served by the SBDC through the Florida Gulf Coast University. The SBDC provides counseling, seminars, workshops, and information on topics such as:

    - Financial and accounting analysis
    - Procurement & contracting assistance
    - Market analysis
    - Commercial loan packages
    - Record keeping
    - Microcomputer cost/benefit analysis
    - Steps to starting a business
    - Bidding on government & other contracts
    - Personnel management
    - International trade
    - Business plans
    - Feasibility studies

    The SBDC sponsors workshops and seminars. The SBDC at Florida Gulf Coast University reportedly has a staff of eight, including Business Analysts and Procurement Specialists. The Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce has a link to the SBDC.

    According to the most recent data available the Florida SBDC Network worked with 146 clients in 2004 (data as of March 8, 2005), started 2 new businesses, and generated $80,000 in loans within Charlotte County.

- ✓ Incubators can also be called Innovation or Technology Centers, or Business Accelerators. There are thousands of incubators across the country. Some have public support or were initiated through the public sectors. Others involve only private sector activity from initiation through operation. Some control the scale of operations (either in terms of physical size or revenue). Others control the length of time (typically through lease arrangements) in which operations can be located in the incubator. Others have none of these limitations. Many are linked to a specific site or building. Some are aligned with institutions of higher learning, while others are not.

- ✓ Virtually all incubators have some common features. These are a sharing of services, programs, facilities, support, etc. Each, however, is generally associated with a distinct industry sector such as agriculture, energy, marine life, manufacturing, emerging technologies, and so on. Probably the most common incubator is associated with the legal profession and now often medicine. In these incubators, libraries, support services, etc. are shared among private practice entities (PAs, etc.).

- ✓ There are also many examples through Florida and elsewhere where "incubator" activity is crossed with on-the-job type training, typically through and affiliated with education institutions. Culinary arts is one area that has flourished through the application of such concepts.

Infrastructure Analysis

Infrastructure is often associated with roadways and capacity, sidewalks, streetscape, and basic utilities. However, fundamental to economic development is human, technology, education, and other "non-traditional" infrastructure.

It is noted that:

- ✓ Human talent, as previously defined, is strong, particularly within the "baby boomer" and beyond population base.

- ✓ There are no known deficiencies in the basic public services that would prevent economic development to continue in downtown or other areas of incorporated sections of Punta Gorda.

- ✓ The only vehicular related transportation issues identified were the one-way street system in downtown, public transportation accessibility and linkages between the City, downtown and the Jones Loop development, and public transportation access and availability within downtown Punta Gorda. The one-way street system in downtown has been a topic of debate for many years. However, no formal engineering study has been conducted with respect to feasibility of a change in the system and the impact of a change on traffic flow, pedestrian movements, surrounding areas, and on-street parking.

- ✓ The ability exists within the community to provide services to expanded areas beyond current boundaries.

- ✓ The Charlotte Harbor contains significant bio-diversity and is known to be one of the most diverse bodies of water in the country. The Peace River is the fresh water source that feeds Charlotte Harbor that blends with the Gulf of Mexico's salt water. It supports natural mangrove habitats.

- ✓ The airport is currently a significantly under-utilized portion of the infrastructure. It has the capacity to serve a larger number of corporate and personal general aviation planes as well as potential major carrier aircraft.

- ✓ One of the Punta Gorda area's most significant asset is available land resources. While much undeveloped land lies outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Punta Gorda, it is adjacent to or near the corporate limits and serviceable by the existing road network and potential utilities. The land, in some cases, could be appropriately used for commercial (office, research, light industrial, etc.) business parks. There is developable land around the airport which could be used to generate significant employment opportunities. (A portion of the land is being used to create a Publix distribution center.)

- ✓ Punta Gorda has a reasonable communications network at this time. Transformation and positioning of this network as technology changes would maintain the community's competitiveness. (For example, many communities are committing to free wireless or broadband networks throughout the entire jurisdiction.)

- ✓ With respect to downtown Punta Gorda, there has been substantial commitment of resources to enhance the availability and use of the waterfront to the local public and visitors to the area. Additional infrastructure is underway to create a facility to house local regional events, activities, conferences, and retreats. Additional marina facilities have recently opened and others are under construction. However, there is a lack of diversity and available transient accommodations within the downtown.

- ✓ There are several higher education institutions within Charlotte County and Punta Gorda. However, none directly offer a full-range of degrees and course work.

- ✓ The City has developed a cultural arts building that provides a variety of services for those that are currently involved with artistic endeavors and those that wish to be involved. While the quality building and programs are of importance, they do not appear to be unique in the general area as nearby communities in other counties have similar facilities and programs.

- ✓ There are a number of facilities or programs involved with research in the area at present, including the Eco-Environmental Collaborative Research, with Florida Gulf Coast University; the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary program; and the Peace River Wildlife Center.

Research & Development (R & D) and Emerging Technology Analysis

The future of industrial and non-community serving office activity and employment in the United States likely rests in our ability to find and develop technology and products associated with that technology. Success in participating in the future structure of such activity will be dependent upon an area's indigenous resources; current production, inclusive of agriculture; and the maximization of the resources' use in a productive, environmentally sensitive manner.

Extensive research into existing industries and natural resources was involved in identifying opportunities in the Research and Development (R & D) and emerging technologies arenas. The selection of potential new base economic activity for inclusion for Punta Gorda was based on a number of factors including:

- ✓ The natural or economic resources found in the area or resources related to those that are.
- ✓ The current transportation network, making the location favorable to various markets.
- ✓ The research or the development of the product not negatively impacting the environment in the area.
- ✓ The R & D activity related to emerging sectors or markets.
- ✓ Either or both a reasonable likelihood of interest in funding or current funding.

Based upon the above, the research indicated that:

- ✓ Charlotte Harbor is the second largest estuary in Florida and the largest, deepest and most diverse of the five Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves. Fresh water from the Peace and Myakka Rivers mixes with salt water coming through Boca Grande Pass from the Gulf of Mexico. Estuaries are called "the cradles of the ocean." These unique bodies of water, of which Florida has more than any other state, provide a home for fish as well as countless birds and other marine life forms. Unlike other Florida estuaries that are mostly influenced by the sea, Charlotte Harbor has more of the trademarks of a freshwater system, thanks to the Peace River. Just 17 miles long, Charlotte County has more than 120 miles of tidal coastline, the vast majority within the confines of Charlotte Harbor, one of Florida's premier fishing and birding spots.

- ✓ With this rich natural resource, a plethora of advancing research opportunities are presented, including but not limited to:

  1. Crab and Shrimp Shells. These shells contain chitin, a very valuable polymer, which can be converted into an extremely versatile biopolymer. Chitosan is and can be applied in many different fields, such as agriculture and medicine. Chitosan derivatives block tumor-related angiogenesis.

  2. Invasive Species. There are many invasive species in the area that present R & D opportunities or are already known to have product development potential. Many invasive plants affect forest health, productivity, access and use, forest management costs, and limit species diversity on millions of acres of southern forests. These plants displace native plants and associated wildlife, and can alter natural processes such as fire regimes and hydrology. There is a Melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia)* invasion in Southwest Florida. Others include pine flatwoods; Kudzu (Pueraria montana var. lobata); the green mussel (Perna viridis); and the Mayan cichlid (an invasive species from Central America and Mexico); and Monitor Lizards:

     The hydric pine flatwoods are habitat for more than 660 species of vascular plants, pine cones, pine cone extract, etc. Kudzu and other invasive plants may be productive agents for cellulosic ethanol, electricity, and other bio-based energy products.

Monitor Lizards can swim, climb trees, etc. They lay eggs on sandy beaches and can easily grow to 5 feet. These animals can hunt prey in the water, in trees and even underground.

Non-indigenous populations of Mayan cichlids are established in portions of Florida Bay and the Everglades. The fish, which are natives of South America, are aggressive and multiply quickly, possibly forcing out native species. Scientists are alarmed the most by the cichlid's carnivorous ways. The mangrove-laden estuaries act as nurseries for fish that are economically important to Charlotte Harbor. Cichlids could be preying on these fish and causing a decline.

Pine cone extract is used in combination with chemotherapy aides and increases its effect, as an adjuvant, to treat established melanomas. PPC (polyphenylpropanoid polysaccharide complex) is capable of stimulating the immune system. PPC is an orally active, non-toxic adjuvant capable of enhancing the effects of vaccines. Such an activity could find widespread use in both civilian and military populations as vaccines specific for bioterrorist agents. PPC is the only orally-active immune modulator capable of synergizing with chemotherapy to suppress tumor growth.

3. The Peace River Wildlife Center. The facility is a rehabilitation center for injured, sick and orphaned animals. Expansion into additional avenues of research may be possible and opportunistic. As an example, the International Bird Rescue Research Center current research projects include: revising and developing new sea bird diets, developing protocol for the control of airborne fungal disease in oiled birds, long-term alcid rehabilitation techniques, improved caging for difficult species, assisting avian specialists in post release radio telemetry studies on rehabilitated oiled birds, and collecting blood normals for each species.

4. Hypoxic Events. A hypoxic event occurs annually in the Harbor for possibly natural rather than anthropogenic reasons, providing an opportunity for the study of hypoxic effects on the ecology of a large subtropical ecosystem.

   The negative impacts of red tides can threaten the economic livelihood of many Florida beach communities. This algae impacts areas such as Charlotte Harbor where the tides and winds cannot clear it as effectively as offshore. Large areas are closed to shell fish harvesting due to bacterial contamination and periodic red tide events. Through research in which the area is already involved, NOAA is finding out more about what triggers blooms and transports their toxins and is using these new abilities in early warning systems to help coastal communities.

   However, it is also known that inhalation exposure to marine aerosol containing brevetoxins causes respiratory symptoms. Additional research on these compounds shows they may be useful in treating the mucus build-up associated with cystic fibrosis and similar lung diseases.

5. The Florida Scrub-Jay. This bird is a threatened species. Florida Scrub-Jays have been declining as their habitat is converted into housing developments and other uses. Researchers have long sought animal models to help them study memory. Currently being investigated is social and physical cognition in scrub-jays, rooks, and jackdaws. Recent work has shown that food-storing corvids utilize a number of social strategies and counter-strategies to prevent their food caches from being stolen. It has been shown that scrub-jays utilize their own experience of pilfering to engage in strategies to reduce the potential for pilfering of their own caches. The neuronal architecture of brain areas thought to be involved in episodic memory is substantially similar in mammals and potentially all vertebrates. Further value in studying episodic-like memory in animals is the opportunity it affords to model certain kinds of neurodegenerative disease that, in humans, affect episodic memory.

6. Limestone found in the Peace River waterbed. Researchers are beginning to study a cost effective extracting method taking carbon dioxide directly from the air. This could allow sustained use of fossil fuels while avoiding potential global climate change. The method would allow researchers to harvest carbon dioxide from the air, reducing buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and allowing its conversion into fuel.

   Such efforts will potentially employ coal gasification technology integrated with combined cycle electricity generation and the sequestration of carbon dioxide emissions. The project will be supported by the ongoing coal research program, which will also be the principal source of technology for the prototype. In fluidized-bed combustion, coal is ground into small particles, mixed with limestone and injected with hot air into a boiler. This mixture, a "bed" of coal and limestone, is suspended on jets of air and resembles a boiling liquid. As the coal burns, the limestone acts as a sponge and captures the sulfur. As in a conventional boiler, water-filled tubes collect the heat generated, creating steam. The steam is used to spin a generator which produces electricity. This technology can reduce the amount of sulfur released by over 90 percent. Another advantage of this technology is the reduction in the boiler temperature. The lower temperature is an advantage because fewer nitrogen pollutants are produced.

7. Eco-Environmental Research and Monitoring. Much of the current efforts are university initiatives, sponsorships and collaborations. Florida Gold Coast University is focusing on the natural resources and initiating break-through preservation, therapeutic, and alternative uses for Punta Gorda's and Charlotte County's abundance of wildlife and natural resources. The coastal zones are where complex geological, chemical, physical, and biological interactions occur. Its accessibility also makes it one of the most heavily impacted marine environment worldwide.

8. Honeybees. The honeybee is the major carrier of pollen for fruits and about anything that grows on a vine, from apples to zucchini. The bee itself is disappearing. Under attack from an Asian parasite, vast numbers of the creatures are dying off. It has been suggested that if honeybees ceased to exist, two thirds of the citrus alone would disappear.

9. Seagrass Meadows. Seagrass meadows rival or exceed most kinds of agriculture in their productivity and also provide unique aesthetic and recreational opportunities. The most common biological communities in the Charlotte Harbor aquatic preserves include: turtle (Thalassia testudinum), manatee (Syringodium filiforme), and Cuban shoal (Halodule wrightii) Seagrasses

   The importance of seagrasses as food, shelter, and essential nursery habitats for commercial and recreational fishery species and for the many other organisms that live and feed in seagrass beds is well known. A single acre of seagrass can produce over 10 tons of leaves per year and can support as many as 40 thousand fish and 50 million invertebrates. This high level of production and biodiversity has led to the view that seagrass communities are the marine equivalent of tropical rainforests. The importance of seagrasses to society has become fully recognized by government agencies. Seagrasses are now receiving focused attention from environmental managers, who require integrated science to aid in developing seagrass protection programs. Studies concerning the ecology, biology, and management of Gulf seagrasses are increasingly diverse and complex; yet, a synthesis of this research has not been prepared since the late 1980s.

   Submerged aquatic vegetation is a sensitive indicator of water quality and pollution in shallow coastal areas. It is believed that Phaeocystis is a model organism from which to begin the study of bio-complexity in marine pelagic ecosystems.

10. Benthic Animals. The benthic community is composed of a wide range of plants, animals and bacteria from all levels of the food web. Benthic animals are more abundant in the shallower waters off the coast because food arrives from river sediments. Vertical zoning involves determining the significance of the food and its impact as currents carry this food and organisms filter it without having to use their own energy to go and get food. In order to apply vertical zoning appropriately, it is crucial to understand when and where interactions occur among benthic and pelagic communities. The research has significance to human use, such as surface trolling for tunas and salmon, within specific depth zones.

11. Using animal behavior to predict natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis, involving sharks, butterflies, migrating birds, drum fish, crocodiles, and others.

    As hurricane after hurricane struck Florida, animals are believed to have shown a striking ability to predict catastrophe and evacuate. When Hurricane Charley came within hours of the Caloosahatchee River, eight sharks tagged by biologists suddenly bolted out of the estuary to the safety of the open ocean. About 12 hours before Hurricane Charley struck southwestern Florida, scientists at Mote Marine Laboratory noticed odd behavior among sharks they had tagged in Pine Island Sound. As underwater hydrophones listened, eight of the 10 sharks headed swiftly out to sea. When Hurricane Jeanne approached Gainesville, butterflies in an experimental rain forest wedged themselves under rocks and disappeared into tree hollows.

    As the whole series of hurricanes churned through the state, migrating birds appeared to delay their trip south, stacking up somewhere in Georgia until the route to their winter habitat was safe. These are just a few examples of animal behavior and natural disaster relationships. The ability to track species and provide advanced warning of storm paths, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, earthquakes, etc. could be an important world-wide tool as anticipated climate change occurs.

Culture/Arts Economic Development Perspective Analysis

According to a New England Council report published about 6 years ago, America's non-profit arts industry generates $134 billion in economic activity every year. This includes about: $53.2 billion in spending by arts organizations and $80.8 billion in event-related spending by audiences. That activity, as defined in the same report, translated into:

- ✓ 4.85 million full-time equivalent jobs
- ✓ $89.4 billion in household income.
- ✓ $6.6 billion in local tax revenues.
- ✓ $7.3 billion in state tax revenues.
- ✓ $10.5 billion in federal income tax revenues.
- ✓ Event-related spending by audiences at an average of $22.87 per person for hotels, restaurants, parking, souvenirs, refreshments, and other similar costs, with tourists spending being nearly twice as much as local attendees.
- ✓ Travelers taking longer trips and are more likely to shop spend more than other U.S. travelers.

This report, released in 2002, is thought to be the most comprehensive economic impact study of the non-profit arts industry ever conducted. It is based on surveys of 3,000 non-profit arts organizations and more than 40,000 attendees at arts events in 91 cities in 33 states.

As has been documented in New England, the arts and related area economy supports nearly 245,000 jobs in New England. This is nearly as many as the computer equipment industry and more than the software and healthcare technology clusters combined. It is also less likely to be “out sourced” by definition. Workers trained in specific cultural and artistic skills drive the success of leading industries, including software development, telecommunications, and new media industries. The creative cluster and its workforce have many of the professional qualities needed to compete in the “New Economy.” These include creativity and initiative, design and technical skills, advanced conceptualizing, and the ability to respond to rapid change. Geographic concentration of creative workers, creative businesses, and cultural organizations enhance a community's quality of life. This then provides support with attracting and retaining businesses, employees, and visitors.

Traditional arts can support economic development by strengthening communities, stimulating demand for local products, and supporting the economic activities of other local businesses. “Culturally-based economic development” is a label for those activities intended to promote increased market participation among traditional artists and arts organizations, as well as other arts and cultural organizations, such as historical sites, museums, theaters, and art galleries. For example, artists working in the folk traditions of various cultures are motivated by a commitment to their artistry, traditions, and cultural heritage of their communities. These values are increasingly prized in the broader economy as markets for traditional arts and for travel linked to uniqueness of particular places have grown substantially over the last several decades. Traditional arts, therefore, represent an opportunity for towns, small cities, and downtowns, in particular, to capture a share of national economic and visitor-based growth, while preserving the cultural vitality essential to quality of life.

With the expansion of the concept have come increased funding options. For example, the Fund for Folk Culture (FFC), a national non-profit organization, initiated a funding program to support partnerships between economic develop organizations and traditional artists and arts organizations. This has been underwritten by the Ford Foundation since 1999.

In some ways Punta Gorda represents a potential mecca for artistic activity. Its advantages in this economic development arena include:

- ✓ Existing structures with character in the core of downtown.
- ✓ Available space.
- ✓ A history of involvement with visual arts and performance activity.
- ✓ Potential for existing and reuse parcels and buildings in downtown for combined studio and living quarters.
- ✓ Current “incubator” activity and facilities, focused on shared equipment.
- ✓ More than 200,000 current visitors to the area.
- ✓ A favorable transportation network, opening the area to potentially thousands of more visitors.
- ✓ Midway between larger population centers that represent markets that goods can be displayed and sold via other merchants.
- ✓ Many available resources that can be used creatively to facilitate the flourishing of arts.
- ✓ Quality of life and favorable climatic conditions.

There are various art forms that represent promise to Punta Gorda because of the above and because they are likely to have sustainability, thereby contributing to the economic sustainability of the general community and the downtown in particular.

Pursuit of those areas is intended to:

- ✓ Create a niche for visitor activity.
- ✓ Expand employment skills and opportunities.
- ✓ Expand the youth market.
- ✓ Enhance quality of life.
- ✓ Be catalytic for a sustainable activity level in downtown.

Those areas are:

1. Murals. (This is an area upon which there is already a focus, but much expansion opportunity. Pursuit would differentiate Punta Gorda from other West Coast communities to visitors and nearby residents.)

2. An Extensive Art in Public Places Program. (This effort would entail replacing/duplicating with similar elements and expanding that which existed prior to the hurricane destruction.)

3. A created themed art exhibition for branding purposes. (Much like the "Cow Parade.")

4. Other Outdoor "Juried" Activity. (Replacing current non-juried held events that have a tendency to not maintain quality over time.)

5. Evolutionary art. (Evolutionary art is a comparatively recent art form and is virtually exclusively generated on computers. The basic idea behind evolutionary art is that the artist is able to control the development of a piece of work through some form of "selection," in a manner analogous to natural selection. In all evolutionary art, one or more pictures or virtual sculptures are mutated and/or crossed to produce a number of other images, which are then selected again. The more advanced systems allow the artist to assign a "goodness" factor to each crossing or manipulation. The results of this "selection" are then used to produce the next "generation." Evolutionary systems allow the artist to generate complex computer artwork without great knowledge of the actual program used. Most, if not all genetic art systems and many organic art systems are "evolutionary" in some form today. Significant computer skills are often gained in the process and can be "employable" in other endeavors.)

6. Organic Art. (Organic art involves the development and the promotion of the arts and issues through educational visits and walks, classes, workshops, community projects, exhibitions and performances. This involves the unique experience of creating art supplies, making them from stones, insects, flowers, earth, and other natural materials and utilizing area "products" in the development of the art. The focus could also be on indigenous populations.)

Current local resources involved with artistic endeavors include, but are not necessarily limited to the Arts & Humanities of Charlotte County, Charlotte Performing Arts Center, Charlotte Players, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, the Cultural Center of Charlotte County, The Visual Arts Center, Punta Gorda Historical Society and Plein Aire. There are other potential national and regional support organizations that generally fall into the following categories:

- ✓ Community Support Organizations, engendering the support of art enthusiasts and encouraging new supporters.
- ✓ Professional Support Organizations, capitalizing upon the professional expertise of experienced attorneys, accountants and business executives who donate their time and talents "pro bono" to assist artists and art organizations in business and legal administrative issues.
- ✓ Organized Artist's Residential Communities, generally resulting from redevelopment of old buildings or assembling new properties for the use by artists to both live and work in one dedicated space.
- ✓ Cooperatives and Collaborations.
- ✓ City Government Programs, aiming to use art to create a unique sense of place, contribute to neighborhood vitality, and stimulate new economic activity.

Opportunities

From the combined analyses, significant economic opportunity for Punta Gorda and areas that surround it are identifiable. The following is a synopsis of those opportunities.

Retail & Related Services

The following are retail and retail related services for which the analysis either identified gaps or demand. These retail services often locate in downtowns and, thus, provide opportunities targeted toward the core of Punta Gorda. Some of these are also likely to locate in suburban non-downtown locations. The addition of more than one such establishment is possible, providing opportunities for the same business or different businesses to be in more than one location in a competitive, but complementary manner.

- ✓ Baked Goods Stores (about 10,000 square feet of space)
- ✓ Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores (between 12,000 to 20,000 square feet of space)
- ✓ Pharmacies and Drug Stores (about four additional operations)
- ✓ Men's Clothing Stores (about 9,000 to 12,000 square feet of space)
- ✓ Pet and Pet Supplies Stores (one or two operations, may have specialized product lines)
- ✓ Video Tape and Disc Rental (two operations in different locations)
- ✓ Full-Service Restaurants (between 7 to 12 new establishments)
- ✓ Limited-Service Restaurants (between 7 to 15 new establishments)
- ✓ Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars (2 to 4 operations, location with heavy foot traffic critical)
- ✓ One-Hour Photofinishing (3,000 square feet of space)
- ✓ Sporting Goods Stores (one marine related, one large "junior" or "box" operation)
- ✓ Floor Covering Stores (11,000 to 15,000 square feet of space)
- ✓ Shoe Stores (20,000 to 25,000 square feet, several operations likely)
- ✓ Jewelry Stores (14,000 to 25,000 square feet of space)
- ✓ Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores (5,000 to 10,000 square feet of space)
- ✓ Dry-cleaning Services (4,000 square feet of space)

The following are retail and retail related services for which the analysis either identified gaps or demand. These retail services most often locate in suburban non-downtown locations. The addition of more than one such establishment is possible, providing opportunities for different specific businesses to be in more than one location in a competitive, but complementary manner.

- ✓ New Car Dealers
- ✓ Used Car Dealers
- ✓ Automotive Parts and Accessories Stores
- ✓ Radio, Television, and Other Electronics Stores
- ✓ Home Centers
- ✓ Hardware Stores
- ✓ Nursery, Garden Center, and Farm Supply Stores
- ✓ Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores
- ✓ Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores
- ✓ Other Gasoline Stations
- ✓ Office Supplies and Stationery Stores

The following are retail and retail related services for which the analysis indicates growth in demand will be sufficient to support additional operations in the future. These retail services often locate in downtowns and suburban non-downtown locations. The addition of more than one such establishment is possible, providing opportunities for the same business or different businesses to be in more than one location in a competitive, but complementary manner.

- ✓ Supermarkets
- ✓ Dairies
- ✓ Department Stores
- ✓ Discount Department
- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Home Furnishings
- ✓ Women's and Girl's Apparel
- ✓ Family Apparel
- ✓ Barber/Beauty shop
- ✓ Book Stores
- ✓ Optical Goods/Optician
- ✓ Printing
- ✓ Paper/Paper Products
- ✓ Gifts/Cards/Novelties
- ✓ Newsstands

Financial, Professional & Other Services

The following are financial services for which the analysis identified gaps. These financial services often locate in downtowns and suburban non-downtown locations.

- ✓ Credit Unions
- ✓ Mortgage and Other Financing
- ✓ Savings Institutions

The following are professional services for which the analysis identified gaps. These professional services often locate in downtowns and suburban non-downtown locations, with the latter most often in quality business parks.

- ✓ Offices of Certified Public Accountants
- ✓ Landscape Architectural Services
- ✓ Human Resources and Executive Search Consulting Services
- ✓ Environmental Consulting Services
- ✓ Advertising Agencies

The following are other services for which the analysis identified gaps. These services can and often do locate in business parks. Some are consumer oriented. Others have a business-to-business orientation.

- ✓ Janitorial Services
- ✓ Wired Telecommunications Carriers
- ✓ Remediation Services
- ✓ Commercial & Industrial Machinery & Equipment Repair & Maintenance
- ✓ Home & Garden Equipment Repair & Maintenance
- ✓ Re-upholstery and Furniture Repair
- ✓ Internet Service Providers
- ✓ Telecommunications Resellers
- ✓ Surveying and Mapping Services
- ✓ Temporary Help Services
- ✓ Security Guards and Patrol Services
- ✓ Landscape Services
- ✓ Offices of Mental Health Practitioners
- ✓ Home Health Care Services
- ✓ Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
- ✓ Food Service Contractors
- ✓ Caterers
- ✓ Commercial & Industrial Machinery & Equip. (except Auto & Electronic) Repair & Maintenance

The following are commercial recreation services for which the analysis identified gaps. These services can and often do locate in either downtowns or commercial strips near consumers, although the second can also often be found in larger business parks with large numbers of employees.

- ✓ Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
- ✓ Bowling Centers

Transient Accommodations

The following are types of transient accommodations for which gaps were defined by the analysis.

- ✓ Hotels and Motels
- ✓ Bed-and-Breakfast Inns

It is noted that both types of operations can be accommodated in many different settings and locations. Synergy with and near other visitor activity is often of benefit. This would include locations near meeting and conference facilities, boat docks, and those with quality access.

Multi-tenant Office Space

As identified, growth in households in Charlotte County is expected to yield an increased opportunity to boost local employment by 9,200. About 40% or 3,680 employees will be in the service sector in managerial, paraprofessional, and professional positions. The amount of office space associated with this employment is based on the following assumptions:

- ✓ About 2/3 of these employees will be in services that involve offices.
- ✓ The average amount of gross space per employee is to 250 square feet.

The total amount of office space that could be marketable, based on the employment growth opportunity, would be roughly 616,000 square feet. This office space can and often is locate in downtowns, commercial strips near consumers, and in quality business parks.

R & D and Emerging Technologies

Eleven areas for potential R & D activity have been identified as holding promise. There could be others that evolve based on changing global markets and environmental conditions. Furthermore, there could be other areas related to the identified resource research that could evolve. Thus, the areas should be interpreted as examples based on the criteria associated with use of natural and economic resources in the area, transportation access, preservation of a quality environment and way of life, and a reasonable likelihood of interest and funding. These eleven areas are:

- ✓ Chitin use as derived from crab, shrimp and other crustacean shells.
- ✓ Control and use of invasive species for energy, medicine, etc.
- ✓ Expansion of rehabilitation and study associated with the Peace River Wildlife Center.
- ✓ Study of hypoxic events and the ability to use the brevetoxins.
- ✓ Study of neuronal architecture and episodic memory.
- ✓ The role of limestone in coal gasification technology and other areas.
- ✓ Eco-environmental research and monitoring.
- ✓ Deteriorating conditions and reversal of the decline of the honeybee.
- ✓ The role of seagrasses in projecting environmental conditions and in management of the environment.
- ✓ Comprehending interaction between benthic and pelagic animals.
- ✓ Utilization of animals in predicting future natural disasters and enhancing human predicting capacity.

Expansion of Culture & Art

Six areas of focus for Punta Gorda were defined for culture and arts as an economic development tool to create a unique regional niche for visitors and to provide for downtown sustainability and enhanced employment skills. These six areas are

- ✓ Murals. (This is an area upon which there is already a focus, but much expansion opportunity. Pursuit would differentiate Punta Gorda from other West Coast communities to visitors and nearby residents.)
- ✓ An Extensive Art in Public Places Program. (This effort would entail replacing/duplicating with similar elements and expanding that which existed prior to the hurricane destruction.)
- ✓ A created themed art exhibition for branding purposes. (Much like the "Cow Parade.")
- ✓ Other Outdoor "Juried" Activity. (Replacing current non-juried held events that have a tendency to not maintain quality over time.)
- ✓ Evolutionary art. (Evolutionary art is a comparatively recent art form and is virtually exclusively generated on computers.)
- ✓ Organic Art. (Organic art involves the unique experience of creating art supplies making them from stones, insects, flowers, earth, and other natural materials and utilizing area "products" in the development of the art.)

Other Light Industrial & Related Activity

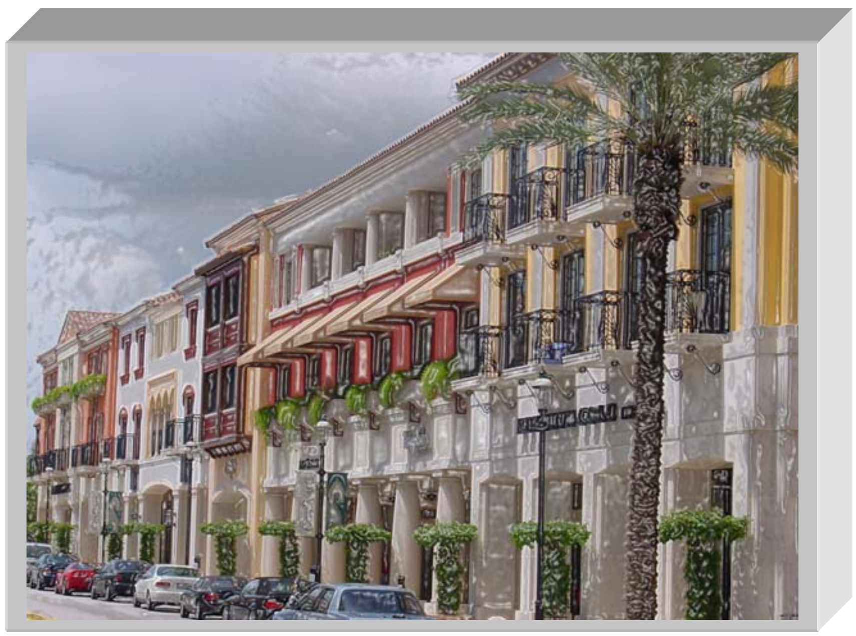
While no under-representation of light industrial activity was found in the analysis that would maintain quality of life in the area, additional employment base activity is needed if the anticipated growth in the labor force is to be satisfied by local opportunities (those in Charlotte County and Punta Gorda). The evidence of such opportunity is found in the development of the Publix distribution facilities near the airport.

Based on the previously noted anticipated employment growth and without a change in the basic structure of employment in Charlotte County, potentially 1,700 new jobs in non-service sector employment would be required to fulfill the opportunities presented by the anticipated household growth.

Housing

The anticipated growth in households is directly correlated with growth in demand for new housing units. While recognized that there may be a surplus of supply compared to current demand, such imbalance is only a temporary market condition resulting from larger regional, state, and national market issues.

Over the next ten or more years, conservatively estimated demand will result in the absorption of at least 8,000 to 9,800 additional housing units with Charlotte County. Based on the regional and national trends both for population groups associated with the "baby boomers and beyond" and newly created households headed by individuals and families between the ages of 21 and 35, there is no reason to believe that such absorption numbers are not achievable and are well within the boundaries of all state, area, and Florida-based university projections for Charlotte County.



Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that Punta Gorda and its downtown could not attract a significant share of this market since the population seeking housing in less suburban settings that offer quality of life and a pedestrian environment is increasing among the noted niche age groups or clusters. In fact, a 15% to 20% capture would not be unreasonable.

However, given rising land costs, construction costs and other factors, there is no guarantee that "affordable," non-professional and managerial "work force" housing can be built in Punta Gorda in general and specifically the downtown. "Market rate" housing could be difficult if not impossible in the environment for "affordable, work force" housing. Current supply of available ownership and rental units will likely be outstripped by demand in the future.

Strategic Program

Goals for the Economic Development Strategy

Based on the input, the various analyses, and the defined opportunities, goals for the economic development strategy can be developed. Those goals are as follows.

1. Enhance the utilization of the area's assets in a manner conducive to achieving other goals.
2. Create sustainable economic diversity.
3. Alter employment patterns and area demographics.
4. Decrease the exportation of retail sales dollars.
5. Establish a unique niche in the market for downtown Punta Gorda.
6. Differentiate Punta Gorda and its downtown from other communities and areas.
7. Enhance the quality of life for current and future residents.
8. Enhance the business climate.

Strategy Components

The following are the components of the proposed economic development strategy for Punta Gorda and areas of Charlotte County that are adjacent to or surround the City. While most of the components address more than one goal, the components have been placed under a goal upon which each component will have a primary impact.

It is noted that it is unlikely that all components will be implemented even with phasing activity. Thus and in a sense, each individual component is a contributor to the defined goal and collection of goals, but is somewhat, although not totally exclusive of the others.

Enhance the Utilization of the Area's Assets

As has been noted, Punta Gorda and areas of Charlotte County that surround it have many assets of which major ones are depicted in the graphic that follows.

Each of these assets individually as well as collectively and through synergistic activity could be enhanced. It is noted that many of these suggestions have surfaced before in Punta Gorda, and some have achieved a certain level of implementation.

At the present time, perhaps none of the area's assets are as underutilized as the airport and the land around the airport. From meeting various goals, this should change. Punta Gorda and Charlotte County collectively must:

1. Insure that vehicular access be provided and the land adjacent to the airport is developed as quality business parks, with appropriate landscape and other visual components.

2. Insure the amount of retail, transient accommodation and retail related services allowed in the business parks is severely limited to preserve the land for other activity.

3. Maintain (where it exists or is under-construction) or create (where it does not now exist) vehicular access to and from the airport that results in enhanced appeal to the interstate and state highway network.

4. Maintain or improve the interstate and state highway access to areas beyond Charlotte County and Punta Gorda. The intent is to assist with facilitating the economic development potential of the business parks for services and distribution facilities, create quality linkages to other West Coast communities in Florida for R & D activity, and to enhance general aviation and other aircraft usage.

5. Provide, maintain, and enhance public infrastructure, including state-of-the-art communications technology for the business parks.

In addition, Punta Gorda should consider:

6. Adjustments to its boundaries that ultimately brings any land around the airport and land in between the airport and the City's current boundaries into the City's domain.

7. Developing and maintaining appropriate land use plans for the above areas.

8. Examining the feasibility of developing the area as one Planned Unit Development or through an "overlay district" and legislatively establishing such.

9. Establish high quality business park standards and apply such standards to appropriate business park locations.

(It is noted that elements #7 through #9 could likely occur through the County planning process as well.)

In addition to the airport, the Punta Gorda area is in the process of adding significant commercial space in the Jones Loop Road area. This development will be of benefit to the community by reasonably diminishing the exportation of retail and related services dollars and associated employment from the community as well as by creating a potential magnet to attract increased dollars from neighboring markets.

However, benefits will be enhanced and potential negatives mitigated if such development works in tandem with downtown Punta Gorda and related activity in and near the waterfront. In an effort to insure the latter, it is suggested that:

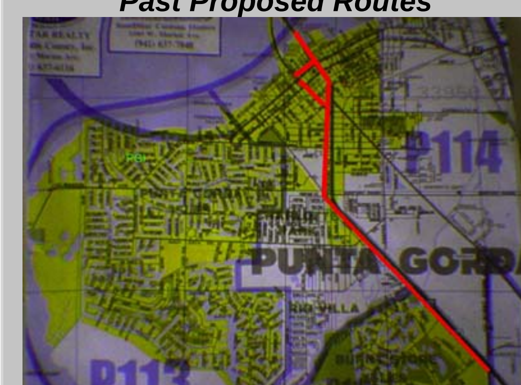
10. Vehicular transportation linkages should be established to move people from Jones Loop to downtown and also the reverse direction, without requiring the parties to use their personal vehicles. (This serves multiple purposes. If the parties are at Jones Loop and get back in their personal vehicles, there is a higher probability that they will leave the area versus going downtown. Second, such connections provide the visitors with what are hopefully two very different experiences. Third, it allows for "expansion of vehicle parking opportunities" for downtown at no additional cost for land or development of parking spaces in downtown where land costs have escalated. Fourth, it diminishes traffic congestion and degradation of the environment.)

11. A trolley or other small capacity vehicle with character should be employed on a very frequent regular schedule at least during the winter months and during downtown event activity.

12. The route that was indicated in the past presentations of the trolley concept linking the two areas should be studied in detail. It is critical that the trolley link Jones Loop activity to both the traditional main street area in downtown and the Fisherman's Village area of downtown.

13. Cooperative events and marketing should occur between downtown business interests and those at Jones Loop, promoting both interests and a range of activities.

Past Proposed Routes



The third critical asset that could become a more effective tool for Punta Gorda is Interstate-75. It is suggested that:

14. Signage should be placed near the entrance/exit on the interstate, indicating the historic district, downtown and the new auditorium/meeting facilities.

Further asset enhancements and development is promoted throughout the remainder of the strategy.

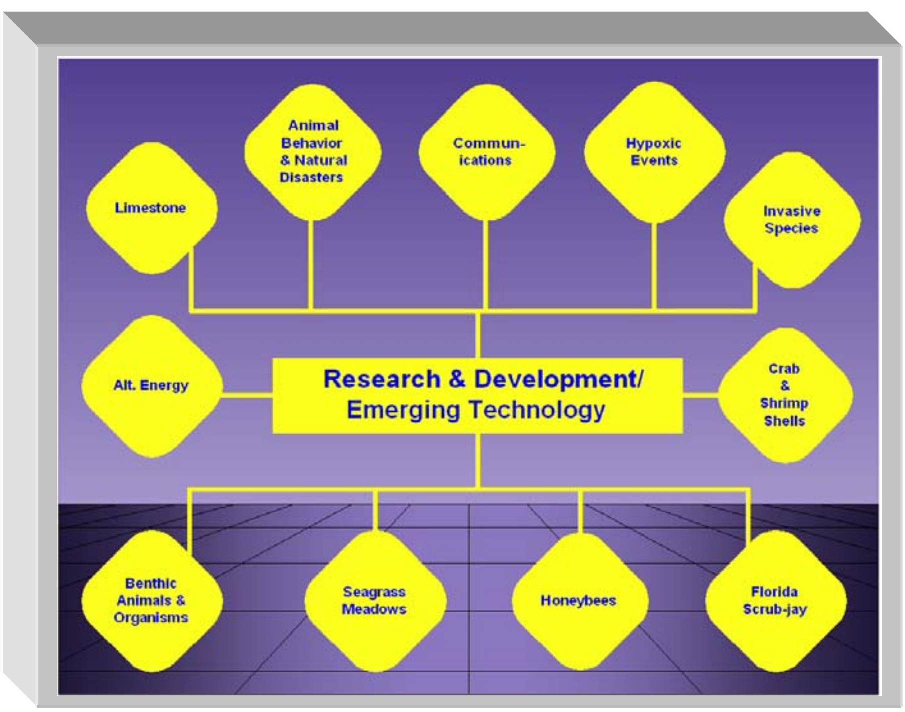
Create Sustainable Economic Diversity.

The future of economic activity will be based on the ability of our country to compete in the technology arena in every aspect of our lives. In an effort to create sustainable economic diversity in Punta Gorda and surrounding areas, several of the previous noted suggestions are directly related. Other suggestions follow.

15. Punta Gorda should pursue Research & Development activity that is based on its available natural resources. As previously identified, areas that are likely to yield promise are related to:

- ✓ ***15A***. Chitin use as derived from crab, shrimp and other crustacean shells.
- ✓ ***15B***. Control and use of invasive species for energy, medicine, etc.
- ✓ ***15C***. Expansion of rehabilitation and study associated with native wild animals at the Peace River Wildlife Center.
- ✓ ***15D***. The study of hypoxic events and the ability to use the brevetoxins.
- ✓ ***15F***. The study of neuronal architecture and episodic memory.
- ✓ ***15G***. The role of limestone in coal gasification technology and other areas.
- ✓ ***15H***. Eco-environmental research and monitoring.
- ✓ ***15I***. Deteriorating conditions and reversal of the decline of the honeybee.
- ✓ ***15J***. The role of seagrasses in projecting environmental conditions and in management of the environment.
- ✓ ***15K***. Comprehending interaction between benthic and pelagic animals.
- ✓ ***15L***. Utilization of animals in predicting future natural disasters and enhancing human predicting capacity.

There are two methods suggested for pursuing research and development. The first method is to directly recruit individual companies through a coordinated, continual process. ***16.*** The second method is to form a partnership or consortium. Fundamental to the R & D activity (as well as others) would be to ***17.*** establish a relationship with one or more higher education institutions.



"17." is suggested for the following reasons:

- ✓ It can help to form and solidify a partnership between the Federal, State, County, and municipal levels of government, insuring greater contact than now occurs and expanded relationships.

- ✓ It helps to expand higher education opportunities and potentially gives Punta Gorda and Charlotte County an additional new focus, image and ability to develop a "youth base."

- ✓ It potentially brings in larger interests and dollars.

- ✓ It has staying power, likely to be around for at least fifteen to twenty years.

- ✓ It is likely to yield, at present and in the future, high levels of employment for highly skilled individuals, increasing the potential to enhance "permanent resident" trends.

- ✓ The approach has proven to be successful elsewhere.

It is suggested that Punta Gorda and Charlotte County pursue the following consortium involving:

- ✓ ***16A. & 17A.*** Either a major new regional, national or international higher education institution or university or one that exists in the area at present. (The educational institution can be a community college evolving with four-year degree programs as well as technical training.)

- ✓ **16A. & 17B.** Focused research into products or product research and development unlikely to yield a private sector return for 10 to 15 years. The time frame is important since the time frame is such that no one company is likely to bare the cost on their own.

Because of the high costs and time frame for success with R & D activity in particular, ***16C. & 17C.*** the consortium approach might also require one or more partner companies along with the university or college to share research. State and Federal government funding and involvement are likely to be important as is the potential interest of one or more universities.

Similar research efforts, upon which the model is based, have and are being pursued elsewhere, most notably in New York. In researching the State of New York's successful private, public and educational R & D efforts, partnerships were identified that have produced a confluence of events and knowledge that worked to benefit each other. The initial effort was initiated by Kodak and has since been duplicated and fostered in other locations by the state government in New York.

Under the leadership of Corning, Kodak, Xerox and the State of New York, the "Center of Excellence" now collaborates with 20 academic institutions, including the University of Rochester, the Rochester Institute of Technology, Monroe Community College, the University at Albany, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Alfred University, Cornell University, Columbia University, NYU, and the City University of New York, to secure leadership positions in photonics, optics and fiber optics. (The use of light to transfer energy and information is making ever-faster and smaller devices possible, with wide applicability from medicine to telecommunications.)

In addition to the above, Punta Gorda in cooperation with Charlotte County should:

18. Recruit professional and other services for which the analysis identified gaps. These include:

- ✓ Offices of Certified Public Accountants
- ✓ Landscape Architectural Services
- ✓ Human Resources and Executive Search Consulting Services
- ✓ Environmental Consulting Services
- ✓ Advertising Agencies
- ✓ Janitorial Services

- ✓ Wired Telecommunications Carriers
- ✓ Remediation Services
- ✓ Commercial & Industrial Machinery & Equipment Repair & Maintenance
- ✓ Home & Garden Equipment Repair & Maintenance
- ✓ Re-upholstery and Furniture Repair
- ✓ Internet Service Providers
- ✓ Telecommunications Resellers
- ✓ Surveying and Mapping Services
- ✓ Temporary Help Services
- ✓ Security Guards and Patrol Services
- ✓ Landscape Services
- ✓ Offices of Mental Health Practitioners
- ✓ Home Health Care Services
- ✓ Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
- ✓ Food Service Contractors
- ✓ Caterers
- ✓ Commercial & Industrial Machinery & Equip. (except Auto & Electronic) Repair & Maintenance
- ✓ Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
- ✓ Bowling Centers
- ✓ Hotels and Motels
- ✓ Bed-and-Breakfast Inns

The above as well as other parts of the analyses and strategy indicate opportunities to expand business and residential activity in Punta Gorda and Charlotte County that is likely to involve recruitment. Those to be recruited might or will include:

- ✓ Developers
- ✓ Education Institutions
- ✓ Retail
- ✓ Service Providers
- ✓ Artists

In some ways, the success with the proposed economic strategy is dependent upon recruitment. Therefore, ***19.*** a recruitment program should be developed. The following are preliminary steps to establish a successful recruitment effort.

- ✓ ***19A.*** Decide who will administer and provide staff support for the recruitment effort in general.
- ✓ ***19B.*** Develop marketing materials oriented toward the types of entities to be solicited. (Materials could be flexible, alterable, and reproducible internally.)
- ✓ ***19C.*** Assure the ability to reproduce the materials on demand.
- ✓ ***19D.*** Develop lists of those to be solicited and update such lists regularly.
- ✓ ***19F.*** Develop a set schedule for phasing of the recruitment process so that the work load is distributed over time.
- ✓ ***19G.*** Establish funding to insure that the effort is continual for at least five years.

The marketing activity associated with recruitment would include:

- ✓ ***19H.*** Distribution of developed materials via direct mail; posting information on Punta Gorda's, Charlotte County's, both Chambers', and others web sites; advertising in select professional journals, if affordable; internet contact; and "cold call" door knocking for select interests.
- ✓ ***19I.*** Follow-up contact via telephone, internet and site visits to answer questions, gauge interest, etc.
- ✓ ***19J.*** In the case of developers, preparation of Request for Qualifications and Proposals, review and evaluation of the responses, and establishment of the relationship (such as between the development interest and the private property owner).
- ✓ ***19K.*** Continued follow-up, acting as an "ombudsman" for the process.

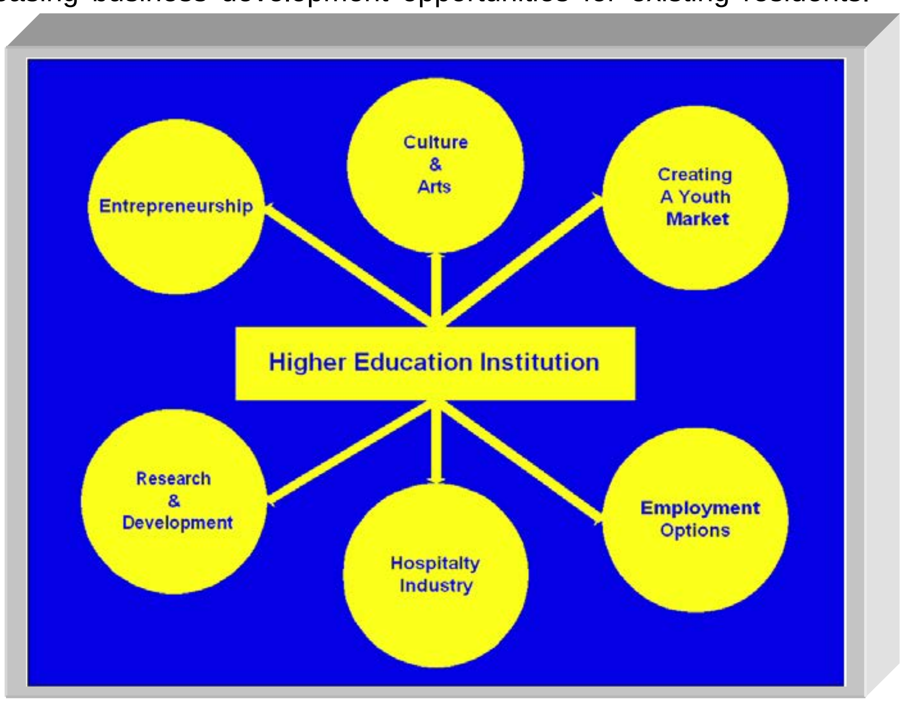
Punta Gorda and Charlotte County will continue to have limited staff and fiscal resources available for recruitment activity. Therefore:

- ✓ Only limited activity can be expected, whether monthly or quarterly. ***19L.*** The City and County with Team Punta Gorda, the Chambers of Commerce and other community interests should establish priorities and allocate the limited resources accordingly. The City and County could focus on one component of recruitment at a time. Other business oriented groups, such as the Chambers of Commerce, could assist in the process as well, focusing on others to be recruited. The amount of activity will largely depend upon the allocation of staff and volunteer resources.

Alter Employment Patterns & Area Demographics.

Expansion of employment opportunities into new areas and recruitment of activity for which there is demand or opportunities are ways to alter employment patterns. However, so too is focusing upon opportunities for current residents to economically advance. Several methods are suggested for assisting existing residents in having greater participation in the future economic health of the Punta Gorda area. These are:

20. Creating new ownership for existing and new businesses through entrepreneurship is both an adjunct and an alternative to recruiting new activity. This serves dual purposes of potentially leading to replacement of current owners as they retire and increasing business development opportunities for existing residents. ***20A.*** It can be effectuated through the community college, technical oriented higher education schools, and other colleges throughout Charlotte County and the larger Southwest Florida multi-county area. Relationships with the institutions could be established on a one-to-one basis.



Through the institution or institutions:

20B. Students can be identified with potentially entrepreneurship profiles and interests.
20C. A "training" process could be developed that would include:

- ✓ Certain business curricula courses.
- ✓ An internship with introduction and at least part-time work (including art production if appropriate) while attending school or training.
- ✓ An apprenticeship of 1 to 3 years working and learning in the businesses (or with other artists where applicable).
- ✓ Purchase, with previous ownership staying on in some capacity for 1 to 2 years, where applicable and possible.

20D. Business scholarships to attend business management courses, acquire specific industry skills, or acquire entrepreneurship skills could be arranged through cooperative partnerships. These partners could sponsor student apprenticeships, assist with financial planning, assist with housing and loft space, sharing of needed equipment through incubator activity, and procure resources for the purchase and financing of businesses if dealing with existing operations and change of ownership.

20E. It is noted that current owners of operations can also identify current employees with potential.

As noted above, the expansion of higher education activity in the area is important to this component as well. The areas of focus for new efforts and programs could include:

- ✓ Computer Arts and graphic skills.
- ✓ R & D.
- ✓ Business Training and entrepreneurship in general.
- ✓ Select Retail and hospitality activity, such as restaurants.

21. Expansion of business development activity and strengthening the fledgling business development center efforts in City Hall. The entrepreneurship could be a primary focus of a business development center for the area. Business development activity might include the above as well as:

- ✓ ***21A.*** Mentoring, composed of area retirees through SCORE.
- ✓ ***21B.*** Volunteer "Ambassadors" to assist with recruitment and composed of existing business owners and area retirees.

Establish a Unique Niche for Downtown Punta Gorda

In the minds of many area residents, economic development is synonymous with downtown activity. Concern was frequently expressed for the speed of recovery or change in downtown Punta Gorda. Much of this concern focused on three projects. These are the anticipated new auditorium, the reuse of the former courts building, and the "marketplace" project. While perceptions are reality to those that hold them, it is noted that in one case reconstruction of the project will be completed in the fall of 2007. The second has recently received approval for location and construction on the site; and the third is controlled by private sector interests that are in litigation over development related issues. In at least two of the three projects, major momentum has been building or is now visible.

It is within this context as well as the significant assets that the components of the strategy for downtown Punta Gorda were developed. The assets include:

- ✓ The Peace River flowing through downtown.
- ✓ Significant public dollars spent to enhance the waterfront.
- ✓ Quality open spaces.
- ✓ Continued expansion of facilities for boating interests.
- ✓ A range of activity generators.
- ✓ Regulations to preserve and enhance a pedestrian environment
- ✓ History of artistic and cultural endeavors.
- ✓ Historic character along the "traditional main street area.

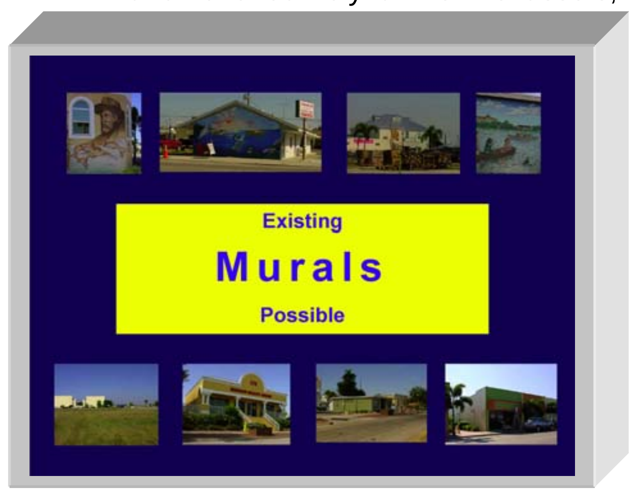
- ✓ Regulations to preserve and enhance a pedestrian environment.
- ✓ Environmentally sensitive areas for observation and educational purposes.
- ✓ The existence and linkage of Fisherman's Village that has helped to attract visitors to the area and has contributed to marketing of the community.
- ✓ Opportunities for expanded retail that includes 300,000 to 600,000 square feet of space.

To create a unique place that is competitive in the regional market and to effectively utilize the assets, downtown Punta Gorda should focus on:

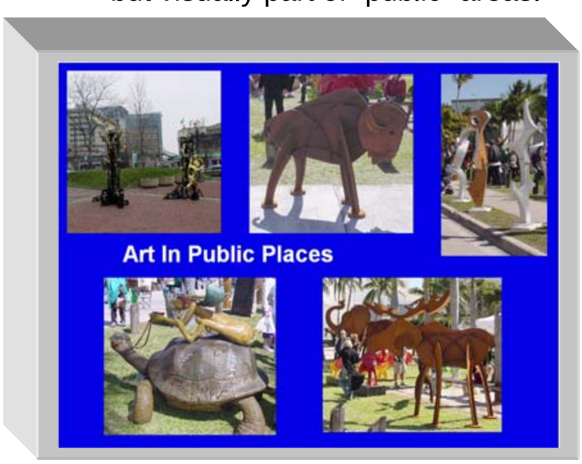
22. Re-establishing previous artistic niches within downtown. These include both murals and "Art in Public Places."

At a minimum, Punta Gorda should:

- ✓ ***22A.*** Identify public and private building facades for potential mural applications.
- ✓ ***22B.*** Identify sites for placement of art.
- ✓ ***22C.*** Purchase or provide insurance under the "city's blanket" for placement of art in public right-of-way or other areas on private property, but visually part of "public" areas.



- ✓ ***22D.*** Providing juried art contests at schools and in the community for mural designs and art.
- ✓ ***22F.*** Commission murals and art for public spaces and buildings.
- ✓ ***22G.*** Establish funds for matching or leveraged efforts on private buildings or provide bonus densities for incorporation of pedestrian and vehicular level murals and art.
- ✓ ***22H.*** Incorporate murals into designs of new structures through incentives at the planning phases.



23. Creating a "city market" and market atmosphere, linking the waterfront with the traditional main street area and Fisherman's Village.

It is noted that markets have a strong appeal to many people for a host of reasons including:

- ✓ The opportunity to see and purchase something new and different with every visit to the area.
- ✓ The ability to create constant pedestrian visual appeal and activity.
- ✓ The ability to purchase items that are often one-of-a-kind or considered quality because of an innovative character or uniqueness.

From the City's and downtown interests' perspectives, an outdoor market is not only appropriate for the climatic conditions, but in creating taxes, employment, excitement, and entrepreneurial activity in a period of pre-major private sector development. This latter is critical to downtown for psychological, economic, and physical reasons.

An excellent proposal had been previously put forth. The program was called "A Program to Jump-Start Downtown Economic Development" and was put forth by "Downtown Focus." Its purpose was "to get as many as 30 small businesses up and running in our downtown as quickly as possible." This is a purpose that is still valid. In fact, in some ways it is even more valid as it can be done without due duress with respect to high business insurance costs, taxes and other factors.

The defined benefits of that proposal are not dissimilar to those noted above and include, as defined in the proposal as:

- ✓ "Create a social/shopping district."
- ✓ Support existing downtown businesses.
- ✓ Energize downtown until bricks and mortar stores can open.
- ✓ Provide incubator opportunity for product/concept testing.

The proposal for the market suggested utilizing the "marketplace" project area as the temporary location and Laishley Park as a permanent location. The proposal also called for the market to "operate at least 3 days a week and be allowed up to 7 days." The proposed effort was named "Van Goghs-to-Mangoes" and was intended to offer opportunities to see and purchase goods from artists, high-end artisans, farmers, bakers, and fisherman. The artistic oriented participants were expected to be reviewed by juries to maintain quality; and the management was to be composed of merchants, Downtown Focus, and city groups.

The project's success was defined in the proposal as being based on the ability to have the "right vendors, right location, right management, right promotion," and "right mission." It is noted that these are essentially the same or true for any commercial venture.

It is suggested that:

✓ ***23A.*** The previous proposal be accepted and pursued with some minor changes.

✓ ***23B.*** The market's area, to the extent possible, run from Fisherman's Village, along the waterfront areas, to 41 and up to Marion Avenue in the traditional "main street" area.

✓ ***23C.*** An oversight committee be formed that is composed of downtown business interests, individuals with artistic jury experience, and City representatives, both administrative and legislative.

✓ ***23D.*** A specific purpose non-profit entity be formed to manage the market either by itself or in partnership with another for or not-for profit entity.

✓ **23E.** The project, in some form, be given the highest priority and be pursued in some manner as soon as possible, even if this means starting as an event with only a few days scheduled.

✓ ***23F.*** An experienced operator be pursued/ recruited as either a manager or owner of the market.

Essentially the market could be viewed as an evolution of the current Fisherman's Village artistic oriented events (only juried), coupled with the farmer's market. This activity could be linked as well to the proposed entrepreneurial activity.

Many of the previous elements associated with downtown Punta Gorda will impact the quality of activity and the ability of the pedestrian to move within downtown in a manner that provides comfort, enjoyment and convenience. Punta Gorda has also adopted development regulations that impact structural design for the downtown area. While many of the design elements and placement of murals and art are intended to create a visually appealing atmosphere for the pedestrian, and the application of the market is intended to create constant and changing activity; still other steps should be considered. These include:

24. Directing the amount of first floor space associated with retail operations and promoting active first floor activity (office, retail, service, etc.). It is suggested that first floor space associated with any individual retail user be limited in size to an amount where there would be at least three or more retail operations within one "standard" city block. The total first floor space for any retail or related service operation should be limited to 7,500 square feet.

25. Providing sufficient and dispersed off-street parking structures.

Critical to the success of downtown, because it is a major element or asset that makes the area distinctive from competitive areas like St. Armands Circle, is the interface with the water. Thus, enhanced Peace River waterfront activity is important when linked in a synergistic manner to other components of downtown Punta Gorda and other areas of the community. Enhanced waterfront activity, like some of the other strategy components, would impact virtually all goals.

As is the case with the proposed "city market," interests in the area have developed a conceptual plan. That plan is called "Pieces Of A Vision" and has been brought forth by The Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance. The Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance is composed of 15 area marine organizations and 6 marine businesses. The organizations are reported to have a total of 4,000 members or participants.

Some of the objectives of the Alliance and the plan that has been put forth are to enhance the waterfront through the following.

- ✓ "Maintain Current Waterfront Configuration
- ✓ Protect Usage Patterns of Today Citizens
- ✓ Build off Current Harbor Facilities
- ✓ Utilize Existing Infrastructure thru Dual Usage
- ✓ Develop Harbor as a Economic Contributor for the City
- ✓ Increase Profit Potential for Our Business Community
- ✓ Provide a Healthy Environment for New Businesses
- ✓ Create Substantial Employment Opportunities"

Potential Projects defined as being included or considered in the plan are:

- ✓ "Homeport Marina with Dry Storage
- ✓ Mooring Field (Short Mast)
- ✓ Transient Marina
- ✓ Launching Ramps
- ✓ Day Boater Marina
- ✓ Sailboat Marina
- ✓ Mooring Field (Tall Mast)
- ✓ Dinghy Docks"

The program also calls for two "marketing" efforts that would assist with differentiating Punta Gorda from other waterfront locations as well. These are certification or recognition as a:

- ✓ "Clean Marina": (Each facility on the waterfront would be "certified" as a Clean Marina in accordance with the standards established by Florida's Department of Environmental Protection Program (FEPA).")
- ✓ "Blue Flag Marina": ("The Blue Flag Program was born in France in 1985. Today it is a worldwide organization of 35 countries consisting of 635 marinas and 2472 beaches. Individual commitment to the program is obtained through a Blue Flag designation.")

The combination of the two would result in the waterfront being "a totally certified waterfront."

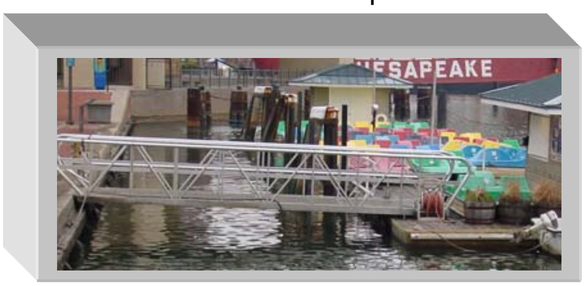
In concept, the composite of the proposal put forth is clearly beneficial to the downtown and Punta Gorda. However, it is possible that some proposed locations and concepts may be in conflict with or result in environmental concerns. It is therefore suggested that:

26. The concepts, not site specific details, should be incorporated into the economic development strategy.

27. The marketing concepts should be endorsed and adoption and certification pursued.

28. A "waterfront development group," under the auspices of economic development, should be formed or appointed.

29. Resources should be provided or obtained to analyze specific proposed concepts in detail.



30. A review of the practicality and legality of a "Marine Overlay District" or alternatives along the waterfront in general or specific pieces of it, if inappropriate for the whole, should take place.

In addition to the above, ***31.*** active waterfront recreation for non-boaters, particularly as it relates to the youth market, should be expanded along the Peace River waterfront. This could include a range of activities, such as paddle boating, canoe and kayak rentals, waterskiing, para-gliding, and others.

The pedestrian oriented amenities and Peace River enhancements are also part of the larger transportation system or infrastructure that impacts the viability of downtown. There are additional components of the strategy for the transportation network as well. In an effort to improve the network, the following suggestions are made.

32. Conduct an engineering and traffic analysis of the potential to convert the paired one-way streets of West Marion and West Olympic to a two-way system from Henry Street to 41. Such reversal has occurred in many downtowns throughout the country to assist with enhanced pedestrian environments without diminishing needed internal traffic flow.

33. Determine the feasibility of developing a trolley, tram, or like system that will move people throughout the downtown area on a regular basis, during season and for special events, at a minimum. ***34.*** If feasible, implement the system in a phased manner. A trolley or tram system would assist with eliminating traffic congestion while supporting significant expansion of activity in the downtown. Key elements that would be linked and coordinated are; stops associated with a Jones Loop-downtown trolley system, and clustered restaurant areas along Marion, downtown medical facilities, event facilities, boating, Fisherman's Village, and boat docking areas.

In addition, costs of operating and insurance costs have skyrocketed, making the conduct of sustainable business more difficult downtown as well as elsewhere in Punta Gorda (and in other parts of the region as well as many coastal areas elsewhere). As has been done by Chambers of Commerce in other locations with medical insurance, pooling of insurance purchases for commercial liability, etc. should be explored. If improved quotes can be obtained by pooling, than commercial insurance should be offered as part of membership benefits by both or either the Charlotte County or Punta Gorda Chambers of Commerce.

There are several additional elements that would enhance the infrastructure and competitive position in downtown. Those suggestions follow.

35. Punta Gorda should offer free access within the downtown area through wireless, broadband, or other future widely accepted or used communications technology.

36. Punta Gorda should recruit a national chain affiliated operator for one or two additional hotels/motel facilities in the downtown area. Such facilities are often part of meeting or conference facilities or are located nearby. The quality of the facilities is important as is the national chain affiliation. Mid-tier affiliates associated with major well-known reputable operators, such as Hilton, Hyatt, and Ramada, should be sought.

37. The City should consider mitigation of parking requirements on existing commercial space for conforming commercial uses. Since the building exists and the space in such buildings was at one time or another previously occupied, even if not currently occupied; little to no additional "historic" parking demand is generated by the re-occupancy of that space. Also, expansion of space by a maximum of 25% to allow for adjustments should not cause significant parking duress. In addition, these changes should help to enhance efforts to preserve existing structures, maintaining the character of downtown.

38. All existing natural areas within the downtown should remain in a natural state, but with accommodations for public access and viewing in an environmentally sensitive manner. Doing so could help to strengthen an eco-tourism base of activity.

Enhance the Business Climate

All previous suggestions are intended to enhance the business climate. Yet, there are others that could result in significant improvements for existing businesses as well that are both pragmatic and could be implemented in some form. These additional suggestions follow.

39. Make Punta Gorda and surrounding areas in Charlotte County a hub for eco-tourism activity associated specifically with birding. This would include developing:

- ✓ ***39A.*** Packages for bus trips to other areas while staying overnight in Punta Gorda, including accommodations, meals, and entertainment when available.

- ✓ ***39B.*** Packages, including tours of places/natural areas internal to Punta Gorda-Charlotte County, including accommodations, meals, and entertainment when available.

- ✓ ***39C.*** Special weekend "city market" art and photography events associated with wildlife.

This activity could ***39D.*** focus on or occur in both the "season" and "off-season."

For the past several years, ecotourism has been increasing in popularity. According to the Nature Conservancy, this industry may be defined as, "Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples."

According to the State Department, there are 900 million visits each year to federal lands alone for the purposes of ecotourism. In terms of future growth:

> "Trends in the U.S. ecotourism industry indicate growing numbers of educated ecotourists with average or above average annual family incomes, increases in the number of nature education and conservation programs, and increasing concern among the population about the degradation of resources due to poor management or overuse of ecotourism destinations."

To be counted as a "birder," an individual must have either taken a trip a mile or more from home for the primary purpose of observing birds or tried to identify birds. While there are discrepancies between information sources concerning the number of birders, it is important to note that there has been an increase in the number of birders since the 1990's. Their numbers are expected to continue to grow rapidly with demographic changes in the United States.

Table 50 - Change in Number and Percentage of Americans Who Participate in Birding*

Year	Millions of People	Percentage of Population
1982-1983	21.2	12%
1994-1995	54.1	27%
2000-2001	70.3	33%

*Source: USDA Forest Service

(It is noted that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service estimated the number of birders to be about 60% of this total, albeit a still significant 46 million, in 2001.)

While the number of birders grew and is expected to continue to grow from all regions, the largest number of new people involved comes from the South. According to the estimates the increase in numbers in the Northeast, Midwest and West are all roughly equal.

Table 51 - Number of People Newly Taking Up Birding Since 1993, by Region of the Country*

Region of Country	Millions added by 1995	Millions added by 2001
Northeast	6.8	9.8
Midwest	6.7	10
West	6.2	10.5
South	13.1	19

*Source: USDA Forest Service

According to the Forest Service, as of 2001, there are about 20 million enthusiasts age 16 or older. About 18% spend between 5 and 30 or more days per year on such "birding" activity.

Table 53 - Different Levels of Birding Participation: 2001*

Level of Participation	% of Americans 16+	Days per Year
No Participation	68.2	0
Least Active 1/3 (Occasionals)	9.2	1-4
Middle 1/3 (Actives)	8.5	5-29
Most Active (Enthusiasts)	9.5	30 0r More
Days not reported	4.6	NA

*Source: USDA Forest Service

The average bird watcher/birder is between 35 to 54 years of age. The second largest group is 55 or older. In other words, as the "baby boomers" age, the numbers are likely to continue to grow, even if the proportion of the population in the age categories does not in the foreseeable future.

Table 54 - Age Distribution of the U.S. Population and Birders: 2001 (in thousands)*

Age	U.S. Population	Number of Birders	Participation Rate
16 and 17	7,709	1,043	14%
18 to 24	22,234	1,894	9%
25 to 34	35,333	5,990	17%
35 to 44	44,057	10,414	24%
45 to 54	40,541	10,541	26%
55 to 64	25,601	7,177	28%
65 plus	36,823	8,893	24%
Total	212,298,000	45,952,000	22%

*Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2001

Most birders have household incomes of at least $50,000. The largest participation rates are by those over $75,000. The largest, in terms of actual numbers, is between $50,000 and $74,000, with the second largest group, in terms of numbers, $100,000 or more.

Table 55 - Income Distribution of the U.S. Population and Birders: 2001 (in thousands)*

Income	U.S. Population	Number of Birders	Participation Rate
Less than $10,000	10,594	2,212	21%
$10,000 to $19,000	15,272	2,754	18%
$20,000 to $24,000	10,902	2,335	21%
$25,000 to $29,000	11,217	2,392	21%
$30,000 to $34,000	11,648	2,618	22%
$35,000 to $39,000	9,816	2,005	20%
$40,000 to $49,000	16,896	4,116	24%
$50,000 to $74,000	31,383	7,476	24%
$75,000 to $99,000	17,762	4,771	27%
$100,000 or more	19,202	5,224	27%

*Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2001

Most birders have a minimum education level of at least have one to three years of college. Participation rates are greatest among those with 5 or more years of college.

Table 56 - Educational Distribution of the U.S. Population and Birders: 2001 (in thousands)*

Highest Education Level	U.S. Population	# of Birders	Participation Rate
11 years or less	32,820	4,627	14%
12 years	73,719	13,933	19%
1 to 3 years college	49,491	11,363	23%
4 years college	34,803	8,922	26%
5 years or more college	21,646	7,107	33%

*Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2001

72% of birders are married. “Anglos” & “Native Americans” have highest participation rates. The “Hispanic” birding population is on the rise, which is significant considering their growing presence.

Table 57 - Racial & Ethnic Distribution of the U.S. Population and Birders: 2001 (in thousands)*

Race/Ethnicity	U.S. Population	Number of Birders	Participation Rate
Hispanic	21,910	1,880	9%
White	181,129	43,026	24%
African American	21,708	1,243	6%
Native American	1,486	321	22%
Asian	7,141	436	6%
Other	833	55	7%

*Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2001

While Woodland areas continue their dominance, birders seeking activities like those offered in the general Florida region do not lag behind by much as found in Table 58.

Table 58 - Sites Visited by Away-From-Home Birders: 2001 (in thousands)*

	Number of Birders	%
All birders	18,342	100
Woodland	13,405	73
Lake and Streamside	12,615	69
Brush-covered areas	11,324	62
Open field	11,184	61
Marsh, wetland, swamp	8,632	47
Man-made area	5,770	31
Oceanside	4,921	27

*Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2001

47% of those pursuing birding enjoy wetland viewing areas more than other areas. Other activities which they partake of or associated with the same trips or while doing birding include:

- ✓ Visit Historic Sites
- ✓ Sightseeing
- ✓ Wildlife Viewing
- ✓ Picnicking
- ✓ Visit Nature Centers
- ✓ Family Gatherings
- ✓ Walking

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, food and beverage purchases made up the majority of the retail trade sector purchases.

Table 59 - Trip-Related Expenditures by Birders: 2001 (in thousands)*

Spending	$
Total, trip-related	$7,409,679
Food & beverage	$2,646,224
Lodging	$1,851,206
Public transportation	$682,202
Private transportation	$1,790,951
Guide fees, pack trip or package fees	$110,374
Private land use fees	$48,999
Public land use fees	$108,414
Boating costs	$135,381
Heating and cooking fuel	$35,928

*Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2001

Some retail expenditures are found below. This has implications to the viability of potential spin-off activities.

Table 60 - Equipment and Other Expenses: 2001 (in thousands)*

Spending Item	$
Total, equipment and other expenses	$24,276,994
Wildlife-watching equipment, total	$6,010,141
• Binoculars, spotting scopes	$471,264
• Cameras, video cameras, special lenses & other photographic equip.	$1,431,807
• Film and developing	$837,868
• Bird food	$2,239,259
• Nest boxes, bird houses, feeders, baths	$628,060
• Daypacks, carrying cases and special clothing	$288,648
• Other wildlife-watching equipment (such as field guides, and maps)	$113,235
Auxiliary equipment, total	$523,700
• Tents, tarps	$163,999
• Frame packs and backpacking equipment	$121,217
• Other camping equipment	$238,835
• Other auxiliary equipment (such as blinds)	$117,267
Special equipment, total	$11,158,302
• Off-the-road vehicle	$5,512,624
• Travel or tent trailer, pickup, camper, van, motor home	$4,657,752
• Boats, boat accessories	$946,688
• Other	$41,238
Magazine	$297,780
Land leasing and ownership	$4,197,666
Membership dues and contributions	$808,101
Plantings	$639,986

*Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2001

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that in 2001, the birding industry resulted in $31.7 billion in retail sales spending, 863,000 jobs and $84.9 billion in economic benefits.

Table 61 - Economic Impact of Birders: 2001*

Item	$
Retail Sales (expenditures)	$31,686,673,000
Economic Output	$84,931,020,000
Salaries and Wages	$24,882,676,000
Jobs	863,406
State Income taxes	$4,889,380,000
Federal Income taxes	$7,703,308,000

*Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2001

The following represents the type of facility in which the birders normally stay upon making related trips.

- ✓ Hotel/Motel (38%)
- ✓ RV Park/Campground (35%)
- ✓ Bed and Breakfast (17%)
- ✓ Home of Family Friend
- ✓ Other

40. Establish a consistent and quality business retention effort with and through the two Chambers of Commerce, the County's economic development arm and the new economic development program associated with the City of Punta Gorda and this strategy effort (defined as Committee elsewhere in this document) This would include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- ✓ ***40A.*** Surveys of individual operations. These would be annual and preferably one-on-one, peer-to-peer and face-to-face through a cooperative effort of a consortium of representatives from the staff of the Chambers and County, Boards of these organizations, retirees associated with Team Punta Gorda, and others. The survey will define opportunities for necessary changes in local regulations; assistance with growing operations; assistance with potential needs focused on ownership retirements; and at the very least, maintain a continuous dialogue, sensitizing government interests to business needs and the reverse.

- ✓ ***40B.*** Establishing a strong Business-to-Business Program with incentives for buying local, particularly in the service sector.

Labor force expansion will be required to pursue almost any economic development effort that expands activity because the unemployment rate is low. This will require housing that is affordable to workers at a variety of levels. ***41.*** To make additional housing available in the future, incentives are likely to be required. ***41A.*** Incentives should be analyzed to determine their potential impact. Possible incentives to support building affordable housing that have met with success in other communities include:

- ✓ ***41B.*** Waiver of utility hook-ups and related fees.
- ✓ ***41C.*** Waiver of impact fees on affordable units when part of larger developments or when self-contained.
- ✓ ***41D.*** Leasing or selling of public land and buildings.
- ✓ ***41F.*** Write-downs of property.
- ✓ ***41G.*** Tax deferrals.
- ✓ ***41H.*** Bonus densities for affordable units.

The community has two other assets or resources that are underutilized. These are the large number seniors and the medical institutions found both in Punta Gorda and Charlotte County. A variety of suggestions have already been made, enhancing the utilization of the first. However, given the large number of "baby boomers and beyond" in the United States, there is no reason that the large concentration of seniors in this area could not become a focal point for innovation with regard to heart, cancer, Alzheimer's and other disease treatments for which the numbers inflicted in the future will grow substantially on a national basis. ***42.*** Expansion of medical research into this population should be sought in cooperation with and through the medical institutions, physicians and potential higher education institutions.

The County and Punta Gorda have taken steps to mitigate conflicts. ***43.*** However, cooperation with respect to land use, marketing, developer recruitment processes and other components of this strategy will require more and broader involvement by definition. This should occur through regular meetings at the administrative, planning and elected official levels.

New funding or establishing different priorities will be necessary to effectuate change. Funding will be required for many of the components. While public grants and resources can be sought, the resources available in the private sector community far exceed those in the public sector.

44. It is suggested that Punta Gorda, Charlotte County and the Chambers pursue an "Economic Development Capital Fund" in concept that is similar to the following.

- ✓ An Economic Development Capital Fund would be identical to any traditional "mutual fund," with a few critical exceptions. The fund would be established by and as part of any traditional brokerage. Money is invested, not "given" to the fund. It can be removed by the individual investors after a set time frame or at any time if replaced by other investor funds. However, unlike other funds, a proportion of the earned income is "given" to a designated 501(c)(3) organization that would invest the money in economic development activity in the area. The investor would get an annual tax deduction for the contribution as well as the return on the remainder not given to the tax exempt entity.

  While the direct funds reinvested would be lower than in a traditional fund, the total "return" is only marginally different because of the accrued tax benefit.

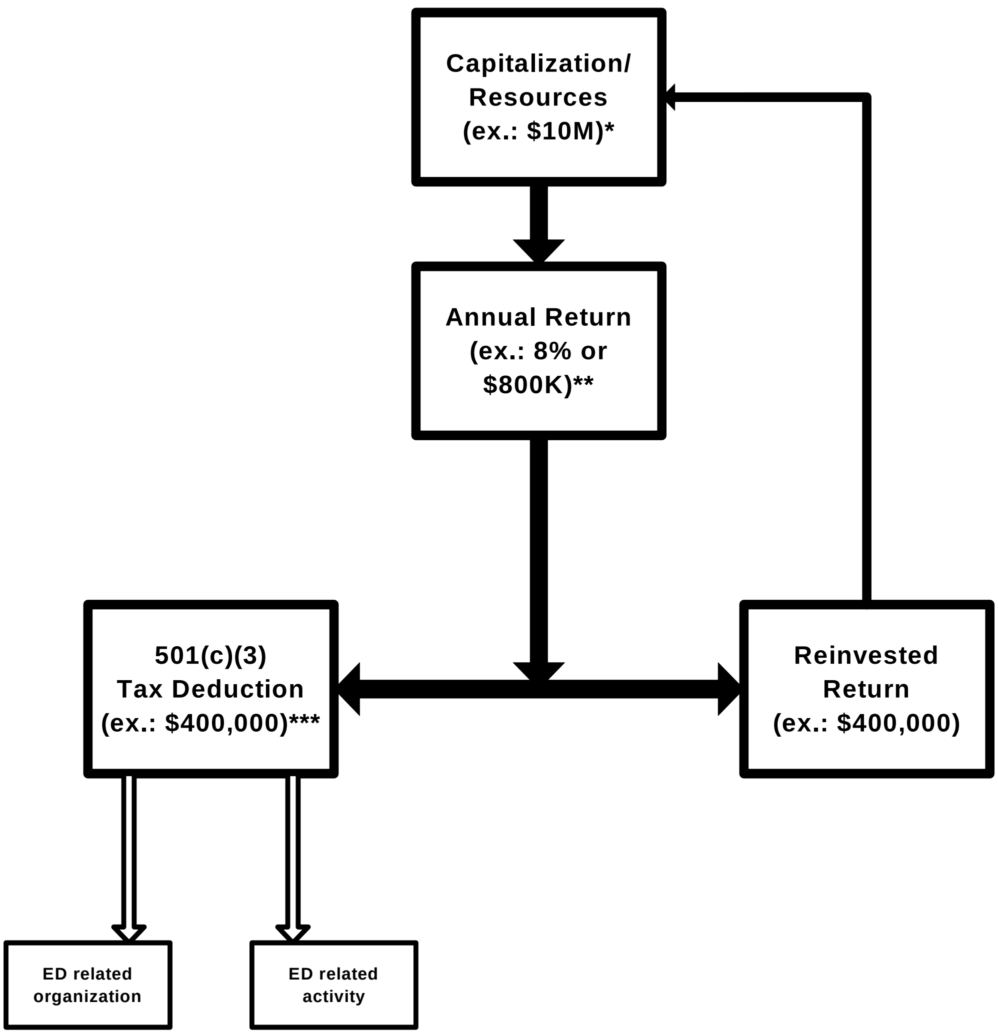
  In the illustration that follows, a "capitalization" of $10 million is used. These funds could come from individual investors, corporate interests, pension funds, private pension resources, etc. The illustration assumes an annual return of 8%.

  This figure is conservative, well below returns recorded in the recent past by managed funds. Assuming only an 8% return, $400,000 would be earmarked for the non-profit, with the tax benefit of the contribution accruing; and the other one-half would be reinvested. Capital would continue to accumulate, but the "gift" amount would hold constant. Thus, the proportion of the return, but not the actual dollar amount "granted" to the non-profit of the total resources and earned income would diminish annually. The cap of dollars could be "set" from the onset, so that returns greater than 8%, if achieved, would resort in greater capital accumulation, not added "grants."

  The new resources could be used for a variety of purposes, including but not limited to any of the program elements

The following illustration provides a synopsis of how the fund would work.

Economic Development Capital Fund



*Considered minimal initial capitalization amount. Amount capitalized grows annually based on reinvestment.

**Return estimates likely to be understated significantly. Dollar amount could be capped or percentage.

***Resources available for community and economic development activity

Program Synopsis Chart

The following table provides a synopsis of the proposed program components. Estimated time frames for implementation are noted. Short-term is defined as being less than 2 years. Mid-term is defined as two to five years. Long-term is longer than five years.

Table 62 – Synopsis of Economic Development Program Elements*

Element	Who Responsible	Time Frame	Other
Enhance the Utilization of the Area's Assets			
1. Insure vehicular access and land adjacent to airport developed as quality business parks.	Airport Authority, County, State, City	Long-term	
2. Limit the amount of retail, related services and transient accommodations in the business parks is limited.	County, Airport Authority, City	Short-term	
3. Maintain/create enhanced vehicular access to the interstate and state highway network.	County, State, Federal	Long-term	
4. Maintain or improve the interstate and state highway access to areas beyond Charlotte County and Punta Gorda.	County, State, Federal	Long-term	
5. Maintain, and enhance public infrastructure, including communications technology for business parks.	Airport Authority, County	Mid-term	
6. Adjust boundaries to bring land around the airport and land in between the airport and its current boundaries into the City's domain.	City, County	Mid-term	
7. Develop appropriate land use plans for new areas.	City, County	Mid-term	
8. Examine the feasibility of developing the area as one Planned Unit Development or through an "overlay district."	Airport Authority, City, County	Short-term	

Table 62 Continued – Synopsis of Economic Development Program Elements*

Element	Who Responsible	Time Frame	Other
9. Establish high quality business park standards and apply such standards to appropriate business park locations.	Airport Authority, County, City		
10. Establish public vehicular transportation linkages between Jones Loop and downtown.	City, Chambers	Mid-term	
11. Employ a trolley or other small capacity vehicle with character on a frequent regular schedule at least during the winter months and during downtown event activity.	City, Chambers, County	Mid or Long-term	
12. Study in detail the route that is indicated in past presentations of the trolley concept linking the two areas.	City, Chambers	Short-term	
13. Pursue cooperative events & marketing of downtown and Jones Loop, promoting both interests and range of activities.	Chambers, City	Short and Mid-term	
14. Place signage near entrance/exit on the interstate, indicating the historic district, downtown and the new auditorium/ meeting facilities.	Chambers, City, County, State, Federal	Short-term	

Table 62 Continued – Synopsis of Economic Development Program Elements*

Element	Who Responsible	Time Frame	Other
Create Sustainable Economic Diversity.			
15. Pursue Research & Development activity that is based on its available resources.	County, City, Airport Authority, Chambers, Team Punta Gorda	Long-term	-Chitin use as derived from crab, shrimp and other crustacean shells. -Control and use of invasive species for energy, medicine, etc. -Expansion of rehabilitation and study associated with the Peace River Wildlife Center. -Study of hypoxic events and the ability to use the brevetoxins. -Study of neuronal architecture and episodic memory. -The role of limestone in coal gasification technology and other areas. -Eco-environmental research and monitoring. -Deteriorating conditions and reversal of the decline of the honeybee. -The role of seagrasses in projecting environmental conditions and in management of the environment. -Comprehending interaction between benthic and pelagic animals. -Utilization of animals in predicting future natural disasters and enhancing human predicting capacity.
16. Pursue R & D through a partnership or consortium.	County, City, Chambers, Educational Institutions	Short to mid-term	-Focus research on products or product research and development unlikely to yield a return for 10 to 15 years. -The consortium approach might require one or more partner companies along with a university.
17. Establish a relationship with one or more higher education institutions.	County, City, Chambers, Team Punta Gorda	Short-term	-Either a major new regional, national or international university or one that exists in the area at present.
18. Recruit professional and other services for which the analysis identified gaps.	Committee	Short and Mid-term	

Table 62 Continued – Synopsis of Economic Development Program Elements*

Element	Who Responsible	Time Frame	Other
19. Develop a recruitment program	Committee	Short-term	-Decide who will administer and provide staff support for the recruitment effort. -Develop marketing materials oriented toward the types of entities to be solicited. - Assure the ability to reproduce the materials on demand internally. -Develop lists of those to be solicited. -Develop a set schedule for phasing of the process. -Establish funding to insure that the effort is continual for at least five years. -Distribute materials. -Follow-up with contact to answer questions, gauge interest, etc. -For developers, prepare a Request for Qualifications and Proposals. -Act as an "ombudsman" for the process. -The City and County with the communities should establish priorities and allocate resources.
Alter Employment Patterns & Area Demographics.			
20. Create new ownership for existing and new businesses through entrepreneurship.	Committee	Mid and Long-term	-Effectuated through the community college and other colleges throughout Charlotte County and the larger multi-county area. -Through the institutions students can be identified with entrepreneurship profiles and interests. -Establish a "training" process. -current owners of operations can also identify current employees with potential.
21. Expand business development activity and strengthening the fledgling business development center efforts in City Hall.	City, County	Short and Mid-term	-Entrepreneurship could be a primary focus of a business development center for the area. -Mentoring, composed of area retires through SCORE. -Volunteer "Ambassadors" can assist with recruitment and composed of existing business owners and area retires.

Table 62 Continued – Synopsis of Economic Development Program Elements*

Element	Who Responsible	Time Frame	Other
Establish a Unique Niche for Downtown Punta Gorda			
22. Reestablishing previous artistic focuses within downtown, including murals and other "Art in Public Places."	City, Chambers, Tourism	Short-term	-Identify public and private building sites for potential mural applications. -Identify sites for placement of other art. -Provide insurance under the "city's blanket" for placement of art in public right-of-way or other areas on private property. -Proving juried art contests for mural designs and art. -For public spaces and buildings, commission murals and art. -Establish funds for leveraged efforts on private buildings or provide bonus densities for incorporation of pedestrian and vehicular level murals and art. -Incorporate murals into designs of new structures through incentives at the planning phases.
23. Create a "city market" and market atmosphere, linking the waterfront with the traditional main street area and Fisherman's Village.	City, Chambers, Tourism	Short and Mid-term	-Accepted and pursued, with some minor changes, the previous market proposal. -Stage the market from Fisherman's Village, along the waterfront, to 41 and to Marion Avenue in the traditional "main street" area. -Form an oversight committee. -Form a specific purpose non-profit entity to manage the market either by itself or in partnership with another for or not-for profit entity. -Given the effort the highest priority and be pursued in some manner as soon as possible, even if this means starting as an event. -Pursue an experience operator as either a manager or owner of the market.
24. Control the amount of first floor space associated with retail operations and promote active first floor activity.	City	Short-term	-First floor space e for any retail or related service operation would be limited to 7,500 square feet.
25. Provide sufficient and dispersed off-street parking structures.	City	Mid and long-term	

Table 62 Continued – Synopsis of Economic Development Program Elements*

Element	Who Responsible	Time Frame	Other
26. Incorporate the concepts developed by The Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance, not site specific details, into this economic development strategy.	City	Short-term	
27. Endorse the marketing concepts and pursue certification of "Clean Marina" and "Blue Flag Marina."	City, Chambers, County, Tourism	Short-term	-Support letters, adoption or resolution passage
28. Form or appoint a "waterfront development group," under the auspices of economic development.	City	Short-term	
29. Provide or obtain resources to analyze specific proposed concepts in detail.	City, Chambers, Boater Alliance, State	Short-term	
30. Review the practicality and legality of a "Marine Overlay District" or alternative.	City	Short-term	
31. Incorporate active water recreation for non-boaters, particularly as it relates to the youth market.	City, County, State	Short and Mid-term	
32. Conduct an engineering and traffic analysis of the potential to convert the paired one-way streets of West Marion and West Olympic to a two-way system from Henry Street to 41.	City	Short-term	
33. Determine the feasibility of developing a trolley/tram system that will move people throughout downtown, during season and for special events at a minimum.	City, Chambers, State, Tourism	Short and Mid-term	
34. If feasible, implement the system in a phased manner.	City, Chambers, Tourism, State	Short and Mid-term	

Table 62 Continued – Synopsis of Economic Development Program Elements*

Element	Who Responsible	Time Frame	Other
35. Offer free wireless, or future widely accepted communications technology access within the downtown area.	City, Chambers	Short and Mid-term	
36. Recruit national chain affiliated hotel/motel operators for the downtown area.	Committee	Short and Mid-term	
37. Consider mitigation of parking requirements on existing space.	City, Chambers	Short-term	-Include expansion of space by a maximum of 25% to allow for adjustments.
38. Maintain all existing natural areas in a natural state, but with public access & viewing opp.	City	Short, Mid and Long-term	
Enhance the Business Climate			
39. Make the area a hub for eco-tourism activity associated specifically with birding.	Tourism, Chambers, Committee	Mid-term	-Prepare and market packages for bus trips, accommodations, & meals. -Develop special weekend "city market" art & photography events associated with wildlife. -Focus on both "season" & "off-season."
40. Establish a consistent and quality business retention effort.	Committee	Short-term	
41. Foster additional workforce housing in the future through incentives.	City, County, Community-based housing groups or Community Development Corporations	Short and Mid-term	-Analyze incentives to determine their potential impact, including waiver of utility hook-ups & related fees, waiver of impact fees, leasing or selling of public land and buildings, write-downs of property, tax deferrals, and bonus densities.
42. Expand medical research.	Committee, Med. Institutions, Education Inst.	Mid and Long-term	-Focus on senior based diseases.
43. Expand City-County cooperation with respect to land use, marketing, recruitment and other components of strategy.	City, County	Short and Mid-term	
44. Pursue an "Economic Development Capital Fund" in concept.	Committee, Chambers	Short and Mid-term	-Establish fund not as a gift, but investment, like a mutual fund only with a portion of the return used for economic development purposes. -Investor given tax incentive along with return on capital.

*Developed by The Chesapeake Group, Inc., 2007.