

2040

City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan

#6

*Community
Facilities & Services
Element*



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An important aspect of community facilities planning is the role of government within the community and what functions are assumed, what services are rendered, and the question of whether they will remain adequate in the future. The community facilities and services evaluated in this section consist of those facilities and functions that serve the residents of Punta Gorda. Those facilities discussed are the Punta Gorda City Hall and Annex Building, City Maintenance Operations, City Police, City Fire, Recreation and Open Space Systems, Water and Wastewater Systems, and the City Stormwater Facilities. The County facilities discussed, but not evaluated, in this report are the Courthouse, Public Library, County Landfill, and the Charlotte County Public Schools that serve the residents of the City of Punta Gorda. In addition, this element identified some of the health, social and cultural facilities and services that are available to the residents of the City. All of these facilities serve a population greater than the City, but each has a great influence on the quality of life and the commerce of the City.

II. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the *Community Facilities and Services Element* is to identify the locations and arrangements of civic and community centers, public schools, hospitals, libraries, police and fire stations and other public facilities. This element identifies not only the City facilities but also other facilities and services

available to the community. The element provides the effective coordination efforts of the agencies, such as the school boards or hospital authorities, having public development and service responsibilities, capabilities, and potential but not having land development regulatory authority.

Relationship to the City's Comprehensive Plan

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

- ❖ The *Future Land Use Element* allows the land development authority to locate the specific facilities needed to maintain the adopted level of services standards at the time the development impacts occur. It is through the *Future Land Use Element* and the Future Land Use Map that the City's growth management strategy is fully implemented. Therefore, it is essential that the uses prescribed by the Future Land Use Map be consistent with sound urban development policies which promote compatibility between development activities.
- ❖ The *Conservation Element* inventories and describes the City's existing and proposed natural preserves and conservation areas within and adjacent to the City.
- ❖ The Coastal Management Element inventories and describes the City's existing coastal areas and their importance to the City's economy and tourism industries within and adjacent to the City.

- ❖ The *Infrastructure Element* is divided into three sections pertaining to Stormwater, Solid Waste and the provision of Sewer and Potable Water services. It connects to the *Future Land Use Element* through the impacts the proposed facilities have on the existing level of service at the time the proposed facilities are completed. Facility site location criteria and overall policies regarding the City's infrastructure must be taken into consideration during the establishment of levels of service for water and sewer facilities if the adopted level of service is to be maintained at the time the development impacts occur.
- ❖ The *Recreation and Open Space Element* identifies the potential recreational opportunities available to the residents of the City. Such opportunities typically include passive recreation, outdoor education, community gardening, and resource-oriented activities such as hiking, boating and camping.
- ❖ The *Transportation Element* deals with the City's road network and addresses port and aviation facilities, bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways. The policies of the *Transportation Element* must reflect those of *Future Land Use Element* to ensure that roads are sited in the most appropriate areas possible and that these roads are designed in a manner which minimizes impacts to the surrounding land uses and promote a pedestrian friendly community.
- ❖ The *Housing Element* lists and identifies the availability of the community facilities and services which affect peoples' housing decisions.
- ❖ The *Capital Improvements Element* allocates sufficient funds in a timely manner for the efficient provision of public facilities and services. It includes a list of projected costs and revenue sources by type of public facilities for a five year period; many of those facilities are identified within this element.
- ❖ The Historical Element lists those historical components of our City's past and identifies their importance to the community. The City provides services to some of the facilities.

III. LEGISLATION

Federal Regulations

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

State Regulations

Florida Statutes

Chapter 163

Chapter 163 of the *Florida Statutes* has specific requirements that relate to ways of dealing with growth management. Adopted levels of service standards need to be maintained and to meet existing and future facility needs. The land development process should be managed "so that public facility needs created by previously issued land development orders or future development do not exceed the ability of the local government to fund and

provide or require provision of the needed capital improvements.” Chapter 163.3177(1) states that the comprehensive plan shall provide the principles, guidelines, standards, and strategies for the orderly and balanced future economic, social, physical, environmental, and fiscal development of the area that reflects community commitments to implement the plan and its elements. These principles and strategies shall guide future decisions in a consistent manner and shall contain programs and activities to ensure comprehensive plans are implemented. The sections of the comprehensive plan containing the principles and strategies, generally provided as goals, objectives, and policies, shall describe how the local government’s programs, activities, and land development regulations will be initiated, modified, or continued to implement the comprehensive plan in a consistent manner.

Chapter 187

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

Strategic Regional Policy Plan

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council’s Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) states specific regional goals with which local government comprehensive plans must be consistent. There are policies in the regional plan relating to the siting of public facilities in order to discourage urban sprawl. The City aims to provide services and infrastructure in a compact and contiguous development pattern within the urban area. The Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) for Southwest Florida provides a long range guide for the physical, economic, and social development of the region. The overall purpose of the SRPP is to steer the region toward a more healthy and sustainable future. The SRPP is not merely a plan for the Council; it is a plan for the region and all those who are active participants in shaping its future.

Local Regulations

City Code of Ordinances

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

City Comprehensive Plan

The City’s Comprehensive Plan provides the growth management strategies necessary for the City to meet future population growth

and subsequent infrastructure and service demands. Legislative changes since the adoption of the previous Comprehensive Plan required the revision of the procedures for the submittal and adoption of comprehensive plans. Through these changes local governments now have more discretion in determining the need to update their plans. If local governments determine the need to amend their plans to reflect changes in state requirements or their own local conditions then the local government is required to submit the proposed amendments to the State Land Planning Agency, the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).

IV. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Administration

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

- ❖ A seat of authority
- ❖ A place of assembly
- ❖ A departmental complex
- ❖ A depository of records

The objective of the City's administrative offices is the development and implementation of sound municipal management structure and processes that provide for efficient operations. This strategy will strengthen the City's standing with

financial institutions and sets in place measures of performance for the organization as a whole and within each department.

Funding is the single greatest challenge to the planning of community facilities and services and more specifically the operation and maintenance of such facilities. The uncertainty of the impact of the fiscal year and future budgets will bring many challenges to the organization over the next planning decade. Nonetheless, the City continues to meet its obligations to provide the necessary services to meet growing demands. Specific needs for and benefit of public facilities and services must be identified to provide the facilities necessary to service the population efficiently and in financially feasible manner.

The City owns and maintains a variety of facilities ranging from government administration buildings, public utilities, to roads and swales. Map #46 – City of Punta Gorda Administrative Facilities, shows the locations of the City's administration buildings and the public works facilities.

Map #46 - City of Punta Gorda Administrative Facilities



Facility Siting

Facility siting is an issue which must be given careful attention due to the City's coastal location. Siting of any facility outside of the Category two (2) Hurricane Vulnerability Zone is extremely difficult since most of the City's population centers are within the Category two (2) or less vulnerability zone. The majority of the City's platted communities exist within these areas. *The Coastal Management Element* of this Comprehensive Plan identifies much of the City's land as platted within the Category two (2) or less storm surge zones. The majority of this platting occurred prior to the passage of the Growth Management Act in 1985. Although there is a severe shortage of suitable facilities to be used as emergency shelters, some progress has been made in establishing additional "refuge sites" to provide additional spaces.

Considerations for Facilities Planning

In siting City facilities, the government implements sound compact and contiguous urban techniques. Through the implementation of the land development regulations, the City will promote a coherent built environment which respects local historical and regional architecture, an integrated and balanced transportation system, adequate provision of utility infrastructure, schools, parks, other public necessities, as well as the preservation of the natural environment.

Given the continuing tax cuts the City is facing, it will be imperative to review projects carefully. Alternative methods of funding will need to be sought. These funding methods may include partnerships, grants and tax credits.

The City prioritizes the siting of urban services to focus them on existing developed areas. Various departments identify needs for new facilities at different times, and have different expectations of how quickly their needs should be met. Established timing procedures with set lead times, provides future facilities in an equitable and efficient manner. A five (5) year capital improvement plan is reviewed and updated annually identifying the facilities to be built or expanded in the following five (5) years; however, there is no indexing system which identifies variables that indicate a need for construction. A master plan for space programming which includes projections for growth would be helpful in timing the provision of local government facilities.

Government Center Complex

The Punta Gorda City Hall is centrally located in the City's Central Business District. The original City Hall, built in 1926, and listed on the National Register, underwent a major expansion in 1978 and contains the City Council's meeting room, the Office of the City Clerk and the Finance Department. The expansion added a new City Council meeting room and offices. In 1991, a City Hall Annex was constructed on adjoining City property and houses the offices of the City Manager, Human Resources, IT Services, Purchasing, Legal, Building, Growth Management (including the Urban Design, and Zoning Departments) and Code Enforcement

Departments. Budgetary cutbacks eliminated Building personnel and room was made available to include the Collections Division of the Utilities Department.

The historic Punta Gorda City Hall serves the largest concentration of population by virtue of its Central Business District location. The District contains a substantial number of daytime workers, as well as persons engaged in shopping and business activities. As the population increases, the demand for services will become greater and consequently will place more emphasis upon City Hall space. The existing City Hall and Annex offices are expected to meet future staffing space demands through the next planning decade. Previous improvements to the parking area will serve the community and the surrounding area for the next decade. Expansion of the City Council Chambers will be considered when population data identifies the need to properly facilitate the number of concerned citizens participating in public meetings.

Public Works & Utility Campus

The Punta Gorda Public Works Campus consists of a variety of City departments and buildings in a new facility located just outside of the City boundaries. In reviewing the growing needs of the City and considering the surrounding residential development, the Public Works and Utilities Departments were relocated in an area more suitable for this type of facility. A Public Works yard was included in the design and construction of the Public Works Campus.

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

Administration

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

Canal Maintenance

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

Engineering

Engineering is a service-oriented division that provides technical support and services to City departments, issues canal construction special permits, performs surveys and grade shots for City projects, project management and inspection duties on Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), and department projects. The Engineering Division is also the point of contact for information relating to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Permit.

Parks & Grounds

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

Facilities Maintenance

The Facilities Maintenance Division provides routine maintenance for all City buildings. The Division prepares preventive maintenance programs that insure high serviceability of building infrastructures, provide contract administration and project management for City building rehabilitation or replacement and provides new electrical install and maintenance for buildings and street/park decorator lights.

Right of Way Maintenance

The Right-of-Way Maintenance Division is responsible for maintenance of streets, storm sewers, swales, sidewalks and related appurtenances located within the right-of-way. Normal operations include traffic sign maintenance, storm sewer cleaning, right-of-way mowing, swale improvements, tree trimming and street sweeping. Scope of operations includes one hundred and fifteen (115) miles of improved streets and two hundred and thirty one (231) miles of stormwater drainage systems.

Sanitation

The Sanitation/Refuse Collection Division presently collects refuse, yard waste and white goods from approximately 11,000

residential and commercial accounts each month. In addition, the City provides weekly curbside recycling to all its residential customers. The curbside program collects newspaper, mixed paper, office paper, junk mail, magazines, phone books, corrugated cardboard, plastics with 1 -7 codes, brown, green and clear glass, and steel and aluminum cans. In addition, materials such as tires, paint, used motor oil, car batteries, and electronic waste, such as televisions, computers, monitors and printers are all accepted by the recycler at the curb.

City Warehouse

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

Utility Plants

Water Treatment Plant

The Water Treatment division operates and maintains the Shell Creek Water Treatment Facility, which treats and supplies potable water to Punta Gorda Utility Water Customers. The plant is currently rated at 10,000,000 gallons per day. The division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Burnt Store Isles Elevated Tank, Punta Gorda Isles Ground Storage Tank and Booster Pump Station. The Water Treatment division is continuing to respond to increased requirements relating to water management, water quality and treatment standards required by

the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and other regulatory agencies.

The division comprises of an operation division and maintenance division. There are ten (10) operators and seven (7) maintenance personnel and one (1) supervisor that are employed at the plant for a total of eighteen (18) employees. The plant is staffed twenty-four (24) hours a day, 365 days a year. Water is treated and pumped to utility customers.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Wastewater Treatment division operates and maintains the Punta Gorda Wastewater Treatment Plant, a 4.0 MGD (Million Gallon per day) plant. The division also operates and maintains the Master and Booster Pumping Stations. Wastewater residuals are beneficially reclaimed by land application to on-site agriculture fields. Treated water is discharged to an effluent disposal deep injection well.

Fleet Maintenance

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

Public Safety Complex

Police Protection

The City Police Department is co-located with the City Fire Department, sharing the same 22,500 square foot building and communication facilities. The public safety building is a one-story structure built in 2002.

The Police Department facilities include administrative offices, reception area, communication room, records room, and an evidence room. Currently the department's manpower consists of a police chief, two (2) captains, seven (7) lieutenants, eighteen (18) patrol officers, three (3) school resource officers, three (3) detectives, and fifteen (15) civilian personnel. The department operates forty-three vehicles and two boats. Based upon the 2015 population (State of Florida Uniform Crime Report) of 17,675, the City has approximately two (1.923) trained police personnel per 1,000 population (2016). This standard relates slightly below the state average of 2.46 trained municipal police officers (excluding Schools & Ports) per 1,000 population (Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Agency Profile Report 2014).

Fire Protection

Fire prevention and firefighting is a major concern of the City of Punta Gorda. The primary objectives of the Fire Department are:

1. Prevention of Fires
2. Prevention of Loss of Life
3. Confinement of Fires to the Place of Origin
4. Extinguishment of Fires

The Fire Prevention Division accomplish their objectives by staying current with the Local, State and Federal codes, rules, ordinances, etc. relating to life safety and building construction. The Division reviews all commercial and multi-family construction plans prior to building permit approval.

The adequacy of fire prevention and response capability is gauged by fire insurance ratings. The rating system most widely used throughout the United States has been established by the Insurance Service Office (ISO). When a community is evaluated for an insurance rating, the ISO specifically looks at five categories: training, water supply, manpower, communications, and equipment.

The City of Punta Gorda has a Class Four (4) Fire Insurance Rating. Since the last ISO inspection, the City has

- ❖ Added a third manned fire station,
- ❖ Established a Training Division,
- ❖ Acquired a 75' aerial ladder/Class 'A' pumper apparatus (new Dec. 2004)

- ❖ Constructed a new Public Safety building which houses the Fire Department, Police Department, and Emergency Dispatch center.
- ❖ All of these improvements should favorably affect future ISO fire insurance rating evaluations for the City of Punta Gorda.

- ❖ Replaced the Class 'A' pumpers housed at Stations 2 & 3 in 2003.

Fire protection for the City is provided by twenty-seven (27) career fire fighters and a complement of twelve (12) volunteers. Career fire personnel consist of a Chief, Assistant Chief, Fire Marshal, Training Chief, three (3) Battalion Chiefs, nine (9) lieutenants, twelve (12) fire fighters, one (1) inspector, one (1) Executive Assistant. Table 6.1 identifies the staffing and equipment per facility.

Table 6.1 – City of Punta Gorda’s Fire Stations

Name	Address	Number of Employees	Equipment Available
Station # 1*	Public Safety Complex (Fire Administration) 1410 Tamiami Trail Punta Gorda, Florida 33950	4 per shift Total: 12	One 75' Quirt (Fire Engine w/75' ladder) 1 Battalion Chief Vehicle One Reserve Fire Engine
Station # 2**	10051 Burnt Store Road Punta Gorda, Florida 33950	2 per shift Total: 6	One fire engine One Brush Truck
Station # 3***	1623 Aqui Esta Drive Punta Gorda, Florida 33950	2 per shift Total: 6 2 s per shift Total: 6	One fire engine One Rescue (CCF & EMS)

Source: City of Punta Gorda Urban Design
 * Station 1 does not include the Administrative or Fire Prevention Staff
 ** Station 2 is being moved to a new facility on Acline Road
 *** Station 3 includes Charlotte County employees and equipment assigned to this station by Charlotte County Fire & EMS (CCF&EMS)

The City of Punta Gorda's fire stations, as identified on Map #47 – City of Punta Gorda Fire Stations, are funded through special assessments and impact fees. At this time, the first priority of the Fire Department is the replacement of the 'temporary' building being utilized as fire station #2. This project was completed in 2008.

At this time there are no deficits in the service response time for the City. In the calendar year 2007 the Punta Gorda Fire Department responded to 2,739 calls for service, the average response time from the dispatch of emergency apparatus to their arrival on scene was four (4) minutes and twenty-two (22) seconds. Based upon the current population of 17,444, the City has 1.55 fire fighters per 1,000 population. Future plans include the implementation of Non-Transport Advanced Life Support (ALS) level of emergency medical care with personnel assigned to the fire apparatus. The implementation of ALS level of care will require additional trained staff. This need will be reviewed over the next planning decade and will be implemented as funding becomes available.

Map #47 – City of Punta Gorda Fire Stations



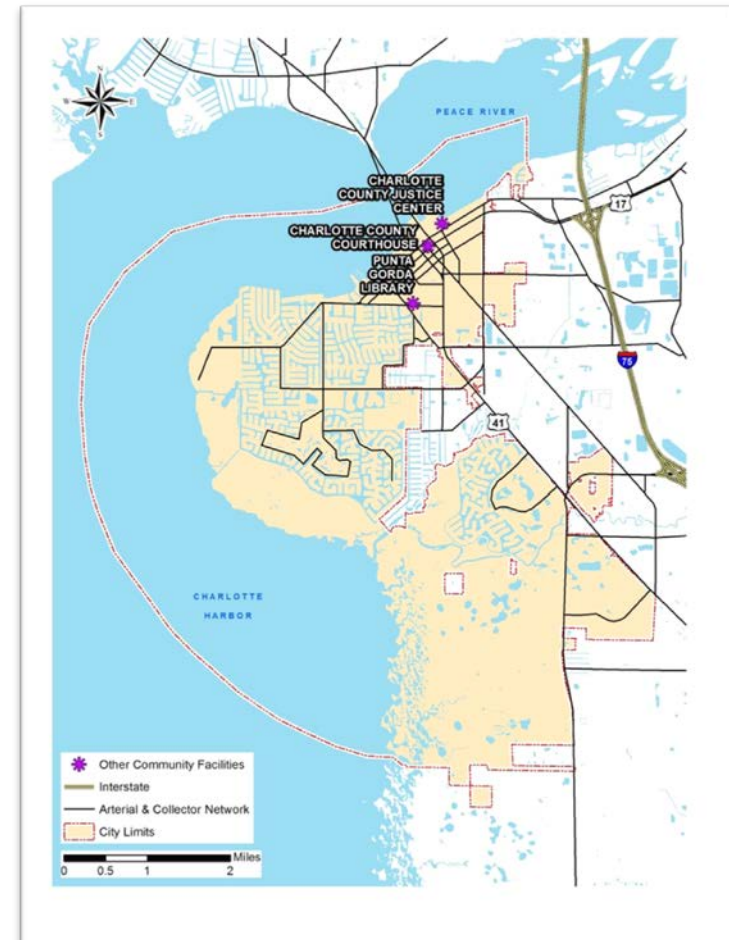
Other Community Facilities (not operated by the City)

There are a variety of community facilities available to the City's residents and tourists that are located in and around the City yet not operated by the City. These facilities are described below and are identified on Map #48 - Other Community Facilities.

Old Charlotte County Courthouse:

The Old Charlotte County Courthouse is an historic two-story brick building located in the center of Punta Gorda's downtown area. Built in the 1928, the structure, a Neo-Classical structure with Greek and Roman influences, was designed by architects Leitner and Henson of St. Petersburg, Florida. Large pediments and columns create a grandiose façade with a parapet roof. Original plans were changed to provide a second floor jail and living quarters for the jailer and his family. Costs totaled \$200,000. The building was dedicated on March 20, 1928. Additions were made to the building in the 1960s and 1980s but in 1999 it was replaced by a new Justice Center and then fell into disuse. In 2005, the additions having been demolished, the Board of County Commissioners undertook the restoration and renovation of the original 1928 structure that remained. It was reopened to the public in a ceremony on February 29, 2008. It now houses the County's Supervisors of Election offices.

Map #48 - Other Community Facilities



Charlotte County Justice Center

Charlotte County Justice Center: The Justice Center, built in 1999, doubled the courtroom capacity to eight courtrooms and covers 160,000 square feet of space. It houses all functions related to the judicial system, including the States Attorney and the Public Defender, Sheriff's Civil Service Office and Clerk of the Courts. The Justice Center provides a total square footage of 400,000 square feet and provides additional parking spaces which can be used outside of the normal business hours. The additional spaces provide a benefit to the downtown businesses. It is anticipated that the justice center will meet the needs of the County, including the City, at least until the year 2020.

Library

The Punta Gorda Library is operated by the Charlotte-Glades Library System and is operated under the Charlotte County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department. The Charlotte-Glades Library System is a member of the Southwest Florida Library Network (SWFLN) which is a consortium of all types of libraries in Southwest Florida. Through SWFLN, Charlotte County libraries have access to a broad range of training opportunities as well as the interlibrary loan support program.

Essential service levels for materials and space are two (2) items per capita for libraries with service populations between 25,001 and 750,000 and 0.6 square feet per capita of building space. Currently, the Charlotte libraries provide 1.5 items per capita and 0.4 square feet of library space per capita. With the opening of

the Mid-County Regional Library, also available to the City's residents, materials per capita will rise to 1.7 and square footage per capita to 0.49 county wide. The current Punta Gorda Library however, will continue to lag significantly behind the standards for collection and space due to the building size and parcel location. This building will be replaced by a new 20,000 square foot building on a 6+ acre parcel of land donated to the County by the City of Punta Gorda. The new library is anticipated to open by 2018.

The ability of the library system to meet the needs of the community is impacted by the amount of resources available to it. The Charlotte-Glades Library System is funded by ad valorem taxes, impact fees, monies from State Aid to Libraries, donations raised by the Friends of the Library, and individual gifts. Impact fees provide over 50% of the library's local materials budget. State aid to libraries is based on local operating dollars allocated to libraries.

Public Schools

The public schools are a cornerstone to the well-being and future of the community. Generally, new residential development occurring within the community is the primary contributor to student population growth and has the most significant impact on the public school system. Because of the relationship between residential development and the provision of public schools, coordination between local governments and the school district is critical to ensuring that future student growth needs are addressed and can be accommodated within the public the City,

the County and the School District of Charlotte County, will continue to implement public school concurrency as supported by data and analysis.

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

Four (4) schools are located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City; however, they cannot be reviewed independently of the rest of the School District. These schools contribute to the whole of the Charlotte County School District and need to be reviewed in unison with the entire District. The school locations can be reviewed on Map #57 – Public Schools and Map #58 – Public School Ancillary Facilities.

In addition, all of the public high schools, middle schools and elementary schools serve as Adult and Community Education sites depending on subject matter and availability.

Private Schools/Other Schools

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

Florida SouthWestern Collegiate High School

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

Charlotte Technical Center

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

Charlotte County School Board Adult and Community Education Program

This program reaches all areas of the County. More than 700 students participated in the various parts of this program during the 2011-2012 school year. The numbers decreased from previous years due to requirement by the State to collect tuition because of the downturn of the local, state and national economy.

Florida SouthWestern State College Previously known as Edison State College,

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

Florida Gulf Coast University

The 760 acre campus is located south of the City near I-75 and Alico Road. The university provides undergraduate education with a wide range of programs in the arts and sciences, business, environmental science, computer science, education, nursing/allied health, and social services. The programs are designed for college transfer students as well as beginning freshman. As of 2014 the school had a student enrollment of over 14,099 students consisting of both undergraduate as well as graduate students and non-degree seeking students.

Florida Gulf Coast University Renaissance Academy

Founded in January 2001, the Academy is the University's and region's premier lifelong learning program for adults. Among the Renaissance Academy's offerings are affordable, non-credit single lectures, short courses, day trips, computer classes, film series, life enrichment classes, writing workshops, music lessons, travel abroad programs and other special events providing academic substance in an interactive format that encourages the exchange of ideas and provides both intellectual stimulation and personal enjoyment.

Recreation and Open Space

City Park Facilities

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

As Punta Gorda's population grows, it is important that the quality of existing facilities improves as well as increasing the amount of recreation and open space to meet the needs of the community as a whole. The current City of Punta Gorda Strategic Plan identifies some of the areas the City is interested in improving and increasing services. Undeveloped Parks allows the City to plan for

and provide the future service needed to manage the growing population. The City continues to develop a park system that can be enjoyed and used by a multitude of users. The *Recreation and Open Space Element* Table 5.2 – City Recreational Facilities and Sites identifies the existing park systems which are maintained by the City’s Parks and Grounds Division.

The Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of City parks and recreation facilities. Approximately 19 developed parks and other recreation facilities, including the recently added Punta Gorda Pathways, are maintained by the Parks & Ground Division. Additionally, the Parks and Grounds Maintenance Division provide care and maintenance for the grounds of the City owned buildings. The Division also maintains all street trees and associated landscaping. The department, which once operated with a maintenance staff of sixteen (16) full time employees under the direction of the Public Works Department, now has been reduced to a maintenance staff of ten (10).

School Facilities

The school facilities that assist the City and County to serve the daily needs of the residents listed in the *Recreation and Open Space Element* Table 5.3 – Publicly Owned Charlotte County School Recreational Facilities and Sites. These systems provide diversity, organized and year-round programs which are very accessible to the population. These systems tend to be more intensely developed than other parks.

Health Facilities

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

Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes

- ❖ There are a variety of facilities and services for retirees in the City. These include centers for independent living, in-home care, assisted living or the full services of a nursing facility. There are numerous congregate living facilities and nursing homes in the City and the County and there is a demand for more, especially affordable/subsidized facilities. Demand will increase considerably, as the “baby-boomer generation” starts retiring. This demand will require a significant addition of assisted living facilities and nursing homes. The Housing Element contains a more detailed discussion regarding these facilities.

Human Services (not operated by the City)

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

availability and targeted to serve specialized needs. Eligibility criteria are determined by the individual agencies.

Charlotte County's Department of Human Services

The County's Department of Human Services is available to the City's residents under the direction of the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners. It employs social workers, case managers and program specialists who determine eligibility for several county, state, and federally funded grant programs which provide assistance to individuals and families. Services provided through these programs include 2-1-1 information and referral, economic counseling, hospital and prescription assistance, indigent burials, emergency food assistance, and home energy and utility assistance.

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

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

Department of Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families is a state agency which has many functions. It serves everyone from infants to senior citizens, while providing a wide range of programs and services. These services include aging and adult services, children and families protective supervision, children, youth and families (voluntary family services, child protection investigation, and foster care), developmental services, emergency preventive dental program, an economic services/payment unit, emergency financial assistance for housing program, Florida adoption reunion registry, and project independence (career counseling, job training, etc.).

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

Veteran Services

Assist veterans of military service, their families, dependents and/or survivors and like persons residing in our County in applying for and obtaining benefits and services.

Other Services

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

Social Services

There are many other social programs and services available to the residents through Charlotte County. A sampling of these programs and services include:

The Charlotte County Veterans Services with offices located in Punta Gorda, provides advice, counseling, and assistance in filing for U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs benefits such as pensions, compensation, death benefits, health care, etc. The office also assists eligible claimants with State of Florida veterans' benefits such as disabled veterans license tags, real estate tax exemptions, and more.

Cultural Resources' Facilities

Cultural life in the City is diverse and growing and constantly changing as the population changes. Activities range from art lessons and gallery walks, exhibits, to community theater groups, choral groups, symphony orchestras and Broadway road shows.

Cultural programs are in place throughout the City and County for both children and adults, which include painting, craft, piano, instrument and voice lessons and dance, music and theater groups. There are a wide variety of other fine performing groups. The small non-profit cultural groups in the city continue to grow in size and number and provide cultural activities by private or independent sponsors.

Future Facilities Needs

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

V. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

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

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

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

Measurement: *Review of Strategic and Business Plans.*

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

Measurement: *The development or redevelopment of community facilities*

and services implementing the Land Development Regulations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Measurement: Continued collection of impact fees.

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

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

Measurement: The implementation of the Interlocal School Agreement and number of School Concurrency Approval Development Letters included in the City's Staff Reports.

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

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

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

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

Measurement: The addition of new facilities within the urban core necessary to maintain the level of service to the City's residents and businesses.

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

Measurement: Number of Interlocal Agreements updated to improve response times.

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

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

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

Policy 6.1.5.1: The City of Punta Gorda will explore opportunities for developing additional refuge/shelter space possibilities, especially within the Category 4 or 5 hurricane storm surge zone.

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

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

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

Objective 6.1.6: The City of Punta Gorda will endeavor to support those public facilities and

services that provide for the health, safety, and well-being of the City's residents.

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

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

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

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

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

Policy 6.1.7.1: The City of Punta Gorda will engage in cooperative planning to accommodate growth and ensure safety. The City will encourage partnerships between public and private sectors and between community groups, local government and law enforcement agencies in order to amass and share information regarding planning and design practices that succeed in enhancing safety.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Policy 6.1.8.3: The City of Punta Gorda will consider the development of an annual awards program that would give recognition to design excellence in public and private development projects in the City.

***Measurement:** The continuation of the recognition awards programs for projects completed within the City.*