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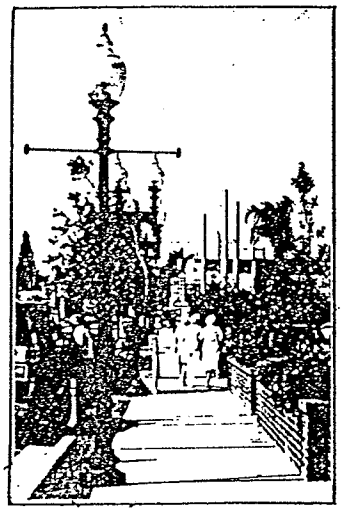
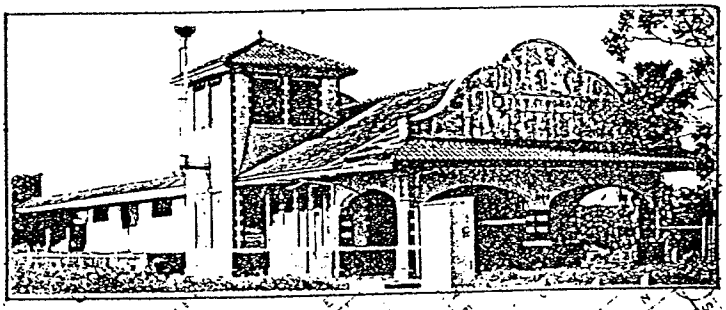
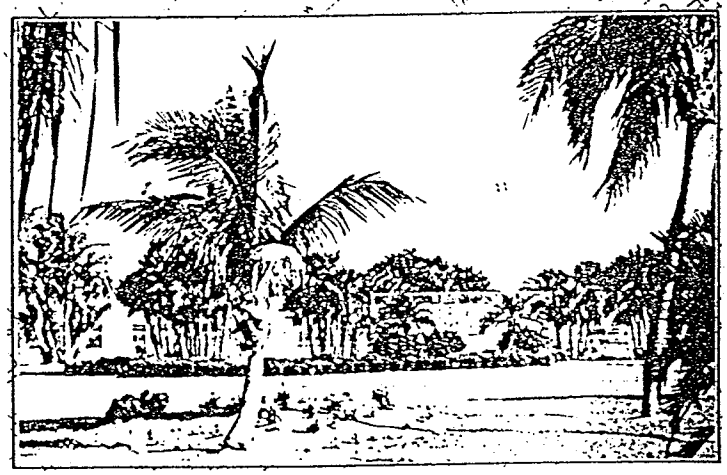
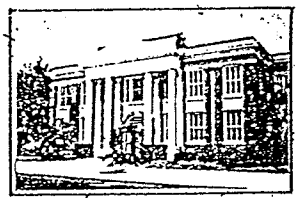
City Clerk's Office

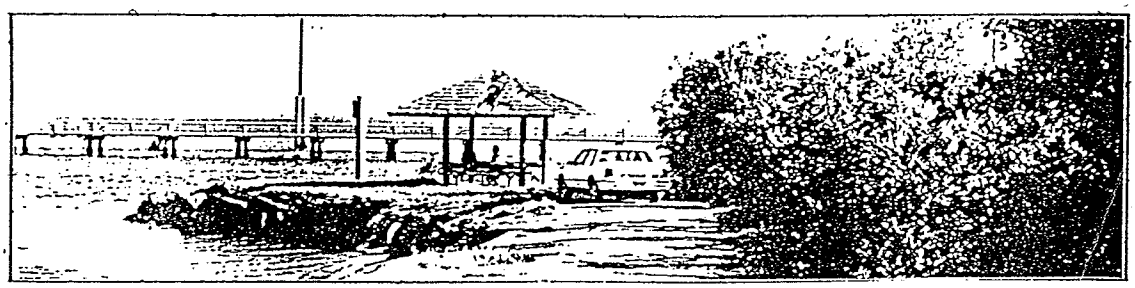
PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN











PLAN DRAFTS: 12/28/89, 1/12/90

City of Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency

Punta Gorda, Florida

January 1990

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Plan is to provide a framework for the redevelopment of the historic downtown area of the City of Punta Gorda, Florida.

Since its incorporation on December 7, 1887, Punta Gorda has served as the commercial, cultural, governmental, and residential hub of Charlotte County.[1] However, during the most recent Florida development "boom" of the past 30 years, Punta Gorda's dominance as the County's focal point has diminished greatly as new residential, commercial, and governmental growth has occurred in the Port Charlotte/Englewood areas. The result has been a slow but steady deterioration in the physical appearance, residential living conditions, and economic vitality of the community that was platted and begun by Colonel Isaac Trabue back in the late 1800's.

In July, 1985, then City Councilwoman Phyllis Smith was named to head a group of local residents, business people, and community leaders with the express purpose of encouraging the revitalization of Punta Gorda's historic downtown area. The Committee began with a community-wide citizen survey that said the downtown area needed conveniently located parking, a broader range of retail/service businesses, preservation of its rich history, and a stronger linkage of the central business district to the Charlotte Harbor waterfront.

Then in December, 1986, "Centennial Fever" broke out in Punta Gorda as the community celebrated its 100th birthday. During the year-long celebration, the Medical Center Foundation renovated the A. C. Freeman Home and listed it on the National Register of Historic Places. The City dedicated the first block of its Streetscape Program, and the Revitalization Committee completed work on a local historic resources survey, a building facade improvement loan pool, and a beautification awards program. Yet with all the revitalization activity, something was missing . . . the commitment of the private sector. However, this situation would soon change.

Since late 1986, 17 downtown businesses have spent an estimated $1.3 million on interior and exterior renovations. September, 1988 also saw the creation of the Downtown Advisory Board (DAB), Greater Punta Gorda Business Alliance (GPGBA) designed to serve as the private sector's key downtown redevelopment organization. The GPGBA is now 76 members strong with a full-time executive director working closely with the Revitalization Committee and City staff. With a strong downtown revitalization effort already in place, the City of Punta Gorda has now turned its attention toward establishing a Community Redevelopment Agency with the aim of adopting a redevelopment plan for its downtown area and using tax increment financing to fund the projects and programs contained in this plan.

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[1]Charlotte County was formed in 1921. Previously, Punta Gorda was part of Manatee and DeSoto Counties.

This community redevelopment plan is intended to serve as a policy guideline for a workable program aimed at arresting the physical, economic, and social problems existing in historic Punta Gorda today. The thrust of this workable program will be to use the powers of the Community Redevelopment Agency to facilitate redevelopment of the target area as outlined in Section 163.300 of the Florida Statutes and established by unanimous City Council approval.[2] This area is bounded on the north by the Peace River, on the west by Maud Street, on the south by Henry Street, and on the east by Cooper Street, as shown on Map 1. The greatest revitalization problems facing the City lie within this area, and it is within this area where the policies and recommendations of this plan are to be applied.

The remainder of this document contains the data, analysis, policies, projects, programs, and implementation actions required to establish the Punta Gorda Downtown Redevelopment Plan as this community's vision for future revitalization efforts.

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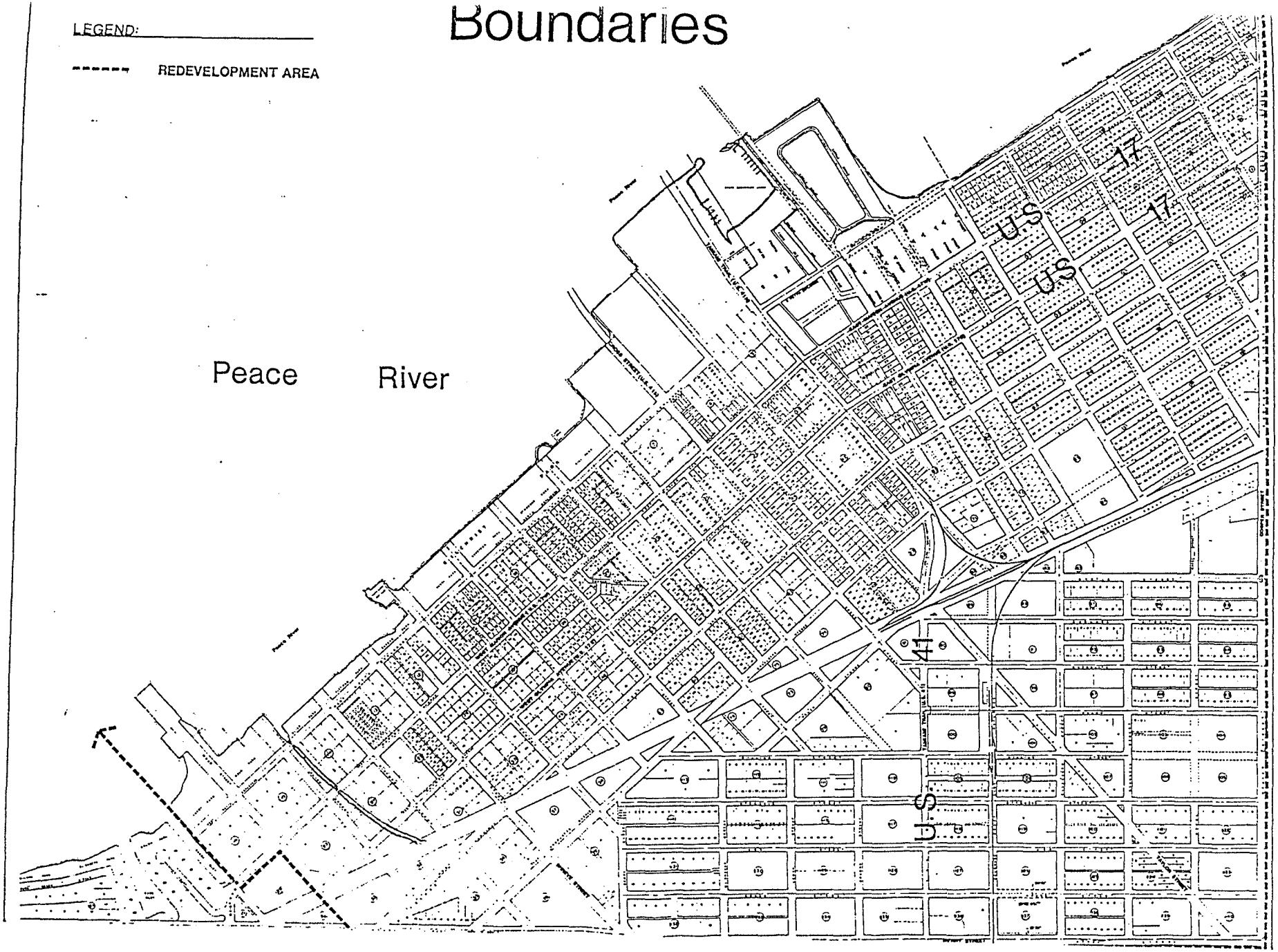
[2]On November 15, 1989, Punta Gorda City Council made a finding that slum and blight conditions existed in the redevelopment area. They established a Community Redevelopment Agency on December 7, 1989 via resolutions.

MAP 1

Boundaries

LEGEND:

REDEVELOPMENT AREA



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MAP

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency

Charlotte County, Florida

January'90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

CHAPTER 1

Existing Conditions

A. BACKGROUND

This chapter profiles the existing conditions of the Punta Gorda redevelopment area. First, demographic information is presented on the social and economic characteristics of the residents of Punta Gorda, Charlotte County, and in some cases the Southwest Florida Planning Region.[3] Second, a physical inventory is presented that documents the use, ownership, value, natural conditions, utilities, and historic characteristics of the land and structures located within the redevelopment area. Finally, a planning and urban design analysis is presented that identifies specific sub-districts of the redevelopment area and catalogs the predominant views, landmarks, edges, and paths that knit together these sub-districts into the unique urban area known as Historic Punta Gorda.

Analytical observations have been made based on the data presented within each of these three profile subsections. These observations will serve as a basis for the goals, objectives, and policies contained in Chapter 4. The majority of the data used in this chapter has been taken from the *1988 Charlotte County/Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan and the Waterfront Park Site Development Feasibility Study* done by Halcyon Ltd. in December, 1987.

B. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The Punta Gorda downtown redevelopment area has historically served as the commercial, cultural, and governmental center of Charlotte County. Even with recent shifts of commercial and governmental facilities to the Murdock area, Punta Gorda is still expected to occupy a strong role as a regional center for retail sales, consumer services, and governmental functions. For this reason, demographic data for resident population, age, household size, income, employment, and housing has been collected and reviewed for Punta Gorda, Charlotte County, and the Southwest Florida Region.

1. **Permanent Population.** As a result of the rapid redevelopment of large land tract subdivisions over the past 30 years, Southwest Florida has emerged as one of the fastest growing regions in Florida in terms of population.[4] From 1970 to 1986, the six-county Southwest Florida Region has grown at a steady rate of 5% per year. Between 1972 and 1987, Charlotte County added over 50,000 new residents, nearly tripling its population. During the same period, Punta Gorda's population grew from 3,879 to 10,148. Today, Charlotte County and Punta Gorda have 11,151 and 99,214 permanent residents, respectively. As shown in Table 1, Punta Gorda is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 3.1% between now and the turn of the century, then taper off to 2.7% between the years 2000 and 2010.

---

[3]The Southwest Florida Planning Region includes the Counties of Sarasota, Lee, Collier, Hendry, Glades, DeSoto, and Charlotte.

[4]Between 1980 and 1988, the Southwest Florida Region grew by 43.3%, or the third fastest of all regions in Florida. *Florida Statistical Abstract*, p.33.

TABLE 1

Population Trends and Projections
Years 1980-2010

Jurisdiction	1980	1986	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Punta Gorda	7,348	9,853	12,700	17,900	24,500	27,600	32,200
Charlotte County	58,460	82,968	99,700	117,800	134,800	151,900	161,400
Southwest Florida	576,539	756,322	877,800	1,008,800	1,129,000	1,252,400	1,330,900
Punta Gorda as a Percent of Charlotte County	–	–	11.6%	12.7%	15.2%	18.2%	20.0%

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census and University of Florida

Until the year 2000, the Region and the County will experience average annual growth rates of only 1.3% and 1.1%, respectively. As a result, Punta Gorda is expected to increase its share of the County's total population from 11.8% currently to 18.2% by the year 2000. This projected population increase is based in large part on the adequate levels of service provided by the City in the areas of sewer, water, roads, parks, police, and fire protection.

Observation 1: The City can expect an increase in potential users of the redevelopment area.

Observation 2: The redevelopment plan must recognize that, based on population growth alone, downtown can expect increased shoppers, visitors, traffic, parking demand, etc.

2. **Seasonal Population.** Charlotte County's seasonal population includes part-time residents who live in the County during the winter months and tourists who visit the area during the same time period. As shown in Table 2, it is estimated that the seasonal population of Charlotte County and Punta Gorda increases by as much as 30% during the peak season between January to April. This figure is based on the recorded increase in traffic, retail spending, and electric usage during these months.[5] By the year 2000, Punta Gorda will be winter home to as many as 31,850 people, and Charlotte County will house 175,240 people.

Observation 3: A significant portion of Punta Gorda's potential users of downtown facilities are seasonal residents.

Observation 4: Redevelopment programs should provide goods and services that meet the needs of seasonal residents and tourists.

Observation 5: Redevelopment projects should be designed to meet seasonal peak demands for their usage and should be timed to avoid construction during the winter season.

3. **Age Distribution.** In 1986, Charlotte County distinguished itself by having the country's highest concentration of local population over age 50. Table 3 shows that in 1986 nearly 36% of the County's population was 65 or over, compared to 17.6% for the state and just 11.9% nationwide. Similarly, only 21% of the County's current residents are under 25, almost half the national average of 39%.

Over the next 20 years, the national demographic trend will be toward an even older population. While Punta Gorda and Charlotte County will continue to see some in-migration of younger families and individuals, the area's current pre-retiree population (ages 45 to 64) is expected to continue to grow older. This is indicated in Table 3 by the increased share of Punta Gorda's total population held by residents 65 years and over. This population rose from the 1980 level of 32.9% to the 1986 level of 35.9%. The percentage of all Charlotte County residents aged 65 or over is projected to rise from 36% currently to nearly 40% by 1995. This means that, of the 35,000 or so new County residents expected by 1995, nearly half, or 16,800, will be age 65 or older.

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[5] *1988 Charlotte County/Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan*, p. 19.

TABLE 2

Seasonal Population Trends and Projections
Years 1980-2010

Jurisdiction	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Punta Gorda	16,510	23,270	31,850	35,880	41,860
Charlotte County	129,610	153,140	175,240	197,470	209,820

Source: Charlotte County Planning Department, March, 1988

TABLE 3

Population Distribution by Age Group
Years 1980-2010

Punta Gorda Age Distribution	1980	% Dist.	1986	% Dist.	1990	% Dist.	1995	% Dist.	2000	% Dist.
Under 14	775	11.4%	1,224	12.4%						
15-24	677	10.0%	854	8.7%						
24-44	892	13.1%	1,626	16.5%		(DATA NOT AVAILABLE)				
45-64	2,214	32.6%	2,613	35.9%						
Over 65	2,239	32.9%	3,536	35.9%						
Charlotte County Age Distribution	**1980**	**% Dist.**	**1986**	**% Dist.**	**1990**	**% Dist.**	**1995**	**% Dist.**	**2000**	**% Dist.**
Under 14	7,166	12.3%	10,307	12.4%	12,505	12.5%	14,844	12.6%	16,089	11.9%
15-24	5,745	9.8%	7,187	8.7%	7,406	7.4%	8,114	6.9%	9,757	7.2%
25-44	9,053	15.5%	13,693	16.5%	17,195	17.3%	19,786	16.8%	20,984	15.6%
45-64	16,641	28.5%	22,004	26.5%	25,044	25.1%	28,523	24.2%	34,803	25.8%
Over 65	19,855	34.0%	29,777	35.9%	37,509	37.6%	46,552	39.5%	53,136	39.4%
Southwest Florida Age Distribution	**1980**	**% Dist.**	**1986**	**% Dist.**	**1990**	**% Dist.**	**1995**	**% Dist.**	**2000**	**% Dist.**
Under 14	93,201	16.2%	119,263	15.8%	138,066	15.7%	158,273	15.7%	167,821	14.9%
15-24	75,246	13.1%	83,026	11.0%	84,526	9.6%	88,724	8.8%	102,855	9.1%
25-44	120,424	20.9%	173,505	22.9%	209,005	23.8%	232,828	23.1%	241,042	21.4%
45-64	142,462	24.7%	175,635	23.2%	197,126	22.5%	232,602	23.1%	288,070	25.5%
Over 65	145,206	25.2%	204,802	27.1%	248,890	28.4%	296,451	29.4%	329,114	29.2%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, General Population Characteristics, 1980; *Population Studies, Bureau of Economic and Business Research*, University of Florida, 1988; City of Punta Gorda Planning Department; and Halcyon Ltd.

Observation 6: Redevelopment programs should offer a downtown area suitable for use by older people.

Observation 7: Redevelopment projects should be designed and constructed with the needs and limitations of older people in mind.

4. **Household Size.** Household data for Punta Gorda, Charlotte County, and the Southwest Florida Region shown in Table 4 reveals that the City's average household is smaller than both the County's and Region's, and that new households are forming more rapidly than in other jurisdictions. Between 1980 and 1984, the number of Punta Gorda households grew at an average annual rate of about 10% compared to 8% in the County and 5% in the Region. Currently Punta Gorda contains about 5,500 households, or about 15% of the County's total of 37,300 households.

In 1986, the City's average household size was 2.13 persons, down from 2.16 persons in 1980. With a resident population that is growing older and national trends toward single person households and families with fewer children, household sizes should be getting smaller in Punta Gorda over the next 15 years. Therefore, Punta Gorda's projected share of the County's total number of households by the year 2000 will be 22.7%, as compared to 15.7% today.

Observation 8: Redevelopment programs for housing units must recognize smaller family sizes with generally less income in the design and pricing structure.

Observation 9: Redevelopment of future land use and development patterns must allow for smaller lots and smaller residential living units.

5. **Income Characteristics.** Southwest Florida, with a total personal income of about $11.9 billion, currently ranks sixth among Florida's 11 economic regions. Over the next ten years, the Region is expected to overtake Northwest Florida to move into the number five position. In similar fashion, the Region's total personal income will grow from 7% to over 8% of the State's total between now and 1996. Per capita personal income has also grown steadily in Charlotte County, from a 1980 level of $8,926 to $12,907 in 1986. Current projections found in Table 5 show County per capita income growing by 6% per year over the next six years to $23,619. Punta Gorda residents, however, are more affluent than those in the County or Region. According to 1980 Census data, the City's median family income was $15,470, or 17% higher than that of Charlotte County families. In addition, more than 8% of the City's families have annual incomes of more than $50,000, compared to only 5% in the Region and less than 3% in the County. Based on these figures for Punta Gorda, per capita personal income should rise to approximately $27,650 by the year 1996.

Observation 10: Redevelopment programs aimed at promoting economic development should first target Punta Gorda's residents as potential shoppers.

Observation 11: Redevelopment programs aimed at attracting new businesses to the downtown area should consider businesses offering the goods and services desired by local residents.

TABLE 4

Household Trends and Projections
Years 1980-2010

Jurisdiction	1980	1984	1986	1990	2000
Punta Gorda	3,185	4,830	5,473	7,055	13,611
Charlotte County	25,922	36,200	37,300	45,000	60,000
Southwest Florida	237,319	295,234			
Punta Gorda as a Percent of Charlotte County	12.3%	13.3%	14.7%	15.7%	22.7%
Persons Per Household:					
Punta Gorda	2.13				
Charlotte County	2.25				
Southwest Florida	2.53				

Source: Population Studies, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida, 1988

TABLE 5

Personal Income Trends and Projections
Years 1979-1996

Jurisdiction	1979	1986	1991	% Change 1986-1991	% Change 1986-1996
Charlotte County	$ 8,012	$12,907	$17,007	5.5%	6.0%
Southwest Florida	8,923	15,719	20,637	5.4%	6.0%
State of Florida	10,045	14,278	18,795	5.5%	6.1%

Source: State of Florida, Department of Labor and Employment Security; and Halcyon Ltd.

6. **Employment Mix.** In past years, Charlotte County has generally experienced a stronger employment picture than that of the State and Region. In 1986, the Southwest Florida Region boasted the second lowest unemployment rate of the State's 11 regions, at 5.2%. Within the Region, only about 5% of Charlotte County's 25,233 person labor force was unemployed.

Regional non-agricultural employment patterns reflect Southwest Florida's traditional status as a center for tourism and retirement housing, with jobs chiefly in services, trade, and, to a lesser extent, construction. As shown in Table 6, since 1970, total regional employment has grown by over 123,000 jobs, an average annual rise of 5.5%. By comparison, Charlotte County employment has grown even faster, by 8.4% each year. County jobs are distributed among employment categories similar to those in the region, although construction is represented more heavily. The impact of the housing industry's traditional volatility on the County's economy is illustrated by the 50% drop in construction jobs from 1980 to 1984, a period of national economic recession.

In addition to the data contained in Table 6 for employment patterns in the Region and County, several pieces of information about Punta Gorda were obtained from the 1980 Census. Of the total 1,686 employees in Punta Gorda in 1980, 28.5%, or 482 people, worked in the services industry; 23.3%, or 427 people, worked in wholesale and retail trades; 14.1%, or 238 people, worked in the financial, insurance, and real estate professions; and 9.2%, or 155 people, worked in the transportation and utilities fields. It is unusual to note that less than 5% of the workers in Punta Gorda are employed in the construction industry, compared to 22.8% in the County.

> **Observation 12: The redevelopment plan should recognize its strong economic base in service and retail businesses when recommending projects and programs aimed at economic development.**
>
> **Observation 13: The redevelopment plan should consider programs and projects designed to diversify the City's employment base into the governmental, financial, insurance, and retail estate sectors.**

7. **Housing Characteristics.** From 1980 to 1989, as the national economy recovered and interest rates fell, Charlotte County witnessed a 120% increase in housing starts. This spurt brought the total number of County housing units to about 52,000, 58% of which are single-family homes. The remaining housing stock is split about evenly between mobile homes and units in multi-family structures. Table 7 shows that Punta Gorda currently has a greater proportion of single-family units than does the County as a whole, and that Punta Gorda has proportionately fewer mobile homes. From 1980 to 1987, the City gained a greater share of multi-family units, from 29.4% to 32.0%. During the same period, there was an increase in group living quarters, from 104 to 193.

Between 1980 and 1987, the City's owner-occupied units increased from 2,408 to 3,060. Rental units rose from 782 to 982, and seasonal units rose from 803 to 1,110. Consequently, median housing values and rents in the City are substantially higher than those in the County. The 1980 Census reported that Punta Gorda had the most valuable owner-occupied housing stock in the County, with a median value of $80,600, 75% higher than the County average. From 1980 to 1987, the gap closed somewhat, but the City's current median housing value of about $90,000 is still 44% higher than in Charlotte County. Median rents, on the other hand, were far lower in Punta Gorda than in the County in 1980. However, with the addition of higher priced projects since then, Punta Gorda median rents are generally higher than the County's median.

TABLE 6

Non-Agricultural Employment Trends
Years 1970-1984

Employment Category	1970	% Dist.	1980	% Dist.	1984	% Dist.
Charlotte County:						
Construction	520	9.8%	3,160	22.6%	2,164	12.6%
Manufacturing	160	3.0%	380	2.7%	414	2.4%
Transportation/Public Utilities	300	5.7%	480	3.5%	715	4.2%
Wholesale/Retail/Trade	1,340	25.4%	3,290	23.7%	4,648	27.0%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	920	17.4%	1,740	12.5%	1,588	9.2%
Service/Government	2,040	38.6%	4,820	34.8%	7,699	44.7%
Total Employment	**5,280**	**100.0%**	**13,870**	**100.0%**	**17,228**	**100.0%**
Region:						
Construction	11,600	10.0%	22,410	12.3%	26,108	11.4%
Manufacturing	6,480	6.1%	12,270	6.7%	13,971	6.1%
Transportation/Public Utilities	5,180	4.9%	8,500	4.7%	9,744	4.2%
Wholesale/Retail/Trade	24,620	23.1%	53,260	29.2%	69,271	30.2%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	8,080	7.6%	15,850	8.7%	19,068	8.3%
Service/Government	30,300	28.5%	69,770	38.2%	91,722	40.0%
Total Employment*	**106,380**	**100.0%**	**182,430**	**100.0%**	**229,432**	**100.0%**

*Employment figures and percentages may not equal totals due to the withholding of data for certain counties.

Source: Previous SWFRPC Data; State of Florida, Department of Labor and Employment Security; and Halcyon Ltd.

TABLE 7

Housing Characteristics – City of Punta Gorda Redevelopment Area
Years 1980 and 1987

Characteristic	1980	% Dist.	1987	% Dist.	1987	% Dist.
Type:						
Single-Family	2,924	68.2%	3,497	63.7%	972	62.2%
Multi-Family	1,258	29.4%	1,802	32.8%	426	27.3%
Group Living	104	2.4%	193	3.5%	164	10.5%
Age (Built Pre-1940):	268 (Est.)	6.2%	252	4.6%	252	16.1%
Tenure:						
Owner-Occupied	2,408	56.2%	3,060 (Est.)	55.7%	790 (Est.)	49.3%
Rental	782	18.2%	982 (Est.)	17.9%	560 (Est.)	35.9%
Seasonal	803	18.7%	1,110 (Est.)	20.2%	64 (Est.)	4.1%
Vacant	293	6.9%	340 (Est.)	6.2%	168 (Est.)	10.7%
Price:						
Median Value	$80,600		$90,000 (Est.)		$50,000 (Est.)	
Median Rent	$157/Mo (Est.)		$625/Mo (Est.)		$300/Mo (Est.)	
Total Units	**4,286**	**100.0%**	**5,492**	**100.0%**	**1,562**	**100.0%**

Source:
1. 1988 Charlotte County/Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan
2. 1980 Census of General Housing Characteristics
3. Estimates based on continued share of citywide units
4. Age data based on 1987 Historic Research Survey

In 1987, the redevelopment area was dominated by single-family units with 972, or 62.2%, of the total housing units in the area. Multi-family units accounted for 27.3% of the total units and 10.5% of the group living quarters. In terms of tenure, the redevelopment area at 49.3% has a significantly lower rate of home ownership than the rest of the City or the County. Additionally, the 560 rental units accounted for 35.9% of the area's total units. The average value of ownership housing units in the downtown area is almost one-half the value of the other owner-occupied units in the City at $50,000. Median rents in the area were estimated to be $300 per month for a two-bedroom/two-bath unit, or approximately one-half of the median rent figure for the rest of the City.

C. PHYSICAL CONDITIONS PROFILE

The following narrative describes the physical environment in the redevelopment area shown previously on Map 1. The maps and information presented in this section will focus on the physical conditions listed below. Traffic circulation/parking can be found in Chapter 2, and market conditions is found in Chapter 3. Unless otherwise noted, the data in the following categories is current as of the summer of 1989.

- Existing Land Use
- Zoning
- Land Ownership/Public Facilities
- Land Valuation
- Historic Resources
- Neighborhood Conditions
- Natural Features/Flood Zones
- Major Utilities

1. **Existing Land Use.** The redevelopment area consists of approximately 160 platted blocks. Map 2 illustrates how each parcel within this area was being utilized in the summer of 1989. The first land use pattern inventoried was that of vacant land. Of approximately 625 total acres in the redevelopment area, 35%, or 219 acres, are currently retained as public open space. The vast majority of the vacant land in the redevelopment area lies in the single-family residential areas west of U.S. 41 (105 acres), the multi-family areas adjacent to Fishermen's Village and Medical Center Hospital (33 acres), the City's waterfront parcel (30 acres), and publicly owned land in and around the Shreve Street area (21 acres). However, of the 80 acres of central business district land, only 15%, or 11.75 acres, is still undeveloped.

The redevelopment area contains a classic mixture of commercial, residential, and public uses. Of the 406 total developed acres in the area, Map 2 shows that approximately 130 acres are devoted to commercial activities, 95 acres to residential usage, 85 acres to public uses, 24 acres to industrial uses, 21 acres to office/professional uses, and 50 acres to roads, railroads, drainage areas, etc.

Observation 14: More than adequate vacant land exists in several residential neighborhoods to accommodate future residential redevelopment and new construction activities.

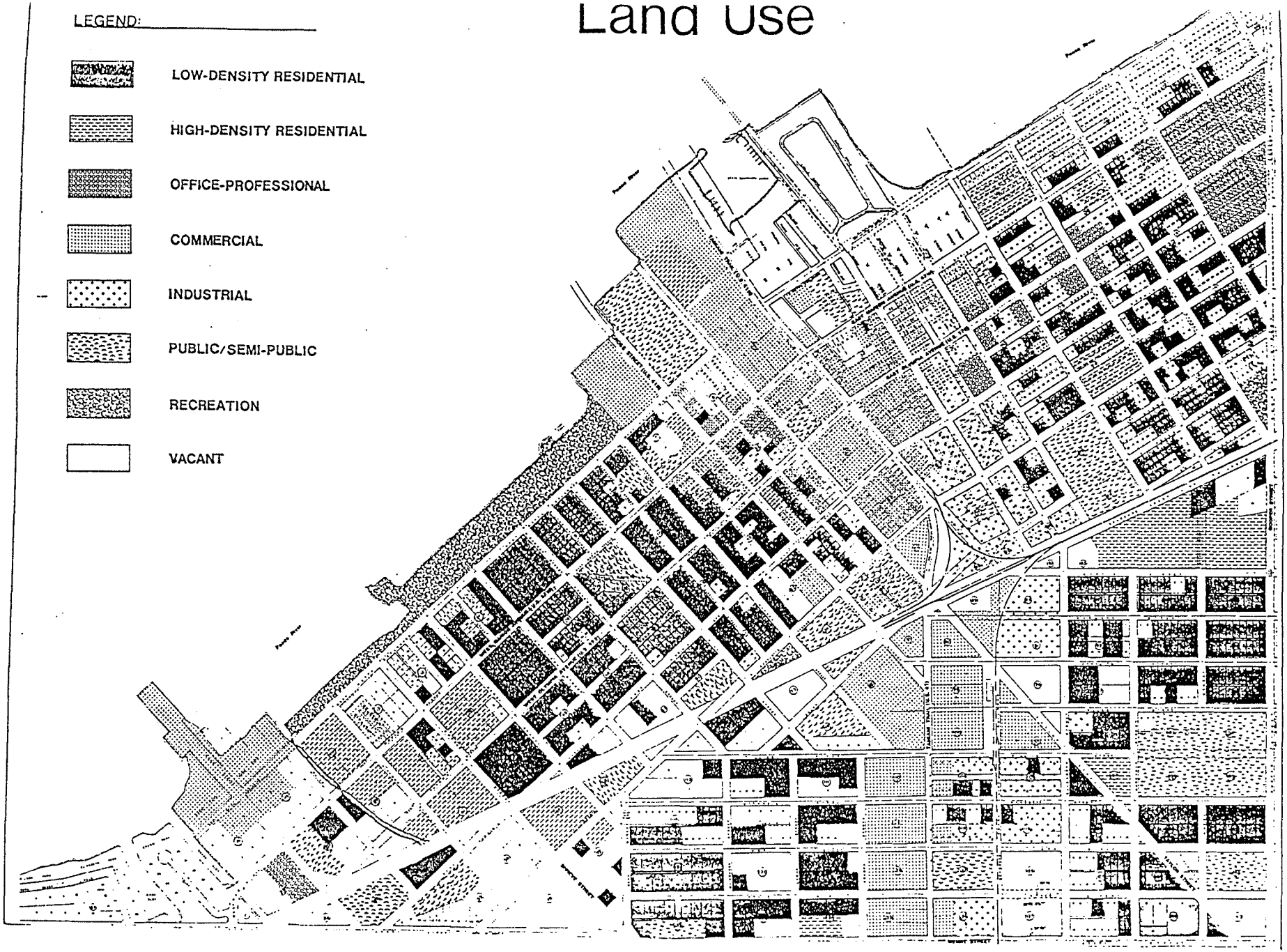
Observation 15: The existing land use pattern offers a very compact business core with residential neighborhoods around it.

MAP 2

Land Use

LEGEND:

- LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- OFFICE-PROFESSIONAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC
- RECREATION
- VACANT



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MAP 2

January'90

North

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency

Charlotte County, Florida

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Observation 16: Redevelopment of the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel could offset the current shortage of vacant land for central business district activities.

Observation 17: Several distinct development sub-districts exist in the redevelopment area based on current land use patterns.

Observation 18: The abundance of publicly owned vacant land and park land in the redevelopment area presents an opportunity to the City to use this land for the overall benefit of the area.

2. **Zoning Controls.** Zoning controls for the use of property in the redevelopment area are defined by the City's zoning district maps and land development regulations. Map 3 reflects the current zoning classifications for property in the redevelopment area. Under Punta Gorda's new zoning atlas adopted in July, 1989, virtually all of the lots in the redevelopment area have zoning classifications that reflect either their existing or proposed land usage. The following list summarizes the zoning districts that exist in the redevelopment area:

RSF 3.5	=	Residential Single-Family 3.5 du/acre
RSF 5.0	=	Residential Single-Family 5.0 du/acre
RMF 10.0	=	Residential Single-Family 10.0 du/acre
RMF 15.0	=	Residential Single-Family 15.0 du/acre
PUD	=	Planned Unit Development
CG	=	Commercial General
CI	=	Commercial Intensive
CBD	=	Central Business District
OPI	=	Office/Professional/Institutional
IG	=	Industrial/General
ES	=	Environmentally Sensitive
MP	=	Marine Park
P	=	Public

In addition to the specific limitations on the type, size, height, number, and proposed use of structures permitted in these various districts, several specific land development regulations were passed in July, 1989. These regulations were designed to encourage orderly redevelopment of the downtown area. Provisions for the transfer of development rights, guaranteed maintenance of commercial properties, preservation of historic structures, design control of rehabilitated business facades, development of affordable housing, and incentives for planting street trees were all included in the regulations.

Observation 19: The existing zoning districts assigned to property in the redevelopment area are adequate to permit a balanced mixture of new development and redevelopment.

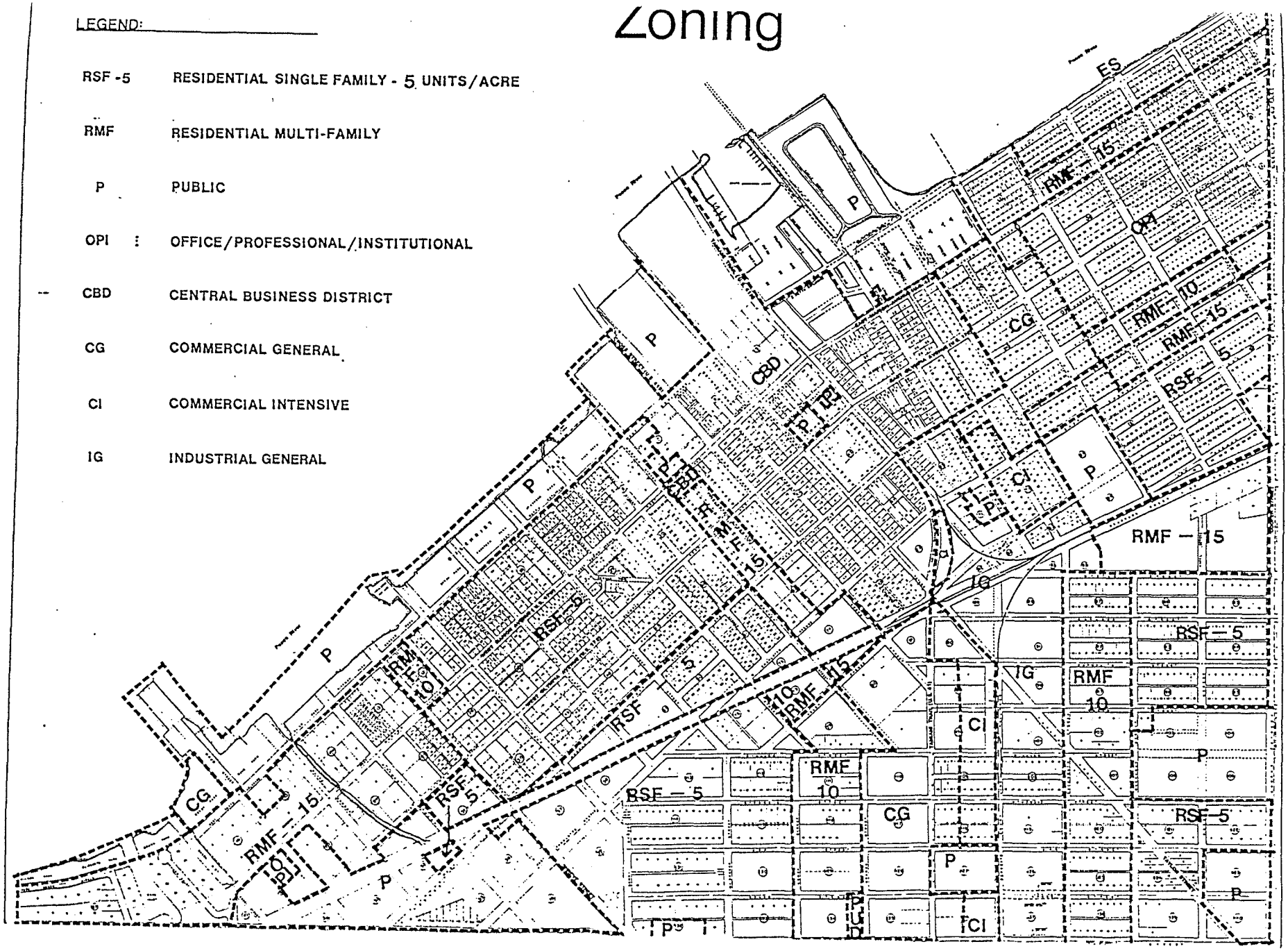
Observation 20: The new provisions of the land development regulations aimed at encouraging redevelopment of the target area should be tested through use and modified if necessary.

MAP 3

Zoning

LEGEND:

RSF -5	RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY - 5 UNITS/ACRE
RMF	RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY
P	PUBLIC
OPI	OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL/INSTITUTIONAL
CBD	CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
CG	COMMERCIAL GENERAL
CI	COMMERCIAL INTENSIVE
IG	INDUSTRIAL GENERAL



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3 MAP

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency Charlotte County, Florida January'90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

3. **Land Ownership**. A large amount of land in the redevelopment area is held in public ownership. As shown on Map 4 and in Table 8, the City of Punta Gorda owns approximately 89.0 acres of land, the County 12.5 acres, the School Board 20.2 acres, the State of Florida 0.7 acres, and the U. S. Government 11.9 acres. Of the total 134.3 acres, 65 acres are currently vacant or undeveloped. The City's 30-acre abandoned municipal mobile home park is being offered for private redevelopment in conjunction with the preparation of this plan. Another 21± acres of City property located off Shreve Street is being developed as the City's new public safety and municipal services center. Finally, as part of this plan, a 9.2-acre abandoned railroad right-of-way is available for a linear park.

Numerous community facilities are located on the 73.4 acres of developed public property. Map 4 shows the location of each of these facilities as they relate to the various governmental entities owning property in the redevelopment area.

Observation 21: The majority of the community facilities located south of the Peace River are located in the redevelopment area.

Observation 22: The redevelopment plan should explore ways to expand the number of community facilities in the downtown area in order to build on an already established activity base.

Observation 23: The City/CRA should proceed with its offering of the old municipal mobile home park for private redevelopment.

Observation 24: The City/CRA should explore possible recreational uses of the 9.2 acres of railroad right-of-way and the uncommitted portion of the 21-acre Shreve Street site.

Observation 25: Redevelopment projects should be considered that link together existing publicly-owned lands.

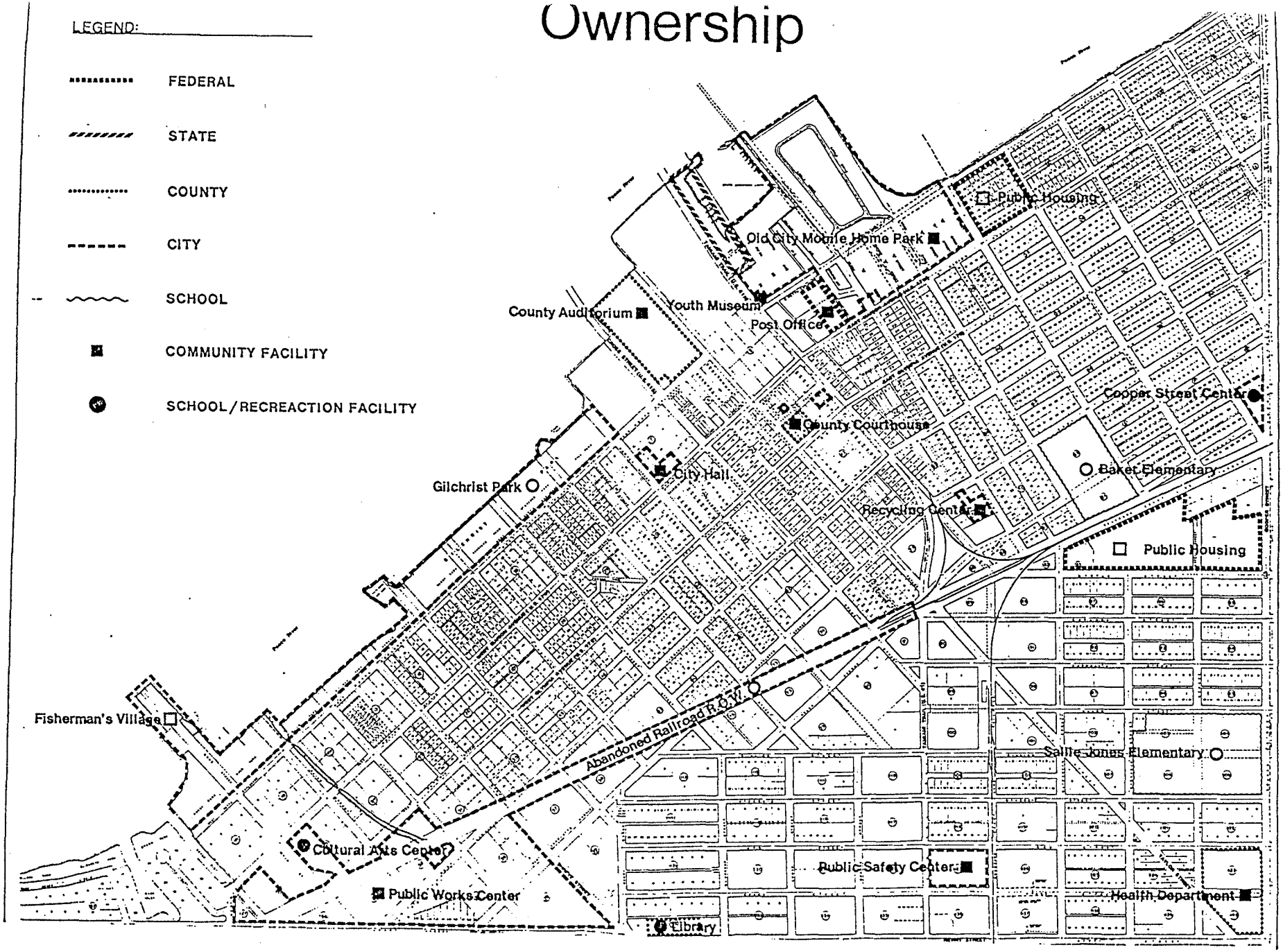
4. **Land Valuation**. The Charlotte County Property Appraiser's Office annually assesses property values in the redevelopment area. Based on the Appraiser's work maps from 1987, the following information was obtained concerning redevelopment area property values. Values were listed on a per-square-foot basis for commercial/industrial property, a per-unit basis for multi-family property, per-linear-foot basis for single-family property, and a per-acre basis for public property. Map 5 and Table 9 depict the breakdown of average property values by block numbers in the four major land use categories. Map 5 shows where they are located and is keyed to Table 9 by the block numbers in circles. For single-family property, the blocks in the southern portion of the Residential Redevelopment District and in the Residential New Development District had the lowest average values ($15 to $20 per linear foot). Highest average values for single-family properties were found in the Historic Residential District fronting on West Retta Esplanade, West Marion Avenue, Harvey Street, Gill Street, MacGregor Street, and Chasteen Street ($150 to $200 per linear foot).

MAP 4

Ownership

LEGEND:

- FEDERAL
- STATE
- COUNTY
- CITY
- SCHOOL
- COMMUNITY FACILITY
- SCHOOL/RECREACTION FACILITY



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4

MAP

January'90

North

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency

Charlotte County, Florida

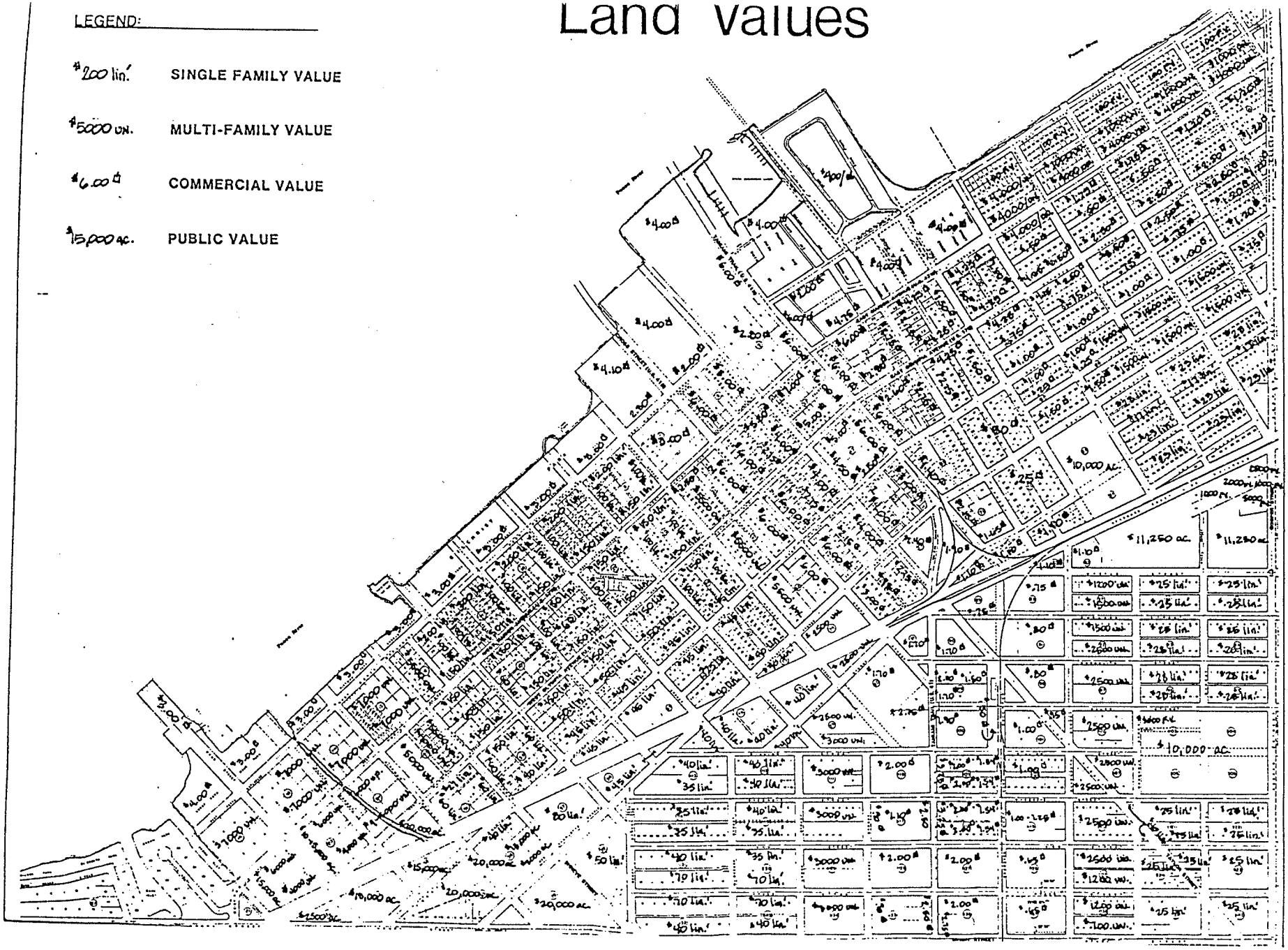
PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

MAP 5

Land Values

LEGEND:

$200 lin.	SINGLE FAMILY VALUE
$5000 un.	MULTI-FAMILY VALUE
$6.00	COMMERCIAL VALUE
$15,000 ac.	PUBLIC VALUE



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5 MAP

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency — Charlotte County, Florida — January '90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

TABLE 8

Land Ownership Breakdown
July, 1989

Jurisdiction	Ownership		Acreage	
	Total	Developed	Undeveloped	% Dist.
U. S. Government	11.9	11.2	0.7	8.9%
State of Florida	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.5%
Charlotte County	12.5	12.5	0.0	9.3%
School Board	20.2	16.8	3.4	15.3%
Punta Gorda	89.0	28.8	60.2	66.3%
Total	**134.3**	**79.3**	**65.0**	**100.0%**

Source: 1989 Charlotte County Property Appraiser's Records

TABLE 9

Valuation Analysis
July, 1987

Land Use/Zoning	Block #	Specific Blocks
Single-Family:		
$25/Linear Foot or Less	17	139, 140, 123, 121, 122, 86, 85, 93, 94, 95, Q, R, S, T, U, V
$26-$50/Linear Foot	16	130, 131, 114, 115, 113, 112, 79, 76, 75, 59, 60, 58, 95, 96, 51, 58
$51-$100/Linear Foot	12	132, 133, 48, 47, 46, 61, 2650, 57, 77, 49, 49
$101/Linear Foot or More	8	PT 47, PT 12, PT 49, 27, 11, 28, 8, 30
Multi-Family:		
$1,500/Unit or Less	14	138, 125, 120, 92, 87, A, B, C, D, E, 1, H, 68, M, N
$1,501-$5,000/Unit	15	74, 79, 111, 116, 129, 134, 107, 102, 97, PT E, PT C, 24, 25
$5,001/Unit or More	13	62, 16, 15, 14, 13, PT 22, PT 23, PT 24, PT 12, PT 31, PT 45, Charlevoi
Commercial/Industrial:		
$1.00/Square Foot or Less	17	37, 38, 40, 67, PT 68, 39, 89, 88, 91, 98, 101, 108, 119, 126, 137, 166, PT 36
$1.01-$2.00/Square Foot	26	73, 90, 80, 81, 110, 117, 127, 136, 127, 41, 35, K, L, 118, 109, 100, 99, F, G, H, I, J, 65, 71, 82, 83
$2.01-$4.00/Square Foot	19	5, Mall, 44, 63, 4, 3, 42, 6, 7, PT 31, 64, PT 32, PT 135, PT 80, PT 1, PT G
$4.01/Square Foot or More	10	Holiday Inn, Howard Johnson's, PT 31, PT 45, PT 36, 43, PT 32, 33, 1-4, 34
Public:		
$10,000/Acre or Less	5	103 (Sallie Jones), 54, 21, 69/84 (Baker)
$10,001-$15,000/Acre	5	53, 52, PT 23, PT 22, Public Housing
$15,001/Acre or More	10	Mobile Home Park, Fishermen's Village, Gilchrist Park, Auditorium, Courthouse, PT 52, 55, 78, 2

Source: 1987 Charlotte County Property Appraiser's Records

For multi-family property, the lowest average values were found in the Waterfront Development District just east of the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel, along Henry and Grace Streets south of Sallie Jones Elementary School, and along Myrtle Street, Burland Street, Fitzhugh Avenue, and Charlotte Avenue in the Residential Redevelopment and new Development Districts ($500 to $1,000 per unit). The highest valued multi-family property is found between West Marion and West Olympia Avenues near Fishermen's Village ($6,000 to $7,000 per unit).

For commercial/industrial property, the lowest average values are found throughout the Residential Redevelopment District, along parts of the Highway Commercial District east of U.S. 41, and in the industrial area between the Atlantic Coastline railroad tracks and Elizabeth Street ($0.25 to $0.50 per square foot). The highest valued commercial/industrial properties are located throughout the Central Business District ($5 to $7 per square foot).

The lowest valued public property is found in the Residential Redevelopment and New Development Districts ($10,000 per acre). The highest valued public property is located at the police/fire station, Gilchrist Park, and the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel ($80,000 to $125,000 per acre).

Observation 26: Within the redevelopment area, property values vary greatly by location and by land use.

Observation 27: Land values tend to reflect the general physical condition of the planning districts shown on Map 10.

Observation 28: The redevelopment plan should consider programs designed to increase property values in the lowest assessed blocks, particularly the two residential districts east of U.S. 41.

Observation 29: The redevelopment plan should encourage continued private reinvestment in the Central Business District where higher property values exist.

Observation 30: The redevelopment plan should target low-value, under-utilized parcels for CRA purchase for public use and should consider offering high-value, vacant, publicly-owned parcels for private redevelopment.

5. **Historic Resources.** In November, 1987, Florida Preservation Services, Inc. completed *The Punta Gorda Historic and Architectural Survey*. This survey identified and catalogued 252 buildings located in the redevelopment area to be listed on the Florida Master File of Historic Structures. The conclusion of this survey was that Punta Gorda possessed one of the finest collections of historic buildings in Florida. This survey also recommended that the City of Punta Gorda make an application to the National Park Service for designation of two downtown national register districts and three individual national register structures. Following in the footsteps of Charlotte County's first national register building, Medical Center Foundation's A. C. Freeman House, the City made application in February, 1989. Map 6 shows the City's national register nominees, consisting of a proposed four-block commercial district, a thirteen-block residential district, the Old Train Depot, the Old Ice House, and Charlotte High School. This application has received approval from the Florida Historic Advisory Board and is currently awaiting review and approval by the National Park Service.

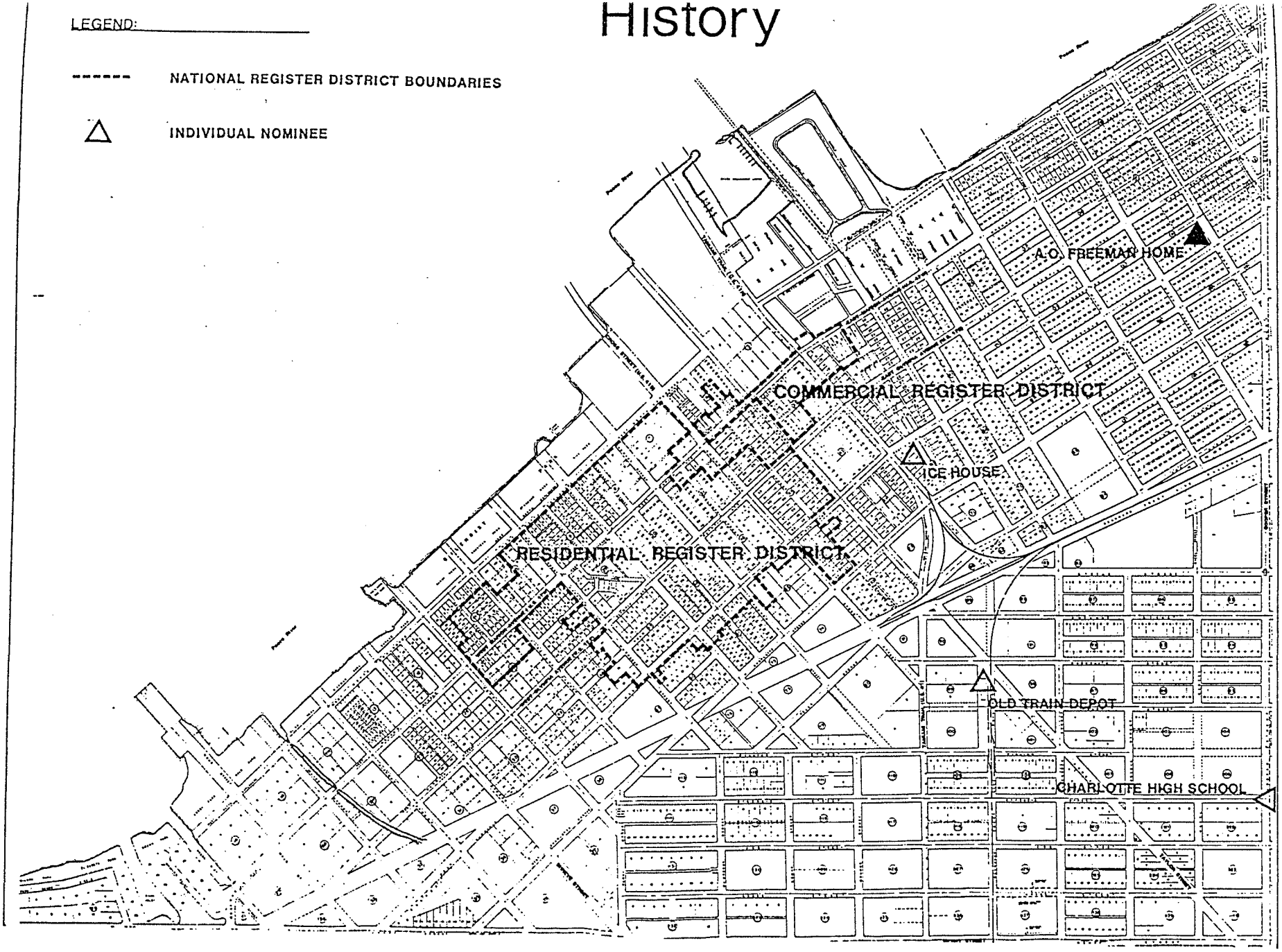
MAP 6

History

LEGEND:

------ NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

△ INDIVIDUAL NOMINEE



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MAP

January'90

North

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency

Charlotte County, Florida

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Historic Resources Survey contained specific recommendations concerning the establishment of a local historic advisory board and adoption of land development regulations aimed at encouraging preservation. Both of these tasks have been completed.

Observation 31: Proposed redevelopment projects should recognize the value and importance of the City's historic resources and seek to protect such resources.

Observation 32: Historic preservation should be strongly promoted as one of the primary tools to be used in the redevelopment of Punta Gorda.

Observation 33: The redevelopment plan should include a historic preservation program to include the recommendations contained in *The Punta Gorda Historic and Architectural Survey.*

6. **Neighborhood Deterioration.** On November 28, 1989, the Punta Gorda City Council made findings that slum and blight conditions existed in the 160-block redevelopment area. Part of these findings included the identification of several specific neighborhoods within the redevelopment area where more acute problems of blight existed. The neighborhoods shown on Map 7 include a five-block commercial stretch of southbound U.S. 41 beginning at West Retta Esplanade and extending to West Charlotte Avenue, a fourteen-block residential area bounded on the north by Hargraves Street, on the east by Cooper Street, on the South by Myrtle Street, and on the west by Wood Street; a three-block residential area between William and McKenzie Streets just east of West Charlotte Avenue, and a six-block mixed industrial/residential area south of East Charlotte Avenue and west of Wood Street. Each of these areas shows signs of physical deterioration, evidence of trash/debris, and, in some instances, areas with woeful housing conditions.

The five-block commercial area flanking southbound U.S. 41 has three structures under condemnation orders, two of which have recently been demolished. Two other buildings in this area have been found not in compliance with the City's Building Maintenance and Appearance Code, with an additional four structures on the "waiting list." Of the seven buildings in this area currently in a state of physical decay, six are occupied rooming houses. This area serves as a major entryway into the community for visitors and residents. For these reasons, special attention should be given in the redevelopment plan to addressing the problems of this area.

The fourteen-block residential area located just to the east of Baker Elementary School has many of the same problems. Of the 608 housing units found in this area, approximately 130 are federal assistance public rental units managed by the Punta Gorda Housing Authority. While these units were not evaluated in terms of their specific structural condition, there appears to be a need for some physical improvements. In addition, approximately 43 of the remaining single-family homes were observed to be in a general state of disrepair. Based on field surveys and 1988 Census data, approximately 18 housing units are without adequate plumbing facilities, 42 housing units were built prior to 1940, only 138 single-family homes were occupied by their owners, and the average 1980 household income was $11,350.

Crime statistics for this area also indicate a problem. Of the total Citywide offenses, over 66% of burglaries and 83% of drug violations were committed in this particular neighborhood. Clearly, this low and moderate income neighborhood should receive careful consideration in the recommended actions of this plan. However, the proposals contemplated by this plan must not disrupt the stable aspects of this neighborhood.

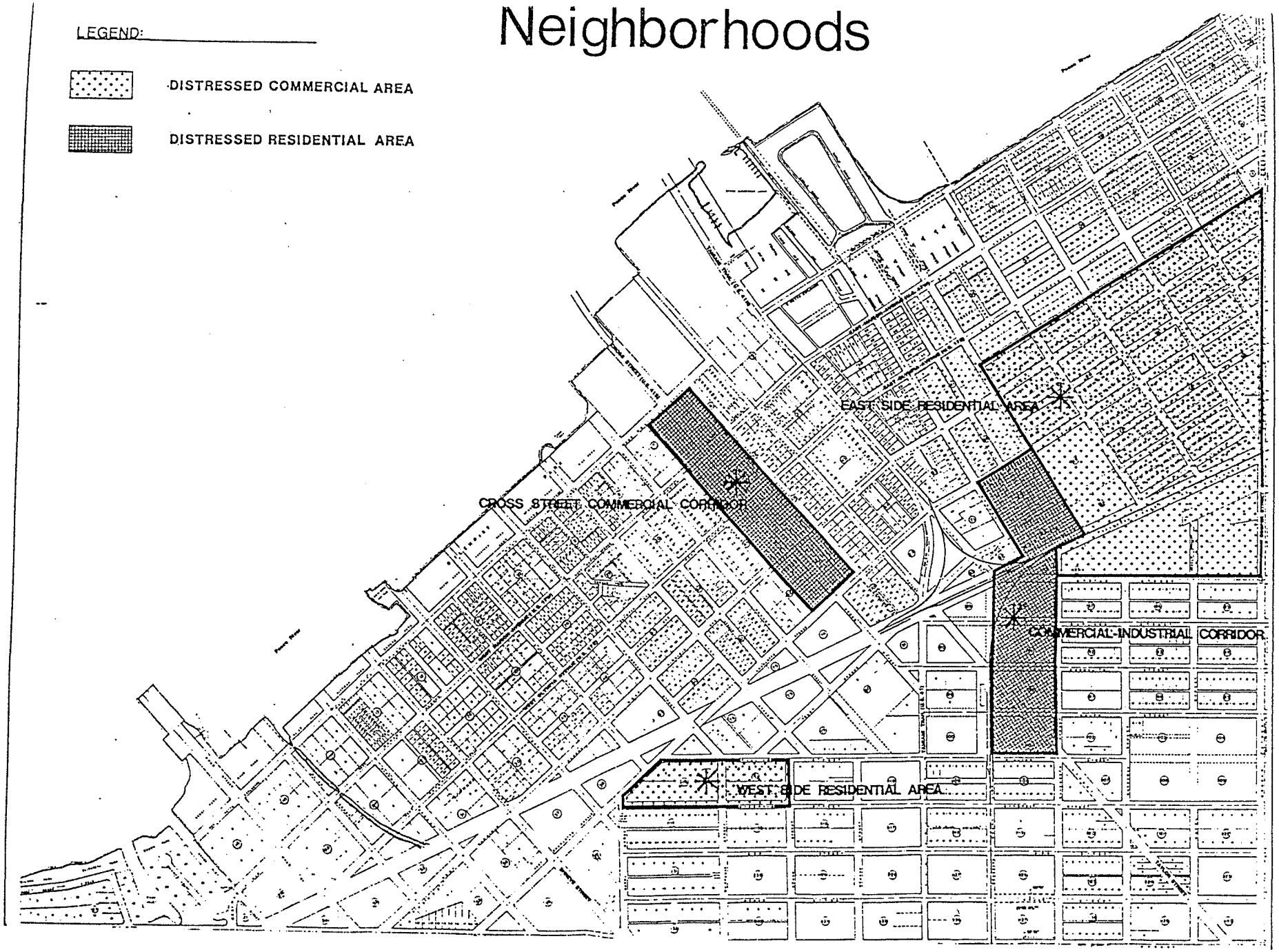
MAP 7

Neighborhoods

LEGEND:

DISTRESSED COMMERCIAL AREA

DISTRESSED RESIDENTIAL AREA



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MAP

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency

Charlotte County, Florida

January'90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Cooper Street Center, numerous churches, and stable families should be encouraged to continue their efforts toward improving living conditions in the neighborhood.

Observation 34: The redevelopment plan should consider continued enforcement of existing codes and regulations aimed at abating the problems of condemnable structures and encouraging an acceptable level of maintenance for deteriorated buildings.

Observation 35: Redevelopment programs should help increase home ownership throughout the redevelopment area.

Observation 36: The redevelopment plan should include recommendations to improve housing conditions in the area.

Observation 37: Existing neighborhood institutions (e.g., churches, families, Cooper Street Center) should be asked to help implement the neighborhood development programs contained in this plan.

7. **Natural Features/Flood Zones.** Map 8 shows the major natural features and flood zones existing in the redevelopment area. The most significant natural feature of the redevelopment area is the Peace River. As part of the Charlotte Harbor State Aquatic Preserve, the Peace River offers spectacular vistas for downtown neighborhoods – over nearly two linear miles of waterfront. As one of the most pristine harbors and finest historic sport fishing areas on the Gulf Coast, the Charlotte Harbor/Peace River water body is one of downtown Punta Gorda's major assets. Natural features in the redevelopment area include wetland and associated drainage areas, tree and vegetation coverage, soil characteristics, and general topography.

Snook Inlet is located just west of Fishermen's Village near Maud Street. This natural water body serves as the outfall point for the Florida Department of Transportation drainage ditch lying within the abandoned Seaboard Coastline Railroad right-of-way. This drainageway serves all of the redevelopment area and has historically not been maintained as an urban drainage facility.

The redevelopment area is by far the most tree-covered and heavily landscaped urban area in all of Charlotte County. In a survey done in 1987 by the Charlotte County Agricultural Extension Agency, it was found that the total canopy coverage of trees in the redevelopment area was 30% of the total land area, or approximately 186 acres. The redevelopment area also contains several outstanding specimens of native and exotic trees, including an 80 year old banyan tree located along West Retta Esplanade. Even with the abundance of trees, the major downtown shopping areas are void of mature trees and landscaping and are in need of both shade trees and decorative landscaping. In addition, protected mangrove stands exist in several areas of the Punta Gorda waterfront. Map 8 shows these areas just east of Fishermen's Village, in the City's municipal marina, and just west of the Medical Center Hospital. The predominant soil type in the redevelopment area is Immokalee-Myakka. This sandy soil is poorly drained with an organic stained subsoil. Like most of Florida, the redevelopment area is very level, with ground elevations of 4 to 5 feet above sea level along the waterfront and 8 to 9 feet farther south in the Henry Street and U.S. 41 area.

MAP 8

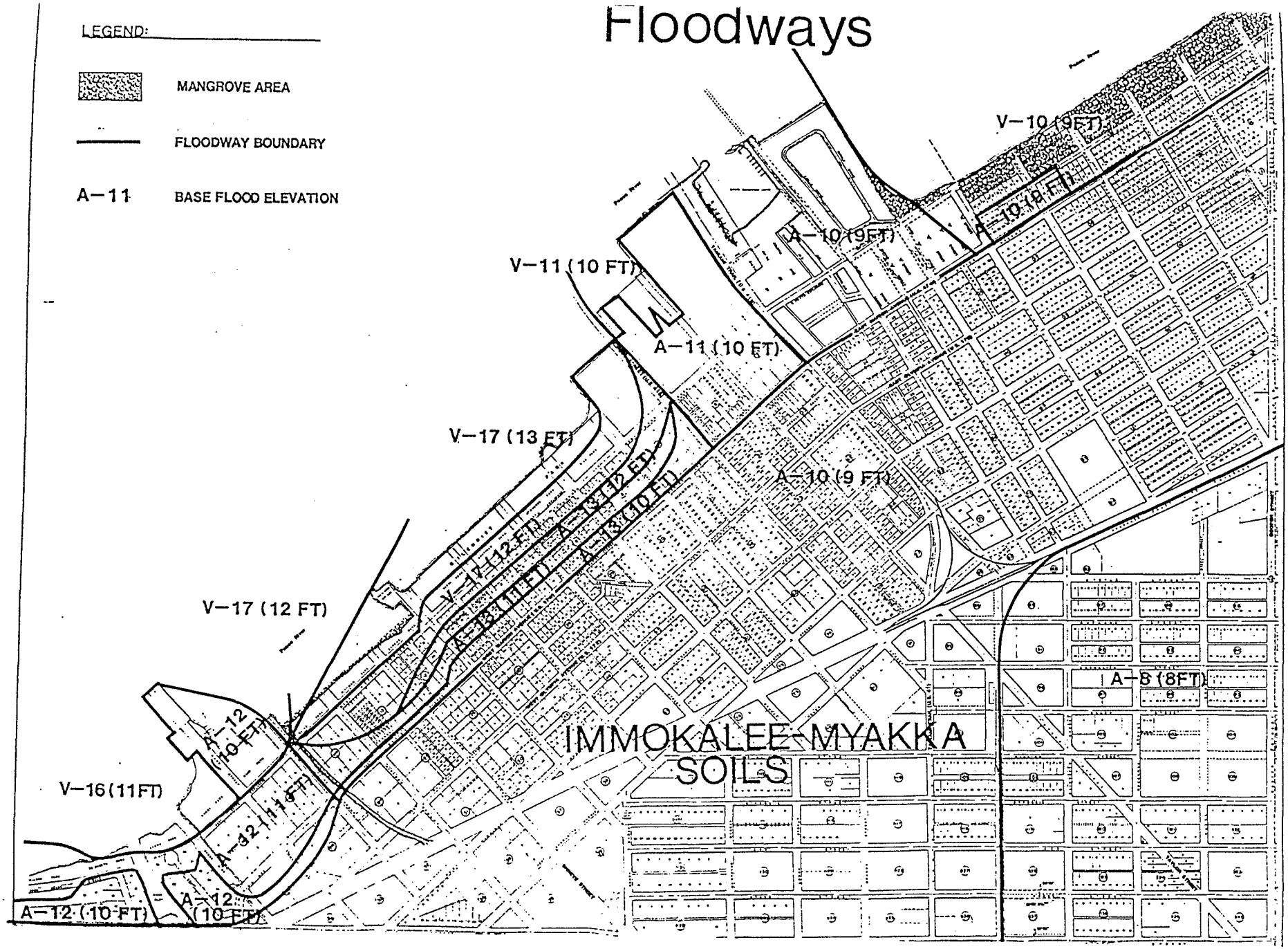
Floodways

LEGEND:

MANGROVE AREA

FLOODWAY BOUNDARY

A–11 BASE FLOOD ELEVATION



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8

MAP

January'90

North

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency Charlotte County, Florida

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

All of the redevelopment area is within the 100-year flood zone. Only two very small velocity "V" zones exist in the area. Most of the waterfront area lying within flood zones A-10 to A-12 have a base flood elevation of 10 to 12 feet. Map 8 illustrates the boundaries of the 100-year flood zone.

Observation 38: The redevelopment plan should consider the reorientation of the downtown area to the harbor as a primary design goal.

Observation 39: Redevelopment projects should encourage public access to the water.

Observation 40: A redevelopment project should consider improvement of the FDOT drainage ditch and its associated right-of-way.

Observation 41: The redevelopment plan should include programs to encourage the planting of street trees and vegetation.

Observation 42: The redevelopment plan should consider the acquisition of mangrove wetlands areas currently held in private ownership.

Observation 43: Drainage facilities in the waterfront area should be improved in order to minimize seasonal flooding.

8. **Utilities.** The major public utilities serving the redevelopment area include sewer, water, and, to a limited extent, drainage facilities as shown on Map 9. The major waterlines in the redevelopment area include a 12" polyvinyl chloride (PVC) line running along East Marion Avenue to the old municipal mobile home park; a 12" PVC line running west along Retta Esplanade from the old mobile home park down Shreve Street and back east along West Virginia Avenue; a 12" PVC line running west along West Olympia Avenue from Shreve Street to Henry Street; a 12" ductile iron (DI) line running south on U.S. 41 from West Marion Avenue out past Henry Street; and a 12" case iron (CI) transmission line beginning at Nesbit and East Virginia Streets proceeding south on Nesbit to the railroad right-of-way, then running east to the water plant. Recent analysis of the downtown water system indicates a need for a new 12" main along Olympia Avenue from Shreve Street to Cooper Street for increased fire protection. In addition, improvements to the existing water main on East Charlotte Avenue between Cooper Street and Nesbit Street, installation of 6" mains on Dupont Street and Milus Street between East Olympia Avenue and East Virginia Avenue, and water main upgrading along West Virginia Avenue between Shreve Street are all being considered during the next five years.

The major sewer lines in the redevelopment area include a vitrified clay pipe (VCP) line varying in size from 8" to 12" along all of Olympia Avenue; a 14" DI force main running the length of Henry Street to a 10" VCP line running northwest on Maud Street; and a VCP line varying in size from 8" to 10" running south on Cochran Street from Marion Avenue to south on Narranja Street to Henry Street. Although many of these are older cast iron and tile gravity lines, the City has recently relined most of these lines with the insituform process which has produced an adequate sanitary sewer system.

The FDOT drainage ditch is the major drainage facility serving the redevelopment area. Along with major stormwater lines located along U.S. 41, Marion Avenue, and Olympia Avenue, the downtown drainage system should be evaluated for improvements to the FDOT ditch and at several trouble spots shown on Map 9.

MAP 9

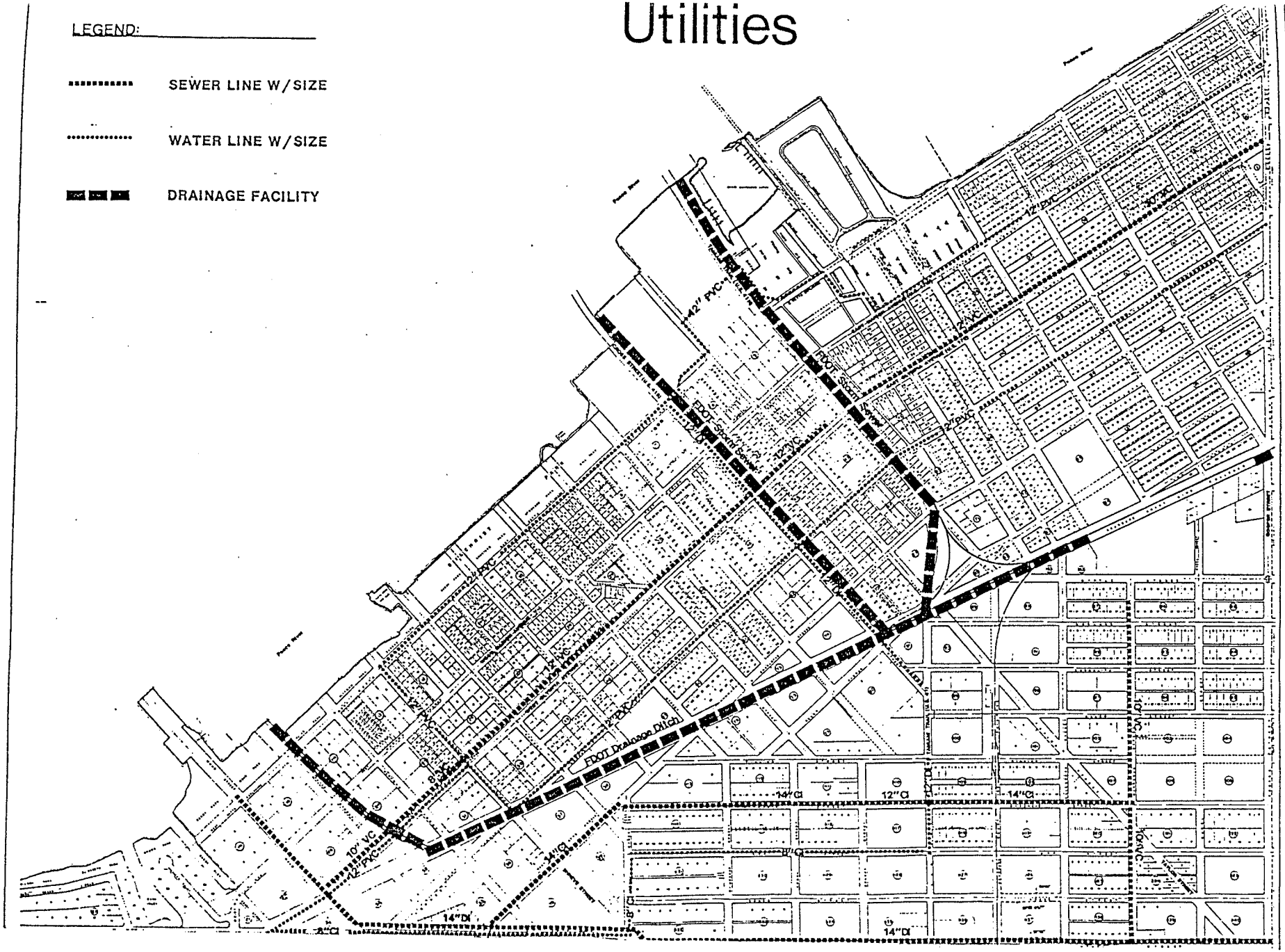
Utilities

LEGEND:

SEWER LINE W/SIZE

WATER LINE W/SIZE

DRAINAGE FACILITY



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MAP

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency

Charlotte County, Florida

January'90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Observation 44: The redevelopment plan should include the water line improvements called for in this section.

Observation 45: The redevelopment plan should encourage upgrading all utilities whenever streetscape work is being done.

D. URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Based on the physical conditions inventoried in the previous section, an urban design analysis of the redevelopment area is presented in Map 10. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the key physical attributes of the redevelopment area that determine its unique character. This inventory will serve as the basis for the land use plan and redevelopment projects and programs contained in Chapter 5.

1. **Districts**. There are several neighborhoods within the redevelopment area which, by reason of their location, size, or predominant land use, can be identified as separate planning districts. Eight individual planning districts exist within Punta Gorda's historic downtown area. Map 10 shows the approximate boundaries of each of these districts.

a. **Waterfront Development District**. This district fronts on the Peace River and is characterized by extensive City ownership and a mixture of public and private water-oriented land uses such as Fishermen's Village, Gilchrist Park, and several marinas.

b. **Central Business District**. This 29-block district overlaps the Waterfront District and is characterized by a mixture of retail and service businesses located in the heart of the redevelopment area. This district also contains the proposed four-block National Register District.

c. **Historic Residential District**. This 30-block district lies west of the Central Business District and is characterized by a high concentration of residential structures built prior to 1940 and the existence of historic brick streets. This area also contains the proposed 13-block National Register District. Where this district meets the Central Business District along U.S. 41 southbound, a deteriorating transitional development area exists.

d. **Public Services District**. This eight-block district is located in the southwest corner of the redevelopment area and is characterized by extensive City ownership of land and a growth of public service facilities such as the City's Public Works Center, the future Public Safety Center, and the Charlotte County Visual Arts Center.

e. **Medical Services District**. This ten-block district is located directly east of the Central Business District and is characterized by a concentration of professional/medical offices around the Medical Center Hospital.

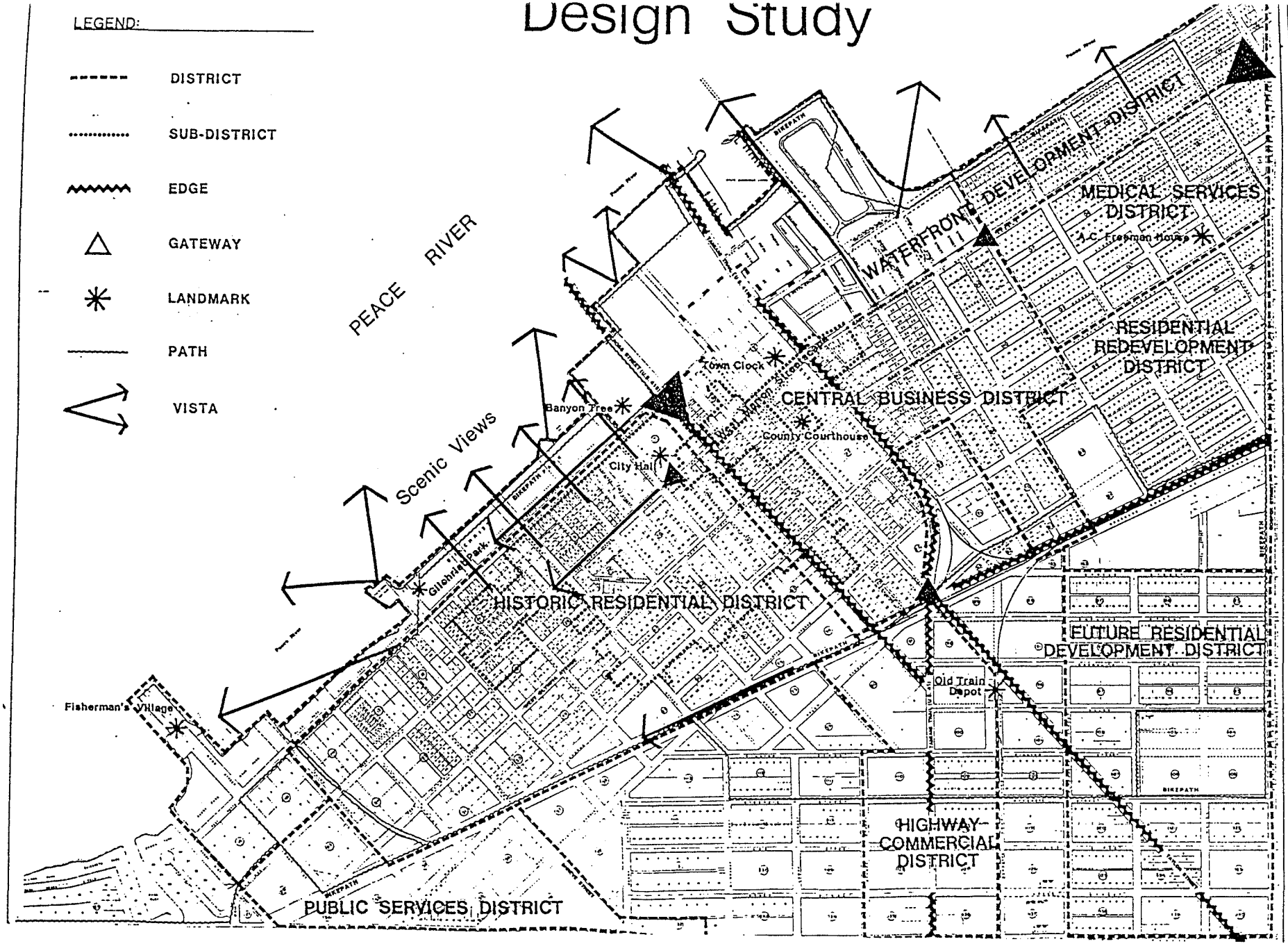
f. **Residential Redevelopment District**. This 12-block district is located south of the Medical Services District and is characterized by deteriorating structures, low and moderate income housing, and a low home-ownership rate.

MAP 10

Design Study

LEGEND:

- DISTRICT
- SUB-DISTRICT
- EDGE
- GATEWAY
- LANDMARK
- PATH
- VISTA



Scale 1":200'

10

MAP

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency Charlotte County, Florida January'90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

g. **Future Residential Development District.** This 24-block district is located in the southeast corner of the redevelopment area. The area is characterized by stable neighborhood conditions with a supply of vacant lots for future residential development, and the existence of elementary, junior, and senior high schools within walking distance.

h. **Highway Commercial District.** This 13-block district fronts along either side of U.S. 41 and is characterized by a mixture of highway-oriented commercial land uses and community services, including several banks and the City's police/fire station.

Observation 46: The redevelopment plan should include projects aimed at reinforcing the unique identity of the districts listed.

Observation 47: The redevelopment plan should address the problems of the commercial southbound transition area along U.S. 41 and the Residential Redevelopment District.

2. **Paths.** There are two principal types of "paths" in the redevelopment area: vehicular and pedestrian. U.S. 41, Marion Avenue, Olympia Avenue, Henry Street, Shreve Street, Virginia Avenue, Taylor Street, and Cooper Street serve as the primary vehicular paths in the redevelopment area. Each of these roadways are classified as either major collectors or arterioles in the City's 1994 Traffic Circulation Plan.

Sidewalks serve as the primary type of pedestrian path within the redevelopment area. However, in several areas sidewalks are either absent or in unacceptable condition. Another path that is partially complete is the riverwalk, which also serves as a piece of the redevelopment area's bike path system. Map 10 shows where the bike path is located.

Observation 48: Redevelopment projects should either upgrade inadequate roadways or construct parts of major streets that are missing.

Observation 49: The redevelopment plan should offer proposals for the development and completion of the riverwalk and bike path systems.

Observation 50: The redevelopment plan should include a sidewalk installation and improvement program.

3. **Gateways.** There are several entranceways or "gateways" to the redevelopment area. These occur where major vehicular paths enter the redevelopment area, and in several cases where they enter specific planning districts. The character and appearance of these areas are important in that they provide visitors with their first impression of the area. The primary entranceways are located at the intersection of East Marion Avenue and Cooper Street, and U.S. 41 southbound at West Retta Esplanade. Secondary entranceways also exist at Cochran Street and East Marion Avenue (Central Business District), U.S. 41 northbound and Taylor Street (Central Business District), and West Marion Avenue and Harvey Street (Historic Residential District).

Observation 51: The redevelopment plan should include proposals to properly mark the gateway entrances to the redevelopment area.

4. **Edges.** There are several physical barriers or "edges" in the redevelopment area. These barriers provide a sense of containment and definition for many of the planning districts already identified. The most obvious and prominent edge is the Peace River. U.S. 41 northbound and southbound also function as barriers due to their width and volume of traffic. Taylor Street south of U.S. 41 serves as an edge due to its angular alignment through the future Residential Development District. The railroad tracks east of U.S. 41 serve to split the Residential Redevelopment District in half.

Observation 52: The redevelopment plan should not try to remove existing edges, but should reinforce them where district boundaries are important.

Observation 53: The redevelopment plan should consider ways to encourage safe public access to and through existing barriers.

Observation 54: The redevelopment plan should consider relocation of the railroad tracks to outside the City limits in order to eliminate the splitting of the Residential Redevelopment District.

5. **Landmarks.** The redevelopment area has several focal points or "landmarks." Landmarks are traditionally points of high activity or locations of visually significant objects. The observed landmarks in the downtown area include: West Marion Avenue Streetscape/Town Clock, Charlotte County Courthouse, Punta Gorda City Hall, Charlotte County Auditorium, Gilchrist Park, Fishermen's Village, Old Train Depot, A.C. Freeman House, Peace River/Charlotte Harbor, and the banyan tree on West Retta Esplanade.

Observation 55: The redevelopment plan should incorporate and preserve these landmarks as focal points of the area.

Observation 56: The redevelopment plan should promote the use of, and activities at, these landmarks.

6. **Dominant Views.** There are several points in the redevelopment area where there are "views and vistas" that should be preserved and enhanced. Most occur along roadway corridors and are oriented toward the river or are in the historic and residential areas. Major views in the redevelopment area are: northwest along Nesbit Street out over the old municipal mobile home park; northwest along U.S. 41 toward Charlotte Harbor, northwest along Harvey, Gill, MacGregor and Chasteen Streets out over Gilchrist Park; west along West Retta Esplanade looking toward the U.S. 41 bridges and Myakka River; west down West Marion Avenue from City Hall; west down the abandoned railroad right-of-way; northwest from Adrienne, Booth, Mary, Milus and Cochran Streets out through the mangroves looking onto the Peace River; north and west from the County Auditorium parking lot out over the Charlotte Harbor; and north and east from the old municipal mobile home park out over Charlotte Harbor.

Observation 57: The redevelopment plan should contain policies and projects aimed at utilizing and enhancing the views listed as design assets.

Observation 58: The proposed redevelopment plan should contain policies and projects aimed at utilizing and enhancing the views listed as design assets.

CHAPTER 2

Traffic and Parking

A. BACKGROUND

In December, 1989, the final draft of the City of Punta Gorda Traffic Study was presented to the City by the consulting firm of Ahlstedt, Stutsman & Rice, P.A. One of the objectives of this study was to assess the traffic circulation pattern and parking supply in the redevelopment area, and to make recommendations for future improvements to these two downtown features.

This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first will present a summary of the existing traffic, parking, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities. The second will provide Ahlstedt, Stutsman & Rice's analysis of the existing traffic-related problems in the redevelopment area.

B. TRAFFIC AND PARKING PROFILE

The downtown redevelopment area contains the 14 traffic zones used in the 1988 Charlotte County/Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan for data collection. In particular, traffic zones 31, 33, 39, 40, and 41 covering the Central Business District (CBD) were examined in order to analyze the problems of traffic circulation and parking in the core business area (see Map 11). Table 10 reflects the square footage of built business space present in the core business area as of July, 1989.

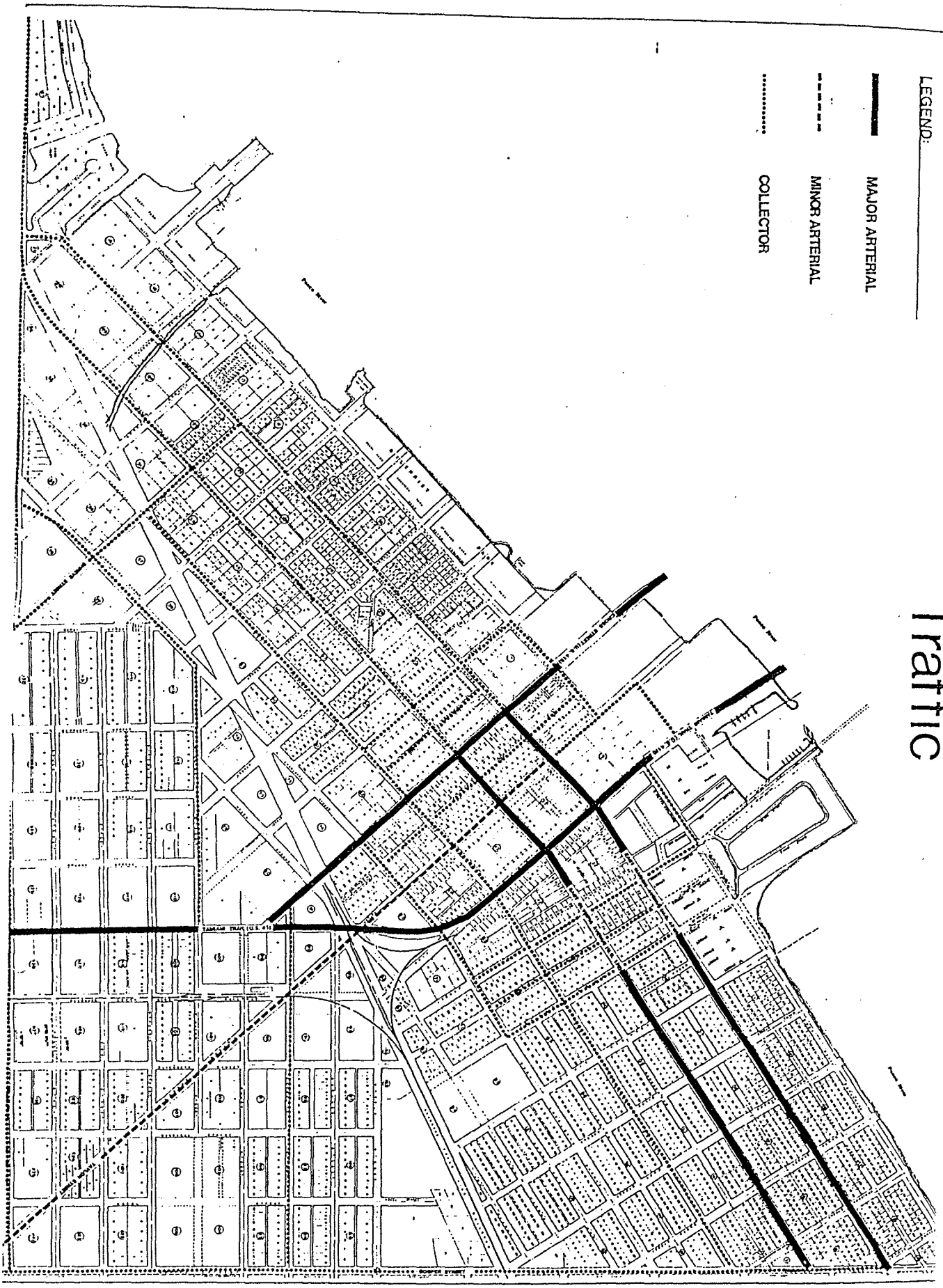
1. **Traffic Circulation Overview.** Traffic circulation in the CBD is shown on Map 11 and is based on a dual one-way system providing a counterclockwise circulation plan. Because of the compactness of the CBD and the dual one-way street system, CBD traffic circulation relies heavily on U.S. 41 and U.S. 17. However, in addition to providing this important CBD circulation, U.S. 41 and U.S. 17, because of their place in the overall state highway system, carry a significant amount of through or non-CBD related traffic. Primary north-south traffic circulation in the CBD is provided by U.S. 41 southbound (Cross Street) and U.S. 41 northbound (Tamiami Trail). Sullivan Street south of Marion Avenue and Taylor Street furnish additional two-way circulation within the area.

Primary east-west traffic circulation in the CBD is provided by U.S. 17 westbound (Marion Avenue) and U.S. 17 eastbound (Olympia Avenue). Retta Esplanade, Virginia Avenue, and Charlotte Avenue furnish additional two-way circulation within the area.

2. **Parking Overview.** Parking within the CBD is provided by a number of surface parking lots which are associated with specific businesses or public facilities. There are four publicly-owned general use parking facilities within the CBD. These facilities are:

a. Herald Court at the Courthouse – 11 Spaces
b. Herald Court at Northbound U.S. 41 – 33 Spaces
c. Virginia Avenue behind the United Telephone Company – 8 Spaces
d. Nesbit Street adjacent to the Post Office – 55 Spaces

MAP 11



Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency Charlotte County, Florida January'90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Scale 1":200'

11

MAP

TABLE 10

Existing Central Business District Development
July, 1987
(In Square Feet)

Traffic Zone	Type of Development	Square Footage
31	Retail	85,700
	Non-Retail	18,300
	Sub Total	104,000
33	Retail	42,400
	Non-Retail	52,700
	Sub Total	96,100
39	Retail	22,400
	Non-Retail	16,400
	Sub Total	38,800
40	Retail	88,200
	Non-Retail	27,000
	Sub Total	82,200
41	Retail	88,200
	Non-Retail	140,900
	Sub Total	229,100
Total	Retail	293,900
	Non-Retail	256,300
	Total	550,200

Source: Charlotte County/City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan, December, 1988

Off-street parking was inventoried in the Central Business District. While these parking areas were identified on an individual basis for purposes of analysis, individual parking areas were grouped into one of 35 blocks in the area. Map 12 identifies the boundaries of this area and the number of off-street parking spaces in each of these 35 blocks. The inventory of parking spaces identified approximately 2,800 off-street spaces in the Central Business District. While this represents a considerable amount of parking to serve the existing level of development, it should be recognized that, of the approximately 2,800 off-street parking spaces, 369 spaces are associated with the Holiday Inn and Howard Johnson motels, and 504 spaces are associated with the Memorial Auditorium.

3. **Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities Overview.** As is the case in most communities in Southwest Florida, pedestrian activity along most public rights-of-way is minimal. This is particularly true in Punta Gorda, where development is relatively spread out and no public mass transit service is provided. Primary pedestrian facilities in the City consist of concrete sidewalks in public rights-of-way. However, bicycle use has continued to increase as of late, as both a form of recreation and a mode of transportation. The present bike path signage along Retta Esplanade and the provision of bike racks in the Central Business District provide evidence of bicycle activity.

C. PROJECTED TRAFFIC AND PARKING NEEDS

Future traffic circulation and parking needs in the redevelopment area will be determined by both the projected use of Central Business District streets by travelers passing through, and by the projected number of new shoppers, employees, and visitors coming to the core business area. Table 11 summarizes the anticipated traffic volumes and associated levels of service on the major roadways in the redevelopment area over the next 20 years. Table 12 reflects the square footage of business space projected to be developed in the Central Business District over the next 20 years. Based on these projections and the existing traffic and parking conditions discussed in the previous section, the following analysis can be made.

1. **Traffic Circulation Needs.** Table 11 indicates that all of the redevelopment area's major roadways will operate at acceptable levels of service of "D" or better through the year 2010, except for a very short segment of U.S. 41 southbound from the bridge to U.S. 17. This means that the combined impact of projected through-traffic and Central Business District destination traffic will not create unacceptable traffic congestion. For this reason, major roadway widening projects to improve traffic circulation and/or access to the downtown area appear to be unnecessary through the year 2010.

Under existing traffic conditions, the one-way system now in operation provides adequate service to the CBD. However, the discontinuity of Retta Esplanade created by the Punta Gorda Mall between northbound U.S. 41 and Taylor Street creates an off-set intersection on U.S. 41. This problem is further magnified since it affects access to the Memorial Auditorium. The Punta Gorda Mall has an entrance from U.S. 41, but most of its internal circulation is to West Retta Esplanade, Taylor Street, and West Marion Avenue. The intersection of Cross Street and West Retta Esplanade is used to access Taylor Street which provides additional two-way north-south circulation in the CBD. This configuration functions satisfactorily at this time, but in the future it may be necessary to improve West Retta Esplanade between U.S. 41 northbound and U.S. 41 southbound. Any upgrading of the other east-west collectors in the CBD (e.g., Olympia Avenue, Virginia Avenue, and Charlotte Avenue) would help move traffic off of southbound U.S. 41 and into the core business area.

MAP 12

Parking

LEGEND:

- TRAFFIC ZONE
- PUBLIC PARKING
- PRIVATE PARKING
- GRASS PARKING AREA
- BIKEWAY

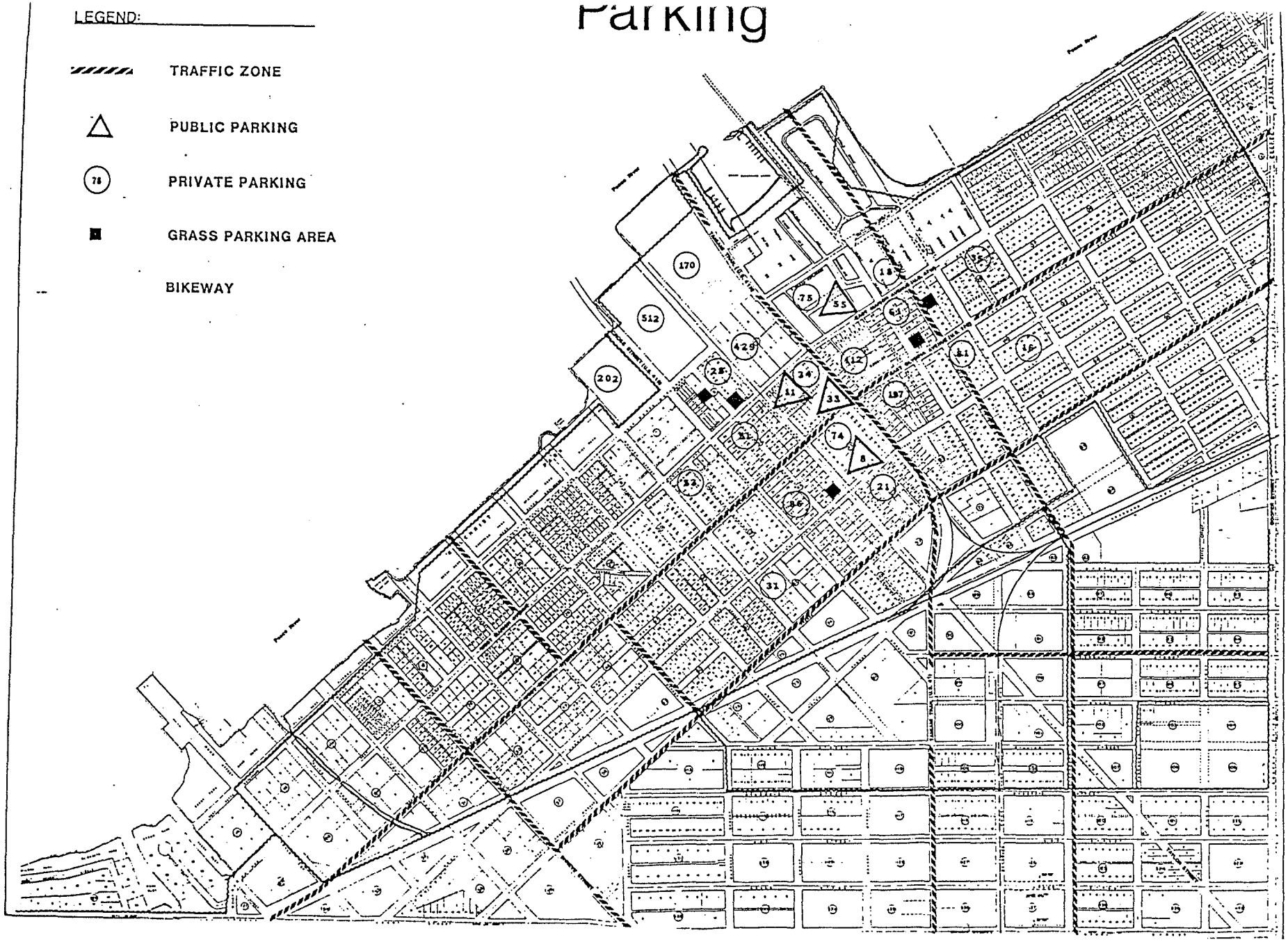


TABLE 11

Projected Traffic Volumes and Levels of Service
Years 1988-2010

	Average Annual Daily Traffic			Peak Season Weekday Traffic			Peak Season Weekday Traffic			Average Peak Hour Capacity			Level of Service		
Facility	**1994**	**1999**	**2010**	**1994**	**1999**	**2010**	**1994**	**1999**	**2010**	**1994**	**1999**	**2010**	**1994**	**1999**	**2010**
West Marion Avenue Cross Street to Henry Street	5,554	6,220	7,553	6,553	7,340	8,913	689	631	758	1,210	1,210	1,210	B	C	C
Olympia Avenue Henry Street to Cross Street	6,398	7,165	8,781	7,549	8,455	10,267	649	719	873	1,210	1,210	1,210	C	C	C
E Marion Avenue (US 17) Cooper Street to US 41	8,963	9,656	11,374	10,576	11,394	13,421	899	968	1,127	1,920	1,920	1,920	B	B	C
E Olympia Avenue (US 17) US 41 to Cooper Street	8,898	8,716	10,284	10,576	11,394	13,421	811	874	1,030	1,920	1,920	1,920	B	B	C
US 41 (Southbound) Bridge to US 17	24,124	24,915	31,617	29,400	37,388	2,381	2,565	2,985	2,790	2,790	2,790	2,790	D	D	F
US 41 (Northbound) Charlotte Street to US 17	16,240	17,496	20,689	19,164	20,645	24,318	1,591	1,714	1,994	2,790	2,790	2,790	C	C	C
Henry Street W Marion Ave to US 41	2,376	2,661	3,232	2,894	3,148	3,813	283	311	378	1,210	1,210	1,210	A	A	A
Marion Avenue US 41 to Cross Street	6,499	7,081	8,247	7,669	8,262	9,732	660	762	827	1,210	1,210	1,210	C	C	C
Olympia Avenue (US 17) Cross Street to US 41	12,042	12,973	15,281	14,210	15,388	18,032	1,194	1,286	1,497	1,920	1,920	1,920	C	C	C

Source: Ahlstedt, Stutsman & Rice, City of Punta Gorda Traffic Study

TABLE 12

Projected Central Business District Development
(In Square Feet)

Traffic Zone	Type of Development	1994	1999	2010
31	Retail	96,139	103,596	120,000
	Non-Retail	69,035	105,274	185,000
32	Retail	43,539	43,996	45,000
	Non-Retail	54,096	45,000	
33	Retail	22,583	22,173	23,000
	Non-Retail	16,453	16,452	16,500
40	Retail	65,791	73,357	90,000
	Non-Retail	37,043	44,217	60,000
41	Retail	88,748	89,139	90,000
	Non-Retail	158,887	171,735	200,000
Total	Retail	316,800	332,801	368,000
	Non-Retail	335,491	392,056	516,500
Change From 1987	Retail	22,900	38,901	74,100
	Non-Retail	79,191	135,756	260,200
		102,091	273,657	334,300

Source: Charlotte County/City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan, December, 1988

In addition, consideration will have to be given to the impact of redevelopment of the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel. Current estimates indicate an impact projected at 3,500 or more vehicle trips per day due to this development. Examination of this site indicates that there will likely be two primary entrances to the project, one at the intersection of East Marion Avenue and Nesbit Street, and the other at the intersection of U.S. 41 northbound and East Retta Esplanade. The main entrance to the site should be the Nesbit Street entrance. Careful design of these two entrances will be needed as this parcel is redeveloped.

While no road-widening projects are needed to improve traffic circulation in the redevelopment area, several intersection problems were observed that will become more acute as traffic volumes increase. Left-hand turning movements from Nesbit and Taylor Streets cause traffic delays at the intersections of Nesbit Street and East Marion Avenue, Taylor Street and West Marion Avenue, and Taylor Street and West Olympia Avenue. In addition, the current configuration of Taylor Street southbound at West Marion Avenue should be considered for redesign in order to allow better right-hand turning movements onto West Marion Avenue.

Finally, as shown on Map 11, there are several inadequate street intersections in the redevelopment area. Virtually all of these problem intersections are related to poor design where angled crossings of two or more streets occur. As traffic levels increase on these streets, so will the problems with these intersections.

Observation 59: The redevelopment plan should examine alternatives to correcting the Retta Esplanade problem between U.S. 41 southbound and U.S. 41 northbound.

Observation 60: The redevelopment plan should allow for east-west collector street improvements in the core business area.

Observation 61: Redevelopment of the City's 30-acre waterfront site must include an off-site traffic circulation impact assessment.

Observation 62: The redevelopment plan should include some design alternatives for the Nesbit Street/East Marion Avenue, Taylor Street/West Marion Avenue, and Taylor Street/West Olympia Avenue intersections.

Observation 63: The redevelopment plan should consider improvement plans for the current problem intersections in the structures.

2. **Parking Needs.** The adequacy of the existing CBD off-street parking supply was analyzed based on the inventory of existing off-street parking and estimates of existing development on both an overall basis and by the five CBD traffic zones. Overall, retail and non-retail development in 1987 amounted to approximately 550,200 square feet. The off-street parking supply based on the parking inventory included a total of 2,815 parking spaces. This would indicate a parking supply of 5.1 parking spaces per 1,000 gross square feet, as shown in Table 13. On the surface, this would indicate that the existing parking supply adequately meets the needs of existing development. However, as shown in Table 11, there is a wide disparity between the parking supply rate in traffic zone 31 and the remaining traffic zones. Additionally, if certain major parking areas dedicated to specific uses (e.g., Holiday Inn, Howard Johnson's, Punta Gorda Mall, and Charlotte Shopping Center, which equal approximately 33% of the total off-street parking supply) are discounted, it becomes apparent that the parking supply for the smaller retail and non-retail establishments and government offices in the CBD is at best marginal.

TABLE 13

Existing Central Business District Off-Street Parking Supply Rate
1987

Traffic Zone	Parking Spaces	1987 Development	Parking Rate
31	1,513	104,000	14.5
33	220	96,000	2.3
39	197	38,800	5.8
40	232	82,200	2.8
41	653	229,100	2.8
Total	2,815	550,200	5.1

Notes:
1. "Parking Spaces" based on inventory.
2. "1987 Development" = total retail and non-retail gross square footage.
3. "Parking Rate" = parking spaces per 1,000 gross square feet.

Source: City of Punta Gorda Traffic Study, December, 1989

An additional component used in analyzing the adequacy of parking is space utilization. Existing off-street parking space utilization was determined using low-level aerial photography taken at two-hour intervals between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM in October, 1988. Analysis of this photography indicates that the parking characteristics in the CBD are not unusual. Average time parked was less than two hours. However, one category of parkers (probably employees) stayed four or more hours and tended to utilize unpaved parking lots.

Analysis of parking space utilization at four selected downtown locations throughout the day indicated a maximum peak hour utilization of approximately 40% of the available spaces. These four locations comprise some 689 parking spaces, or approximately 25% of the total number of parking spaces inventoried. It should be noted that on an individual basis, the highest utilization rates for each location varied from 100% for the grass lot at West Virginia Avenue and Taylor Street to 32.3% at the Punta Gorda Mall.

Based on the inventory of parking supply and sampling of parking utilization, it appears the current parking supply in the CBD is adequate. However, the number of spaces provided in individual parking facilities is significantly greater than what is required by the zoning code.

The following analysis was made in terms of future parking needs. As development displaces present parking in unpaved areas, the present parkers and those generated by the new development must be accommodated. There are no current plans for additional public parking in the CBD, and no proposals to increase privately provided parking beyond the required 1 space per 1,000 square feet contained in the zoning regulations. Based on these regulations and the anticipated future development shown previously in Table 12, only 335 additional parking spaces would have to be constructed to satisfy development impacts through the year 2010. However, Table 14 provides a projection of the future parking needs in the CBD using a more realistic off-street parking requirement of 5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet. Using this 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet standard, the downtown area will need 1,607 new parking spaces by the year 2010.

With regard to on-street parking, field observations and analysis of aerial photography indicates that the turnover rate of these spaces is reasonably high and thus does not indicate a need for the installation of parking meters.

In addition to the overall projected need for parking in the redevelopment area, three other issues should be addressed. First, off-street parking requirements for various land uses are established in the zoning code. However, Punta Gorda's current 1 parking space per 1,000 square feet of retail/service development is inadequate. In addition, some cities and counties have now modified parking space requirements to include compact and handicapped space needs. Both of these areas of the Punta Gorda code should be reviewed for revision.

Second, the use of unpaved lots for parking detracts from the appearance of certain areas and can be inconvenient during periods of inclement weather. Parking on unpaved lots is a code violation that should be corrected by either removing the parking or paving the lots. However, because the use of unpaved parking lots usually indicates a lack of adequate paved parking spaces, removal of this parking may further exacerbate localized parking problems. Since paving of these lots represents a substantial capital investment, a low-cost alternative using grass pavers should be investigated.

TABLE 14

Projected Central Business District Off-Street Parking Supply
(Number of Parking Spaces)

Traffic Zone	Type of Development	1994	1999	2010
31	Retail	481	518	600
	Non-Retail	345	526	925
	Sub Total	826	1,044	1,525
33	Retail	218	220	225
	Non-Retail	270	272	275
	Sub Total	488	492	500
39	Retail	113	114	115
	Non-Retail	82	82	82
	Sub Total	195	196	197
40	Retail	329	367	450
	Non-Retail	185	221	300
	Sub Total	514	588	750
41	Retail	444	446	450
	Non-Retail	794	859	1,000
	Sub Total	1,238	1,305	1,450
Total	Retail	1,585	1,665	1,840
	Non-Retail	1,676	1,960	2,582
	Total	3,261	3,625	4,422

Note: Based on off-street parking requirement of 5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of non-residential development.

Source: Charlotte County/City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan, December, 1988

Third, if a more aggressive policy toward providing off-street parking in public parking lots and/or parking structures is adopted, it may be desirable to establish an off-street parking district or authority. Such a district or authority would potentially be a benefit in administering the public parking system, acquiring property, and developing funding sources and strategies.

Observation 64: The redevelopment plan should include proposals for public parking facilities in the traffic zone sub-area(s) where a deficiency in spaces currently exists, and where future needs are projected.

Observation 65: The redevelopment plan should continue to encourage the placement of additional public parking spaces on local streets via programs like Streetscape.

Observation 66: The redevelopment plan should include recommended changes to the Punta Gorda Land Development Regulations concerning required off-street parking.

Observation 67: The redevelopment plan should include a proposal to provide temporary parking on unpaved lots using grass pavers.

Observation 68: The redevelopment plan should call for the study of the use of an off-street parking authority.

3. **Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Needs**. Pedestrian safety at signalized intersections is a matter of concern. The existing signal system does not have signal heads visible to pedestrians on the non-traffic approach at intersections with one-way streets, particularly at East Olympia Avenue and Nesbit Street, and West Marion Avenue and U.S. 41 northbound. This problem should be addressed.

Bicycle facilities in the CBD should consist of marked and signed routes and bike racks. The street system is not suitable for bike lanes, and there is no demonstrated need for exclusive bike lanes. However, the bikeway system called for in the City's Comprehensive Plan and shown on Map 10 should be implemented. Part of this proposed system is the waterfront walkway/bike path called "Riverwalk." Most of the walkway is in place from the Holiday Inn on West Retta Esplanade to the Punta Gorda Isles Yacht Club. The Comprehensive Plan calls for a continuous Riverwalk from Cooper Street to The Isles Yacht Club, which would require work to be done from the Holiday Inn eastward. If Riverwalk is to be a shared bike path/walking path, then improvements to the existing width and surface conditions in certain areas will also be required.

The old abandoned railroad right-of-way running from Taylor Street westward to Maud Street has been targeted in the Comprehensive Plan for development as a bike path/walking path. This project should also be considered as part of the community redevelopment plan.

There are many blocks in the redevelopment area that are completely without sidewalks. Given the fairly compact nature of Punta Gorda's downtown and the close proximity of residential areas to such amenities as grocery stores, drug stores, and parks, it appears that sidewalks would serve a useful purpose in the redevelopment area.

Observation 69: The redevelopment plan should include a proposal to upgrade pedestrian comfort and safety in the redevelopment area.

Observation 70: The redevelopment plan should include a comprehensive "Riverwalk" proposal.

Observation 71: The redevelopment plan should include a proposal for the development of the old railroad right-of-way.

Observation 72: The redevelopment plan should call for the assessment of sidewalk needs in the redevelopment area for future inclusion of projects in the plan.

CHAPTER 3

Market Assessment

A. BACKGROUND

In July, 1987, the City of Punta Gorda retained the services of Halcyon, Ltd., a real estate consulting firm, to do a development feasibility study for the redevelopment of the old municipal mobile home park site. A major element of this study was the assessment of local real estate markets for the support of retail space, office space, hotel space, and housing. These four market segments were chosen because they make up the overall market profile that will determine the economic future of Punta Gorda's downtown redevelopment area. Halcyon was instructed to gather and analyze their data in such a way that it could serve as the market assessment material for this redevelopment plan. The assessment of each of the four market segments was also done for Charlotte County as a whole. By doing so, Halcyon was able to assess downtown Punta Gorda's future market strength within its primary trade area south of the Peace River, and its secondary trade area throughout the rest of the County.

The remainder of this chapter will be divided into two sections. The first will provide a profile of the existing retail, office, hotel, and housing markets. The second will offer Halcyon, Ltd.'s analysis of the future demand for retail, office, hotel, and housing development in the redevelopment area. As with Chapters 1 and 2, observations will be made concerning the data presented in this chapter.

B. EXISTING MARKET PROFILE

A description of the existing market conditions is presented for each of the four market segments. The general outlook for the near future for housing, retail, office, and hotel development is also discussed in the following subsections.

1. **Retail Market Overview.** Retail space in Charlotte County is concentrated along U.S. 41, reflecting the growth and development pattern of nearby residential neighborhoods. Historically, the County's first shopping district was in downtown Punta Gorda, along Marion Avenue and Retta Esplanade, where stores and services met the needs of fishermen, residents, and, even in the early 20th century, tourists. With the first construction of Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda Isles in the late 1950's and early 1960's, the retail development pattern shifted to strip shopping centers, a model that still dominates today.

In 1987, these centers contained just over one million square feet of leasable space, as shown in Table 15. Fully 83% of the space in shopping centers was located on U.S. 41, with about one-third located south of the Peace River. The two oldest centers, Charlotte Shopping Center (1958) and Punta Gorda Mall (1965), are located within a few blocks of the old mobile home park site and contain 52,500 and 120,000 square feet of gross leasable area (GLA), respectively.

TABLE 15

Existing Competing Retail Centers
Charlotte County, Florida
July, 1987

Project	Type/ Year Opened	Gross Lease Area	Number of Stores	Number of Parking Spaces	Major Tenants	Average Rents	Distance From Site
Aqui Esta Center	Neighborhood 1976	30,000	7	117	Economy Food Center	$4-$6	2 miles
Charlotte Shopping Center	Neighborhood 1958	52,500	9	163	Gray Drug Fair, U-Save Super Market	N/A	0.5 miles
Cross Trail Center	Community 1977	109,000	12	299	Winn-Dixie Grocery	N/A	–
Fishermen's Village	Community 1980	67,650	50	600	Earl Nightingale's Rest., Oyster Bar Restaurant	$8.50	1.5 miles
Promenades Mall	Regional 1976	250,000	52	1,400	Beall's Department Store, J. Byron's Department Store, Winn-Dixie Grocery	N/A	5.5 miles
Punta Gorda Mall	Community 1965	120,000	20	600	Beall's Department Store, Eckerd's Drug, McCrory, Publix Supermarket	$6-$10	0.25 miles
Town & Country Shopping Center	Community	109,000	14	700	N/A	$6-$11	1.5 miles
Harbor Square	Neighborhood	82,000	27	500	Kash-n-Karry, Treasury Drug	–	3.7 miles
Charlotte Square	Community	91,000	30	460	Publix, Eckerd's Drug	–	8.0 miles
Village Market Place	Regional	176,890	44	894	Winn-Dixie, Wal-Mart	–	7.6 miles
Town Center Mall	Regional	902,000	–	–	Sears, Penney's, Belk's Dept	–	8.1 miles
Anticipated Centers:							
Burnt Store Square	Community	225,000	–	–	Publix, Eckerd's Drugs	–	4.1 miles
Aqui Esta Center	Community	145,000	–	–	Food Lion	–	3.2 miles

Source: *1986 International Council of Shopping Center Directory*; Halcyon, Ltd.

Most of the existing centers in the County can be classified as community shopping centers, generally containing between 50,000 and 150,000 square feet. The three exceptions are the Village Market Place, the Promenades, and the Port Charlotte Town Center Mall. In addition to the retail space in these centers, an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 square feet of retail space exists in small stores, mainly along U.S. 41 and its frontage roads, and in downtown Punta Gorda. The emerging development core at Murdock, about eight miles north of the Peace River, contained two centers totaling nearly 270,000 square feet in 1987. Since then, nearly 900,000 square feet has been added as part of the Port Charlotte Town Center Mall and other strip centers. The area also offers a significant concentration of restaurants, cinemas, government and private office space, and community facilities.

The Port Charlotte Town Center Mall, developed by the DeBartolo Corporation, is the largest retail center in the County. This regional mall contains nearly 700,000 square feet of currently occupied retail space. This mall, when fully occupied, will virtually double the existing retail center space north of the Peace River. Currently, the nearest comparable center is Edison Mall in Fort Myers, about 35 miles to the south.

Shopping center base rents in Charlotte County in 1986 ranged from $4.50 to $11.00 per square foot. Specialty retail rents at Fishermen's Village averaged $8.50, while reported rents planned for the regional mall at Murdock range from $15.00 to $30.00. In August, 1987, County officials reported average vacancies for shopping centers at a low 1.1%, compared to an overall retail vacancy rate of 6%.

2. **Retail Market Outlook**. Retail sales in Charlotte County grew 65% from 1980 to 1985, an average growth rate of 13%. By comparison, sales statewide averaged a 10% gain over the same period. The Southwest Florida Region, however, saw retail sales grow a whopping 153%, or 31% a year.

The distribution of sales by merchandise category in the County generally reflects that of the Region and the State. Based on 1985 sales, Charlotte County residents spend a slightly greater proportion on food, automotive goods, and drugs than do average Floridians. They also spend less money, on the average, in restaurants and bars.

Strong household growth alone should paint a relatively bright picture for Charlotte County retail. Combined with rising real incomes, more and better quality retailers will enter the local market. Merchandise lines and store types in all categories will begin to reflect a wider range of price levels and consumer orientations. The influx of new space and increased representation by national chains will put additional pressure on existing managers and owners to upgrade and maintain their properties. Vacancies will likely rise to 4% to 5% in the next several years, as existing retailers move to newly available space such as the Town Center Mall.

In addition to the concentration of retail space at Murdock, at least two new community shopping centers are likely in Punta Gorda Isles. These two centers are located at the intersection of Aqui Esta Drive and Bal Harbor Boulevard, and at the intersection of U.S. 41 and Burnt Store Road.

Downtown Punta Gorda may continue to hold a distinctive position among Charlotte County's retail areas for one simple reason: It is not a shopping center. While its merchandise mix and image currently show some weaknesses based on the results of recent community attitude surveys, downtown nevertheless offers a scale and pedestrian orientation not found elsewhere in the County. Recent streetscape improvements are an important step toward the upgrading of downtown retail areas. Such efforts should be continued to ensure

that downtown captures its share of the projected increase in retail sales in coming years. In addition, Punta Gorda's downtown should continue to attract small "mom and pop" type businesses that have become part of the community's shopping charm.

As the County's only approximation of the festival retail center concept, Fishermen's Village is able to tap the important tourist-based market. The 1989 gross sales at the Village exceeded the $10 million mark. The center also functions as one of the few destination-oriented retail centers in the County. Given the national upsurge in specialty retail, as well as growing consumer familiarity with the notion of festival retail centers nationwide, it is likely that an additional project of this type, especially on a waterfront site, would be well received. Its ultimate success, however, will depend on the County's ongoing ability to capture a larger segment of regional visitors.

3. **Office Market Overview**. The distribution of Charlotte County office space differs little from the retail pattern. Major surface transportation routes and residential development patterns, along with traditional employment centers, have dictated office location decisions. Downtown Punta Gorda, as the County seat, enjoys a prominent position in the office market. An estimated 85,000 square feet of office space, housing about 350 employees, is occupied by all levels of government in downtown Punta Gorda. Overall, the area south of the Peace River contains about 54% of the County's 432,850 square feet of Class A and B office space, as shown on Table 16.

Except for a few older buildings in downtown Punta Gorda, office projects are free-standing structures with surrounding surface parking. They range in size from about 3,000 square feet to the County's largest and newest office building, the 50,000 square foot Murdock Professional Building. Vacancies are generally less than 10% except in several newer buildings still leasing up, where vacancy is from 25% to 45%.

A few developers are taking a different approach by constructing high-quality, smaller buildings outside of the downtown core, but south of the river. Although these recent projects have reportedly been slow to lease up, their design, layout, building materials, and marketing efforts have raised the standard for new office development.

A more specialized professional office district is emerging to the south and east of the CBD. There, medical professionals are building new small buildings or renovating and converting existing larger homes to offices. To date, this activity is strongest within three to four blocks of the Medical Center Hospital. Another exception is a highway-oriented office/showroom/warehouse complex on the east side of the redevelopment area called the Sunstate Commerce Center.

Rents per square foot for Class A and B office space range from $8.00 to $13.00 and $6.00 to $8.50, respectively. Asking rents are highest in the Murdock area and are generally lowest in Punta Gorda. Tenants tend to be smaller organizations, with professional firms, professional individuals, and service companies occupying most of the space south of the river.

TABLE 16

Office Space South of Peace River
July, 1987

Class	Name	Total Square Feet	Vacant Square Feet
A	Punta Gorda Professional Building	24,000	0
B	Harold Morris Building	4,200	3,500
A	Punta Gorda Isles Building	20,000	5,000
A	McQueen Building	10,000	2,000
A	Florida First Building	35,000	5,000
B	Cedar Key Building	6,000	2,000
A	Wotitzky Building	3,100	0
B	Martin Building	4,000	500
B	Farr Building	6,000	0
A	Safron Building	3,000	0
A	Coldwell Commons	4,200	0
B	Sunstate Commerce Center	29,350	4,800
A/B	County/City/State Offices (Est.)	85,000	
	Total	**233,850**	**22,800** (15%)

Estimated Average Rents	Class "A"	Class "B"
Punta Gorda	$8.00 – $11.00/SF	$6.00 – $8.00/SF
Port Charlotte	$9.00 – $13.00/SF	$6.50 – $8.50/SF

(Continued)

TABLE 16
(Continued)

Office Space North of Peace River
July, 1987

Class	Name	Total Square Feet	Vacant Square Feet
A	Murdock Professional Building	50,000	23,000
B	GDC Building	10,000	0
B	Olean Building	25,000	6,000
A	Farr Building	6,000	0
B	LaPlaya	18,000	2,800
A	Beulow Building	12,000	0
B	Omni Building	11,000	3,000
A/B	Aztec Plaza	6,000	1,200
A/B	Tower Buildings	12,000	2,000
A/B	Amick Buildings	9,000	1,200
B	County Buildings	40,000	
	Total	**199,000**	**39,200** (19.7%)

Estimated Average Rents	Class "A"	Class "B"
Punta Gorda	$8.00 – $11.00/SF	$6.00 – $8.00/SF
Port Charlotte	$9.00 – $13.00/SF	$6.50 – $8.50/SF

Note: County office space in Punta Gorda estimated based on 190 square feet of space per employee.

Source: Punta Gorda Planning Department; Coldwell Banker; Halcyon, Ltd.

4. **Office Market Outlook.** Office demand has grown considerably over the last 15 or so years. Between 1980 and 1986, office based employment (services, government, finance, insurance, and real estate) has grown by 3,119, for an annual average growth rate of about 9%. Assuming this trend continues, the County must accommodate an additional 900 office workers per year. At 200 square feet per worker, this rough estimate translates to an additional 180,000 square feet. Some workers will occupy space that is currently vacant; nonetheless, based on employment projections the office market appears healthy. However, the projections assume that public sector employment will continue to grow at the strong rates shown in the 1970's and 1980's, which is unlikely now that most County and City agencies and functions are in place. Still it seems safe to assume that sufficient office demand will exist to absorb at least one moderate-sized office building per year in the County.

Tenants will continue to demand good parking and convenient access to nearby retail businesses and services. As for the other markets, traffic congestion will increasingly play a role in office location decisions, which will have the greatest impact north of the river. At the same time, the Murdock area will likely hold the advantage of public facilities, retail concentration, and critical mass of existing office space.

5. **Hotel Market Overview.** Currently 15 Charlotte County hotels and motels have at least 15 rooms. These larger properties together account for 1,050 rooms, for an average size of 70 rooms. In addition, 35 smaller properties contain 184 rooms, as shown in Table 17. These figures do not include a range of investor-owned condominium or single-family properties that may be rented on a short-term basis. The bulk of the 1,050 rooms are located along U.S. 41 from south Punta Gorda to the Murdock area. Two of the largest properties, with a total of 250 rooms, have opened since December, 1986.

These non-resort properties represent moderately priced accommodations targeted toward cost conscious tourist and business travelers. In downtown Punta Gorda, the two waterfront motels, Holiday Inn and Howard Johnson's, report a proportionately larger share of business-oriented demand. Both of these properties have completed major capital improvements or expansion programs, partly in response to increasing competition north of the river.

Published in-season room rates for July, 1987 ranged from $38.00 to $85.00, with an average rate of $55.00. Out-of-season rates were from $23.00 to $65.00, with an average of $35.00. Occupancies during the December to April season hover around 95%, according to a City survey of hotel/motel managers. Off-season occupancy falls, on average, to about 40%. Unlike neighboring counties to the north and south, Charlotte County's motels offer comparatively few amenities and supporting facilities. The Holiday Inn on the Peace River in Punta Gorda offers the most extensive meeting facilities, with space for 200.

6. **Hotel Market Outlook.** Lodging facilities follow such demand generators as office space, regional attractions, beaches, and other amenities. They do not generate their own demand. Therefore, the market outlook in Punta Gorda and Charlotte County is largely a function of continued economic development, particularly employment growth and office construction. Enhanced awareness of Charlotte County's beaches, fishing, and other attractions can also spark additional room demand, particularly for resort properties.

TABLE 17

Lodging Market Inventory
(15 or More Units)
July, 1987

Hotel/Motel	Rooms	In-Season Rate	In-Season Occupancy	Out-Season Rate	Out-Season Occupancy	Facilities
Punta Gorda Area:						
1. Best Western	84	N/A	N/A			1 meeting room
2. Econo-Lodge	48	$42.00	100%	$30.00	50%	–
3. Fishermen's Village Resort	47	$75.00	100%	$60.00	70%	Tennis courts, marina
4. Holiday Inn	101	$76.00	100%	$48.00	70%	4 50-person meeting rooms, restaurant, lounge
5. Howard Johnson's	102	$55.00	100%	$40.00	50%	40-person meeting room
6. Knight's Inn (Opened 6/87)	124	$49.50	N/A	$36.00	20%	12-person conference rm
7. Sea Cove Motel	32	$42.00	90%	$28.00	40%	–
Port Charlotte Area:						
8. Days Inn (Opened 12/86)	126	$75.00	90%	$40.00	50%	40-person meeting room
9. Port Charlotte Motel	53	$43.00	100%	$30.00	25%	–
10. Ramada Inn	105	$70.00	100%	$41.00	N/A	3 75-person meeting rooms, restaurant, lounge
11. Sandpiper Motel	38	$38.00	90%	$23.00	40%	–
Charlotte Harbor Area:						
12. Charlotte Bay Resort	18	$85.00	100%	$65.00	N/A	–
13. Harbor Inn	50	$40.00	100%	$25.00	20%	Restaurant
Englewood Area:						
14. Days Inn	84	$62.00	100%	$32.00	50%	Restaurant
15. Veranda Inn	38	$71.50	100%	$33.50	42%	–

Note: 100% occupancy translates to 95% effective occupancy with cancellations. All rates based on double occupancy.

Source: Punta Gorda Planning Department

More importantly, one-third of the competitive supply (334 rooms) has been added in the past four years. While in-season vacancy may remain extremely low, it seems likely that out-of-season occupancy will fall in the face of expanded supply. And, as is the case with the markets for most real estate types in the County, the lodging supply is relatively undifferentiated: price orientation, amenity packages, and location are very similar to one another.

The long-term outlook is strong, mainly as a result of the County's continued growth. In the short term, however, it appears that the area has an adequate inventory of hotel rooms.

7. **Housing Market Overview.** From 1980 to 1986, the supply of single-family units in Charlotte County has grown at an average annual rate of 5.4%, as shown in Table 18. Yearly increases in building permits issued have ranged from 601 in 1986 to 1,833 in 1985.

In Charlotte County, most new single-family units are built in large-scale residential subdivisions. Many are built by small builders, either speculatively or, more often, for owners who may have purchased the land some years earlier. The number of permits issued is therefore a close approximation of actual absorption. It is estimated that County-wide single-family absorption is now about 900 units per year.

The County's multi-family housing stock, estimated at just over 11,000 units in 1986, has grown at about 2.7% each year between 1980 and 1986. Absolute gains ranged from 113 in 1986 to nearly 400 in 1984.

8. **Housing Development Outlook.** The proportion of retirement-age residents in the local population will increase. This reflects the fact that, nationally, the age cohort is growing most rapidly in the 65 and over age group. As this century fades into the next, the baby-boom generation will be approaching pre-retirement age. The outlook for retirement housing of all types will therefore remain quite strong nationwide. Southwest Florida will continue to capture a healthy share of the retiree market, assuming that infrastructure improvements keep pace.

However, as the retirement housing market grows, it will divide into a greater number of market segments, each with differing demand characteristics. To date, the housing supply in Charlotte County has been rather simple. The vast majority of units are one-story, single-family dwellings in large subdivisions. Multi-family projects are perhaps even less diverse, with mid-rise, garden-style condominium apartments predominant.

To tap a more highly segmented retirement market, the Charlotte County housing supply will differentiate into a broader array of types and options. For example, a range of adult congregate living facilities with varying levels of services and health care will likely arise. Similarly, lower maintenance patio homes, zero lot line homes, and detached condominiums will begin to supplant the traditional detached dwelling units. As both incomes and activity levels continue to rise, more projects will contain a wider range of recreational facilities.

Population growth of retirement housing will, of course, be accompanied by continued growth of local employment, with service-related jobs growing fastest. Hence, demand for non-retirement homes, ownership housing, and rental units will continue to grow, as will school enrollments, traffic congestion, and pressure on local utility systems.

TABLE 18

Charlotte County Residential Growth
1980-1986

Single-Family Units	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Total Units	22,232	23,356	24,293	25,977	27,610	29,443	30,044
New Units	1,419	1,124	937	1,684	1,633	1,833	601
Percent Increase	6.2%	5.6%	4.01%	6.93%	6.93%	6.29%	2.04%

Average Annual Growth 1980-1986: 5.4%

Multi-Family Units	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Total Units	9,563	9,783	9,924	10,273	10,668	11,064	11,117
New Units	318	219	142	348	396	396	113
Percent Increase	3.4%	2.29%	1.45%	3.5%	3.85%	3.71%	0.48%

Average Annual Growth 1980-1986: 2.8%

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census; Charlotte Planning Department; Halcyon, Ltd.

C. PROJECTED MARKET DEMAND

The Halcyon study focused on future market demand for retail, office, hotel, and housing development on the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel. However, this demand analysis done for the waterfront site is also applicable to the rest of downtown, particularly since the waterfront site will most likely see no completed development until 1992. For this reason, the Halcyon market demand analysis has been modified and applied to the overall downtown redevelopment area.

1. **Retail Demand Analysis.** Three main population groups will generate demand for retail goods and restaurants in Punta Gorda's redevelopment area: residents of Punta Gorda and Charlotte County, downtown employees, and visitors to Punta Gorda. The following analysis uses existing information to estimate the size, spending patterns, and expected growth of each of these demand components.

Residents: Although downtown Punta Gorda is Charlotte County's most concentrated and oldest development area, most retail space, and consequently expenditures, are north of the Peace River. Nevertheless, downtown Punta Gorda offers certain strategic advantages for development of new retail space. Because Charlotte County's economy depends heavily on retirees, any successful downtown retail development must rely on the spending power of residents Countywide.

Table 19 identifies the basic scope of the residential retail market in Charlotte County. The most suitable retail categories for the downtown area would be restaurants, apparel and accessories, specialty merchandise, and convenience goods. In 1987, total County expenditures in these categories were estimated at over $140 million, for an average expenditure per household of nearly $3,600.

Two trade areas are defined for the purposes of analyzing potential resident-based expenditures:

a. The **primary trade area** consists of those households south of the Peace River in both Punta Gorda and Charlotte County. In 1987, these households numbered approximately 12,887.

b. The **secondary trade area** is the remainder of Charlotte County, which in 1987 contained about 26,000 households.

Table 20 translates expenditure potentials for these two trade areas into expected retail spending in the redevelopment area. Capture rates, or the percentage of potential expenditures that can be expected to be made, are based on historical spending patterns by trade area population, distance from downtown, and expenditure type. Households in the primary trade area, for example, are more likely to visit downtown for its restaurants because there are relatively few competitive alternatives, as opposed to convenience retail centers, which abound north of the river.

Based on these projected capture rates, residents of both trade areas would have accounted for total expenditures of over $3 million in 1988. These expenditures would have been about evenly split between retail and restaurant and would have grown along with the overall population and the downtown reputation over time. By 1991, resident expenditures should exceed $7 million annually.

TABLE 19

Residential Retail Market Potential
1987-1991

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Charlotte County Households	$ 39,053	$ 40,889	$ 42,810	$ 44,822	$ 46,122
Median Household EBI* (000)	19.61	19.80	20.00	20.20	20.40
Percent of Statewide Sales (1992)					
Apparel and Accessories – 5.0%					
Eating/Drinking – 10.0%					
Miscellaneous Shopping – 3.3%					
Total County EBI* (000)	$765,751	$809,769	$856,291	$905,500	$941,081
Target Retail EBI* (000)					
Apparel and Accessories	$ 38,288	$ 40,488	$ 42,815	$ 45,275	$ 47,054
Eating/Drinking	76,575	80,977	85,629	90,550	94,108
Miscellaneous Shopping	25,270	26,722	28,258	29,882	31,056
Totals	**$140,132**	**$148,188**	**$156,701**	**$165,707**	**$172,218**
Target Retail EBI* Per Household	$ 3,734	$ 3,588	$ 3,624	$ 3,660	$ 3,697

*Effective Buying Income

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

TABLE 20

Residential Expenditure Potential For Retail and Restaurants 1987-1991

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Primary Market:					
Primary Market Households	12,887	13,493	14,127	14,791	15,220
Total Primary Market Sales (000)					
Retail (66%)	$30,521	$32,275	$34,130	$36,091	$37,509
Restaurant (34%)	$15,723	$16,627	$17,582	$18,592	$19,323
Capture Rate					
Retail	0%	3%	5%	7%	7%
Restaurant	0%	5%	7%	10%	10%
Downtown Sales Potentials (000)					
Retail	$0	$968	$1,706	$2,526	$2,626
Restaurant	$0	$831	$1,231	$1,932	
Secondary Market:					
Secondary Market Households	26,166	27,396	28,683	30,031	30,902
Total Secondary Market Sales (000)					
Retail (66%)	$61,967	$65,529	$69,293	$73,275	$76,155
Restaurant (34%)	$31,922	$33,757	$35,697	$37,748	$39,231
Capture Rate					
Retail	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Restaurant	0%	2%	3%	5%	5%
Downtown Sales Potentials (000)					
Retail	$0	$655	$1,386	$1,466	$1,523
Restaurant	$0	$675	$1,071	$1,962	
Total Resident Sales Potential (000):					
Retail	$0	$1,624	$3,092	$3,992	$4,149
Restaurant	$0	$1,506	$2,302	$3,894	

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

Workers: Traditionally, retailers in downtown areas receive their primary support from office workers and other downtown employees. While their impact in Punta Gorda is mitigated by a proportionately lower downtown labor force, these workers still form an important source of support for downtown retailers. Current estimates put the downtown office worker population at about 800. Another 230 employees work in non-downtown office space south of the Peace River.

Two potential markets have been established for the purpose of analyzing worker expenditures. Those working in the CBD make up the largest block of potential support, which represents the primary market. Around 800 employees are housed in office space within the 29 blocks defining the core business area. Another 230 office workers are employed outside this radius, but within the boundaries of the City, which represents the secondary market. Table 21 projects these worker populations for each trade area through 1991. Based on state employment data, private sector employment is projected to increase at an annual rate of 7%.

Translating these estimated worker populations for each market area into expected retail expenditures requires an estimate of annual expenditures on different goods by each worker. Nationally, office workers in large cities spend from $500 to $1,000 per year on lunchtime and after-work eating and drinking. The average annual expenditure by office workers for retail merchandise is about $600. In Punta Gorda, due to regional buying habits and a lack of competitive opportunities, Halcyon estimated office worker annual retail and restaurant expenditures at $225 and $250, respectively. With modest increases in real income, these levels can be expected to gradually rise.

Capture rates for each of the three office worker market groups are based primarily on distance from the CBD. Halcyon estimated 1988 downtown sales potential from workers for retail and restaurant business at about $100,000 in 1988, rising to just $150,000 in 1991.

Visitors: Although recent comprehensive visitor data does not currently exist for Charlotte County or Punta Gorda, Halcyon estimated the number of visitor days Countywide in 1987 at 1,043,000. This figure is based on the existing hotel room inventory and reported occupancy levels, data from nearby County surveys indicating the number of non-hotel visitors (e.g., those staying with friends), and visitors who pass through Charlotte County or Punta Gorda but who do not stay overnight. Statewide data consistently shows that those visitors arriving by air spend more money, on average, than those traveling by auto. Because of the distance from a major airport and the relative lack of resort attractions, Halcyon estimated the Charlotte County distribution of visitors at 65% by auto and 35% by air.

Table 22 identifies estimated daily visitor expenditures on retail goods and at restaurants by each type of traveler. Using a capture rate that takes into account the downtown's character and visibility from the Peace River bridges, visitors should account for total expenditures in the redevelopment area of over $2 million in 1988, rising to nearly $3.5 million by 1991.

TABLE 21

Office Employee Expenditure Potential for Retail and Restaurants

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
On-Site Workers	0	120	132	145	160
Primary Market Workers	701	750	803	859	919
Secondary Market Workers (Assumes 7% annual increase in private sector, 10% in public sector)	250	246	263	282	301
Worker Expenditures					
Retail	$225	$227	$320	$232	$234
Restaurant	$250	$253	$255	$255	$260
Capture Rates					
Primary Retail	0%	15%	20%	20%	20%
Primary Restaurant	0%	30%	35%	35%	35%
Secondary Retail	0%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Secondary Restaurant	0%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Downtown Sales Potentials					
Primary Retail	$0	$25,568	$36,842	$39,815	$43,028
Primary Restaurant	$0	$56,818	$71,637	$77,418	$83,666
Secondary Retail	$0	$ 5,593	$ 6,044	$ 6,532	$ 7,059
Secondary Restaurant	$0	$12,428	$13,431	$14,515	$15,686
Workers Sales Potential					
Retail	$31,161	$42,886	$46,347	$50,087	
Restaurant	$69,246	$85,068	$91,933	$99,352	

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

TABLE 22

Visitor Expenditures Potential for Retail and Restaurants

1.	**Estimated Daily Visitor Expenditures (1987)**	**Auto**	**Air**		
	Retail	$ 5.50	$17.00		
	Restaurant	$14.00	$24.00		
	1987	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**
2.	**Total Visitor Days (000)**				
	Auto	678	712	747	785	824
	Air	365	383	402	423	444
	Total	1,043	1,095	1,095	1,150	1,268
	(5% annual increase assumed)					
3.	**Capture Rates**				
	Retail	0%	7%	10%	10%	10%
	Restaurant	0%	7%	10%	10%	10%
Total Visitor Expenditure Potential (000)					
	Retail	$0	$ 730	$1,095	$1,150	$1,208
	Restaurant	$0	$1,342	$2,012	$2,113	$2,219

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

2. **Retail Expenditure Summary.** Taken together, these demand sectors were expected to produce total expenditures in the downtown area in 1988 of some $5.3 million, as shown in Table 23. With relatively modest growth in households, employment, and tourism, along with the growing awareness and reputation of the Punta Gorda redevelopment area, these expenditures should rise to nearly $11 million by 1991. At current market rents, this spending power could support the development of nearly 70,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space in the downtown area over the next five years. With their rent at a reasonable percentage of sales, based on industry standards, retail and restaurant tenants would enjoy a productivity level of $173 and $188 of sales per square foot, respectively, in the redevelopment area.

Observation 73: The redevelopment plan should adopt projects and programs that encourage the development of new retail and restaurant businesses.

Observation 74: The redevelopment plan should include policies that help concentrate retail and restaurant activity in the core area of the Central Business District.

3. **Office Market Analysis.** Office development potential is based on employment growth in several key sectors. As shown in Table 24, in the first half of the 1980's, Charlotte County office employment increased at an average annual rate of about 6.2%, rising from just over 10,000 to better than 14,000. The only decreases in the Table 23 employment figures were reported in the finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) sector. On the other hand, government employment jumped an average of almost 30% per year, reflecting the County's continuing rapid growth and retirement-based economy.

Future office demand can be estimated by projecting employment levels in these office-based sectors. By 1991, nearly 4,000 office workers will have been added in Charlotte County, for an average annual gain of nearly 1,000 workers. Because not all new workers will require new office space, these figures are reduced, using a factor related to the typical proportion of office workers in a given employment sector. For example, only 30% of government workers typically occupy an office.

This analysis reveals an average annual office space demand of 264 workers from 1987 to 1991. Allocating 190 square feet per employee shows that just over 50,000 square feet of new office space will be needed in Charlotte County from 1987 to 1991.

Historically, about 38% of the County's office inventory has been located in downtown Punta Gorda. Assuming that this market penetration remains constant, downtown will likely capture about 20,000 square feet per year of this projected demand. Some 10,500 square feet of downtown office space is currently vacant. With absorption rates identified, this inventory should be fully leased in just under a year. However, the recent loss of approximately 100 County Courthouse employees may prolong the absorption of the vacant space.

Observation 75: The redevelopment plan should consider programs aimed at encouraging leasing of existing vacant office space.

Observation 76: The redevelopment plan should encourage concentration of office space in the Medical Services District and the Central Business District.

TABLE 23

Summary of Retail and Restaurant Expenditure Potential and Supportable Space

	1988		1989		1990		1991	
	Retail	Restaurant	Retail	Restaurant	Retail	Restaurant	Retail	Restaurant
Expenditures ($000)								
Residents	$1,624	$1,506	$3,092	$2,302	$3,992	$3,747	$4,149	$3,894
Workers	39	80	53	99	58	107	63	116
Visitors	730	1,342	1,095	2,012	1,150	2,113	1,208	2,219
Total	**$2,385**	**$2,917**	**$4,231**	**$4,399**	**$5,188**	**$5,910**	**$5,406**	**$6,112**

	Market Rent Gross Sales (000)				Supportable Square Feet		
	1989	1990	1991	Rent as % of Sales	1989	1990	1991
Retail	$4,231	$5,188	$5,406	7.50%	24,407	29,932	31,191
Restaurant	$4,399	$5,910	$6,112	8.00%	23,462	23,462	32,600

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

TABLE 24

Office Market Potentials

Growth in Office-Related Employment: 1981-1986

Change Avg.	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1981-86	% Change
Services	4,072	4,856	5,068	5,435	5,981	5,571	1,499	6.27%
FIRE (1)	2,090	1,755	1,981	1,588	1,607	1,733	(357)	-3.75%
Government	797	917	942	997	1,074	2,774	1,977	24.94%
Other (2)	3,226	2,761	2,860	3,395	3,281	4,093	867	4.76%
Total	**10,185**	**10,289**	**10,851**	**11,415**	**11,943**	**14,171**	**3,986**	**6.61%**

Office-Related Employment Projections: 1987-1991

Change Avg.	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1987-91	% Change
Services	5,913	6,284	6,678	7,096	7,541	1,628	407
FIRE (1)	1,684	1,684	1,684	1,684	1,684	0	0
Government	3,291	3,620	3,982	4,380	4,818	1,527	382
Other (2)	4,276	4,480	4,693	4,916	5,510	874	219
Total	**15,164**	**16,067**	**17,037**	**18,077**	**19,194**	**4,030**	**1,007**

Estimated Office Demand Growth

	New Jobs 1987-1991	Annual Square Footage Needed at 190 SF per Employee
Services	488	23,200
FIRE (1)	0	0
Government	458	21,765
Other (2)	131	6,229
Total	**1,078**	**51,194**

Downtown Market Penetration: 38%

Note: Projected to Suitable, Projected Annual Change 1987-1991: 10%

Downtown Annual Fair Share Market Capture:		
	Government	8,271
	Private	10,829
	Total	19,100

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

Observation 77: The redevelopment plan should consider a study of potential expansion of county, state, and federal office facilities and how such expansion can be encouraged.

4. **Hotel Market Analysis.** As identified earlier in Table 17, just over 1,000 hotel rooms existed in Charlotte County in 1987, with year-round average occupancy running at about 60%. With planned expansions identified and room night demand projected through 1991, the total market average occupancy will rise to approximately 66% by 1991, as shown in Table 25. This average occupancy is still lower than the 70% industry benchmark standard, but represents a reasonable average occupancy in a seasonal market such as Charlotte County.

Any hotel development in the redevelopment area should pursue a waterfront location, proximity to downtown Punta Gorda employment centers, and nearby civic and cultural facilities. The City's 30-acre waterfront site offers such a location. A budget-priced tourist motel, for example, would not be suitable, whereas in a strong market an all-suite, business-oriented hotel may work well in the overall downtown development context.

Typically, the average cost per room for a new hotel is around $65,000, including land. At current occupancies, a hotel costing this much would need to charge rates substantially higher than those of the existing competitive hotels, as shown in Table 26, in order to realize a reasonable return on investment. It is likely that as occupancies continue to grow and facilities improve in quality, that rates will rise accordingly. Growth in employment in downtown Punta Gorda and increased tourism in the County will also result in gains in hotel demand. Yet, at this point, the development of a hotel of at least 100 rooms appears to pose considerable risk. However, all variables point to an increasingly firm hotel market over time.

Observation 78: The redevelopment plan should limit hotel development to the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel being offered for redevelopment.

Observation 79: The redevelopment plan should encourage a market that can support a unique hotel on the 30-acre waterfront parcel.

5. **Housing Demand Analysis.** Between 1987 and 1991, the number of Charlotte County households was projected to grow by better than 7,000 for an annual growth rate of around 5%. These new households, along with households moving from other areas of the County, constitute the demand source for housing in the redevelopment area. The market has been viewed as overwhelmingly retirement oriented, and the supply was targeted accordingly. The prevalent market includes single-family homes on relatively small, but often waterfront, lots, and condominiums in six-plex or eight-plex garden apartment configurations.

In the redevelopment area, it appears from the information in Table 8 in Chapter 1 that three characteristics dominate the redevelopment area's housing stock: older age, rental units, and low unit values. First, the age of the redevelopment area's housing stock reflects the City's fine historic residential areas where approximately 16% of the total housing units in the redevelopment area were built prior to 1940. While not all of the 252 historical residential structures located in the area are worth saving, the clear conclusion concerning many of the older structures is that they are part of Punta Gorda's unique historical image and therefore should be preserved.

TABLE 25

Projected Motel Occupancy
1987-1991

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Projected Visitors (000)	1,043	1,095	1,150	1,207	1,268
Projected Room Nights	229,950	240,900	253,000	265,540	278,960
Room Nights Available*	383,250	383,250	419,750	419,750	419,750
Average Occupancy	60%	63%	60%	63%	66%

*Room nights available based on existing supply and planned expansion of the Holiday Inn from 101 rooms to 200 rooms in 1989.

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

TABLE 26

Competitive Hotel Supply

	Average Rooms	Average Room Rate	Average Annual Occupancy
Holiday Inn	101	$57	80%
Days Inn – Port Charlotte	126	$52	69%
Howard Johnson's	102	$45	72%
Ramada Inn	105	$51	80%
Competitive Market Average		$51	75%

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

Second, there is a much higher incidence of rental units in the redevelopment area. However, the limited income enjoyed by many of the area's residents makes lower priced rental units the only available option. It is generally recognized that areas of high owner-occupancy of living units usually have much higher property values and less physical deterioration. Programs designed to foster increased home ownership should be considered in conjunction with continued efforts to maintain rental living conditions.

Finally, one approach to diversifying the mix of the existing housing stock in downtown Punta Gorda in order to increase overall property values is to encourage higher cost multi-family units at selected sites. As shown in Table 27, the expected average annual increase in households in Charlotte County is just over 1,700. These households will spray all age brackets and income levels that have traditionally existed in the County. It is safe to assume that in their income distribution, these new households will likely reflect recent experience. Additionally, 1% of existing County households will seek new housing in the County each year. Halcyon estimated that about 8% of existing and new County households will have annual incomes greater than $50,000. Applying the same income criteria, about 173 new and existing affluent households will constitute the relatively high end housing market during the next five years. They will generally be able to afford housing units priced at $140,000 and above.

Observation 80: The redevelopment plan should permit limited higher cost housing units, possibly on the City's 30-acre waterfront site.

Observation 81: The redevelopment plan should include policies to encourage housing units aimed at serving an aging resident population (e.g., smaller units, congregte living, etc.).

Observation 82: The redevelopment plan should contain specific programs and proposals designed to encourage the preservation of historic residences, and in particular historic homes in the proposed National Register Districts.

Observation 83: The redevelopment plan should consider programs and projects aimed at increasing home ownership for current residents of the redevelopment area.

Observation 84: The redevelopment plan should explore methods of improving current housing conditions, particularly of rental units, in the redevelopment area.

TABLE 27

Residential Demand Potential
1987-1991

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Total County Households	39,053	41,006	43,056	45,209	47,469
New Households	1,753	1,953	2,050	2,153	2,260
Net Added Demand	391	410	431	452	475
(At % of Total County Households)					
Households with Income Over $50,000 (At 8%)	171	189	198	208	219
Non-Traditional Single-Family Market (At 35%)	60	66	69	73	77
Downtown Market Capture (At 50%)	30	33	35	36	38

Source: *Waterfront Park Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study*, Halcyon, Ltd., December, 1987

CHAPTER 4

Goals, Objectives and Policies

A. BACKGROUND

Upon its establishment in July, 1985, the Punta Gorda Revitalization Committee adopted four basic goals to guild its efforts toward instigating revitalization of the redevelopment area. These four goals, listed below, will serve as the foundational building blocks for the objectives and policies of the Punta Gorda Redevelopment Plan presented in this chapter. These goals are broad policy statements designed to guide the implementation of the specific programs and projects called for in this plan.

Goal 1: Provide an aesthetically pleasing business, residential, and public district attractive to all people.

Goal 2: Arrest declining property values and stabilize and eventually achieve increases in values and taxable base.

Goal 3: Achieve a broad based business, residential, and public district in which people desire to live, work, conduct business, and visit.

Goal 4: Promote cooperation between businesses and City government.

B. ANALYTICAL OBSERVATION SUMMARY

The 84 observations presented throughout Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are based on the figures, maps, and information contained in those chapters. These observations serve as simplified analytical conclusions that can easily be translated into specific objectives and policies. The following list provides a consolidated review of these observations.

Observation 1: The City can expect an increase in potential users of the redevelopment area.

Observation 2: The redevelopment plan must recognize that, based on population growth, downtown can expect increased shoppers, visitors, traffic, parking demand, etc.

Observation 3: A significant portion of Punta Gorda's potential users of downtown facilities are seasonal residents.

Observation 4: Redevelopment programs should encourage the provision of goods and services that meet the needs of seasonal residents and tourists.

Observation 5: Redevelopment projects should be designed to meet seasonal peak demands for their usage and should be timed to avoid construction during the winter season.

Observation 6: Redevelopment programs should be developed that offer a downtown area suitable for use by older people.

Observation 7: Redevelopment projects should be designed and constructed with the needs and limitations of older people in mind.

Observation 8: Redevelopment programs for housing units must recognize smaller family sizes, with generally less income in their design and pricing structure.

Observation 9: Redevelopment for future land use and development patterns must allow for small lot, smaller living unit residential construction.

Observation 10: Redevelopment programs aimed at promoting economic development should first target Punta Gorda's residents as potential shoppers.

Observation 11: Redevelopment programs aimed at attracting new businesses to the downtown area should consider businesses offering the goods and services desired by local residents.

Observation 12: The redevelopment plan should recognize its strong economic base in service and retail businesses when recommending projects and programs aimed at economic development.

Observation 13: The redevelopment plan should consider programs and projects designed to diversify the City's employment base into the governmental, financial, insurance, and real estate sectors.

Observation 14: More than enough vacant land exists in several residential neighborhoods to accommodate future residential redevelopment and new construction activities.

Observation 15: The existing land use pattern appears to offer a compact business core with residential neighborhoods around it.

Observation 16: Redevelopment of the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel could offset the current shortage of vacant land for CBD activities.

Observation 17: Several distinct development sub-districts exist in the redevelopment area based on current land use patterns.

Observation 18: The City can use its abundant publicly-owned vacant land and park land in the redevelopment area for the overall benefit of the area.

Observation 19: The zoning districts assigned to property in the redevelopment area are adequate to permit a balanced mixture of new development and redevelopment.

Observation 20: The new provisions of the land development regulations aimed at encouraging redevelopment of the target area should be tested through use and modified if necessary.

Observation 21: Most of the community facilities south of the Peace River are in the redevelopment area.

Observation 22: The redevelopment plan should explore ways to expand the number of community facilities in the downtown area in order to build on an already established activity base.

Observation 23: The City/CRA should proceed with offering its old municipal mobile home park for private redevelopment.

Observation 24: The City/CRA should explore possible recreational uses of the 9.2 acres of railroad right-of-way and the uncommitted portion of the 21-acre Shreve Street site.

Observation 25: Redevelopment projects should be considered that link together existing publicly-owned lands.

Observation 26: Within the redevelopment area, property values vary greatly by location and by land use.

Observation 27: Land values tend to reflect the general physical condition of the planning districts, as shown on Map 10.

Observation 28: The redevelopment plan should consider programs designed to increase property values in the lowest assessed blocks, particularly the two residential districts east of U. S. 41.

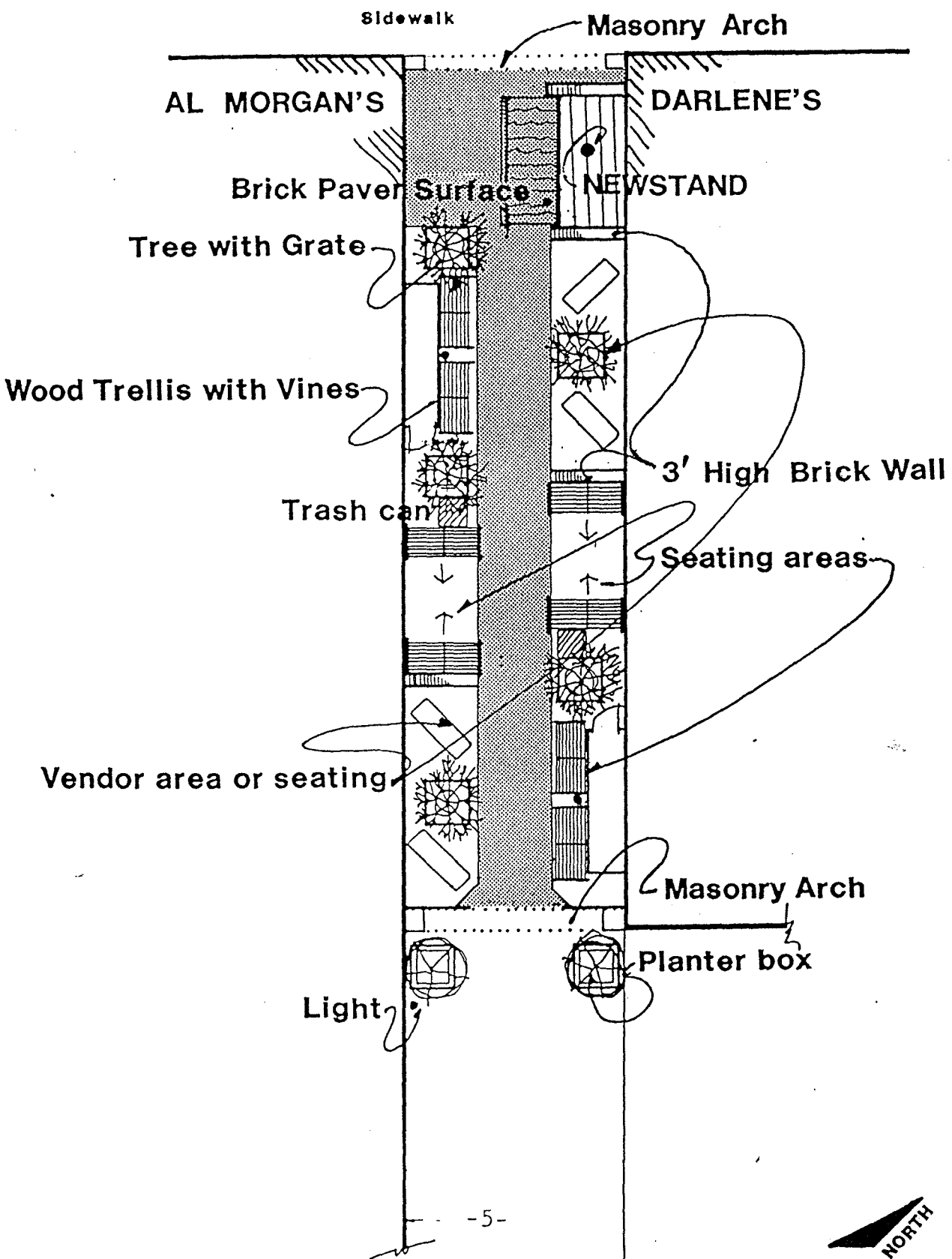
Observation 29: The redevelopment plan should encourage continued private reinvestment in the CBD where higher property values exist.

Observation 30: The redevelopment plan should target low-value, under-utilized parcels for CRA purchase for public use and should consider offering high-value, vacant, publicly-owned parcels for private redevelopment.

Observation 31: Proposed redevelopment projects should recognize the value and importance of the City's historic resources and seek to protect such resources.

Observation 32: Historic preservation should be strongly promoted as one of the primary tools to be used in the redevelopment of Punta Gorda.

WEST MARION AVENUE



HERALD COURTYARD IMPROVEMENT PROJEC

SCALE: 1"=10'

FEBRUARY 1

Observation 33: The redevelopment plan should include an historic preservation program to include the recommendations contained in *The Punta Gorda Historic and Architectural Survey.*

Observation 34: The redevelopment plan should consider continued enforcement of existing codes and regulations aimed at abating the problems of condemnable structures and encouraging an acceptable level of maintenance for deteriorated buildings.

Observation 35: Redevelopment programs should be considered that will help increase home ownership throughout the redevelopment area.

Observation 36: The redevelopment plan should include recommendation to improve housing conditions in the area.

Observation 37: Neighborhood institutions (e.g., churches, families, Cooper Street Center) should be used to implement neighborhood development programs contained in this plan.

Observation 38: The redevelopment plan should consider the reorientation of the downtown area to the harbor as a primary design goal.

Observation 39: Redevelopment projects should encourage public access to the water.

Observation 40: Redevelopment projects should consider improvement of the FDOT drainage ditch and its associated right-of-way.

Observation 41: The redevelopment plan should include programs to encourage the planting of street trees and vegetation.

Observation 42: The redevelopment plan should consider the acquisition of mangrove wetlands areas currently held in private ownership.

Observation 43: Drainage facilities in the waterfront area should be improved in order to minimize seasonal flooding.

Observation 44: The redevelopment plan should include the water line improvements called for in this plan.

Observation 45: The redevelopment plan should encourage the upgrading of all utilities whenever streetscape work is being done.

Observation 46: The redevelopment plan should include projects aimed at reinforcing the unique identity of the districts listed.

Observation 47: The redevelopment plan should address the problems of the commercial southbound transition area along U. S. 41 and the residential redevelopment district.

Observation 48: Redevelopment projects should be planned that either upgrade inadequate roadways or reconstruct parts of major streets that are missing.

Observation 49: The redevelopment plan should offer proposals for the development and completion of the Riverwalk and bikeway systems.

Observation 50: The redevelopment plan should include a sidewalk installation and improvement program.

Observation 51: The redevelopment plan should include proposals to properly mark the gateway entrances to the redevelopment area.

Observation 52: The redevelopment plan should not try to remove existing edges and should reinforce them where district boundaries are important.

Observation 53: The redevelopment plan should consider ways to encourage safe public access to and through existing barriers.

Observation 54: The redevelopment plan should consider relocating the railroad tracks to outside the City limits in order to eliminate the splitting of the residential redevelopment district.

Observation 55: The redevelopment plan should incorporate and preserve landmarks as focal points of the area.

Observation 56: The redevelopment plan should promote use of, and activities at, these landmarks.

Observation 57: The redevelopment plan should contain policies and projects that use and enhance the views listed as design assets.

Observation 58: The redevelopment plan should examine alternatives to correcting the Retta Esplanade problem between U. S. 41 southbound and U. S. 41 northbound.

Observation 59: The redevelopment plan should allow for east-west collector street improvements in the core business area.

Observation 60: Redevelopment of the City's 30-acre waterfront site must include an off-site traffic circulation impact assessment.

Observation 61: The redevelopment plan should include some design alternatives for the Nesbit Street/East Marion Avenue; Taylor Street/West Marion Avenue; and Taylor Street/West Olympia Avenue intersections.

Observation 62: The redevelopment plan should consider improvement plans for the current problem intersections in the study area.

Observation 63: The redevelopment plan should include proposals for public parking facilities in the traffic zone sub-area(s) where a deficiency in spaces exists and where future needs are projected.

Observation 64: The redevelopment plan should continue to encourage the placement of additional public parking spaces on local streets via programs like streetscape.

Observation 65: The redevelopment plan should include recommended changes to the Punta Gorda Land Development Regulations concerning required off-street parking.

Observation 66: The redevelopment plan should include temporary parking on unpaved lots using grass pavers.

Observation 67: The redevelopment plan should call for the study of an off-street parking authority.

Observation 68: The redevelopment plan should include a proposal to upgrade pedestrian comfort and safety in the redevelopment area.

Observation 69: The redevelopment plan should include a comprehensive Riverwalk proposal.

Observation 70: The redevelopment plan should include a proposal for the development of the old railroad right-of-way.

Observation 71: The redevelopment plan should call for the assessment of sidewalk needs in the redevelopment area for future inclusion of projects in the plan.

Observation 72: The redevelopment plan should adopt projects and programs that encourage the development of new retail and restaurant businesses.

Observation 73: The redevelopment plan should include policies that help concentrate retail and restaurant activity in the core area of the CBD.

Observation 74: The redevelopment plan should consider programs that encourage the leasing of existing vacant office space.

Observation 75: The redevelopment plan should encourage concentration of office space in the Medical Services District and the CBD.

Observation 76: The redevelopment plan should consider a study of potential expansion of County, State, and Federal office facilities and how such expansion can be encouraged.

Observation 77: The redevelopment plan should limit hotel development to the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel that is being offered for redevelopment.

Observation 78: The redevelopment plan should encourage a market capable of supporting a unique hotel on the 30-acre waterfront parcel.

Observation 79: The redevelopment plan should permit limited higher-cost housing units, possibly on the City's 30-acre waterfront site.

Observation 80: The redevelopment plan should include policies to encourage housing units that serve an aging resident population (e.g., smaller units, congregate living, etc.).

Observation 81: The redevelopment plan should contain specific programs and proposals designed to encourage the preservation of historic residences and, in particular, historic homes in the proposed National Register Districts.

Observation 82: The redevelopment plan should consider programs and projects aimed at increasing home ownership for current residents of the redevelopment area.

Observation 83: The redevelopment plan should explore methods of improving housing conditions, and particularly rental units, in the redevelopment area.

C. POLICY GUIDELINES

The following section contains the Punta Gorda Downtown Redevelopment Policy Plan. These objectives and policies will identify specific programs and projects aimed at facilitating the revitalization of the redevelopment area. Each of these objectives and policies has been derived from the observations presented previously. They have been reviewed by nearly 200 community leaders, residents, and business people and were modified to reflect the general observations of those individuals.

OBJECTIVE A: **To provide aesthetically pleasing business, residential, and public downtown areas.**

Policy 1: Identify distinct sub-areas for special planning attention (e.g., waterfront zone, historic residential district, "main street" retail district, etc.) and reinforce the integrity of these sub-areas.

Policy 2: Draft and adopt comprehensive urban design guidelines for the special sub-areas.

Policy 3: Continue the downtown tree planting program to create a more pleasant walking environment for downtown employees, residents, and visitors.

Policy 4: Continue and expand the City's downtown maintenance program to include litter pick-up, landscaping maintenance, etc. in public right-of-ways.

Policy 5: Draft, adopt, and implement a downtown minimum property appearance and maintenance ordinance.

Policy 6: Prepare a design plan to redevelop the Cross Street commercial areas.

OBJECTIVE B: **To preserve, enhance, beautify, and ensure public access and utilization of the waterfront as downtown's number one asset.**

Policy 1: Pursue the physical design of a "riverwalk" extending from Fishermen's Village to the Medical Center Hospital.

Policy 2: Acquire by purchase or easement any lands within the riverwalk corridor needed for construction of the walkway.

Policy 3: Establish clear public access points to the waterfront, and develop pedestrian linkages from the rest of downtown to the waterfront.

OBJECTIVE C: **To aggressively pursue the improvement of public areas, including streets, parks, alleys, parking areas, walkways, etc., through the prudent expenditure of public funds.**

Policy 1: Establish an alleyway improvement program.

Policy 2: Actively enforce landscaping and surfacing requirements for all areas currently being used for parking.

Policy 3: Continue the improvement of existing waterfront parks and the development of new parks.

Policy 4: Identify and plan for a "Town Square" as a central downtown meeting place.

Policy 5: Continue the streetscape program until all of the CBD area is completed.

Policy 6: Support the on-going upgrading of existing downtown infrastructure (e.g., sewer, water, drainage, electric, roads, etc.).

Policy 7: Install sidewalks where they are missing and where they will link the activity centers of downtown to one another.

OBJECTIVE D: **To encourage reinvestment of private sector funds into downtown properties to arrest declining property values and eventually achieve an increasing tax base.**

Policy 1: Identify parcels of property with depressed values for possible acquisition and redevelopment.

Policy 2: Petition local lending institutions to extend the lower interest Facade Improvement Loan Program to all of the redevelopment area.

Policy 3: Work with local lending institutions to establish a lower interest loan program for renovation of historic residential buildings and encouragement of affordable ownership housing.

Policy 4: Explore the use of local tax abatement programs for people renovating existing declining properties.

Policy 5: Offer under-utilized public property for private redevelopment.

OBJECTIVE E: **To foster cooperation between the downtown business community, land owners, and local government.**

Policy 1: Hold periodic planning and communication meetings with the leaders of the various downtown revitalization groups.

Policy 2: Support the on-going economic development work of the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Council, and in particular the Downtown Advisory Board.

Policy 3: Strive to design public improvements (e.g., parking, roads, parks, etc.) to meet peak seasonal demands and install such improvements in the off-season so as to cause minimal disruption to local businesses.

OBJECTIVE F: **To reinforce the concept of downtown as a center of City and County government, and to encourage additional growth of this role.**

Policy 1: Be actively involved in the retention and expansion of the County Courthouse and its judicial/constitutional functions downtown.

Policy 2: Work with the County government to upgrade the current County facilities, such as the auditorium, boat ramps, and parking facilities, and assess the long-term needs for each of these facilities.

Policy 3: Support efforts to expand current City offices in the downtown area, and encourage the retention of City facilities in the redevelopment area (e.g., police, fire, warehouses, etc.).

Policy 4: Consolidate area state offices into a central downtown location.

Policy 5: Link community facilities together with walkways and bikepaths.

OBJECTIVE G: **To establish a high quality downtown retail district that emphasizes personal service, quality products, and a mix of available products and services appealing to downtown workers, area residents, and tourists.**

Policy 1: Undertake a detailed market analysis to identify shopping habits of consumers using downtown.

Policy 2: Identify goods and services desired but not currently provided in downtown, and recruit such businesses.

Policy 3: Research and establish a downtown "small business incubator" whereby state grant funds would be used to renovate/convert existing buildings for small businesses just getting started. This provides such businesses with lower rents in the first couple years of their operation.

Policy 4: Review local codes and ordinances to make business operations and start-ups in downtown easier.

Policy 5: Develop and promote the Central Business District as a "destination" shopping area.

Policy 6: Develop a program to court tourists and seasonal residents as users of downtown.

Policy 7: Pursue a market-supportable mix of retail/service activities on the 30-acre waterfront parcel and promote it as a downtown "anchor."

Policy 8: Support the construction of a market-supportable waterfront hotel on the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel.

OBJECTIVE H: **To ensure that downtown Punta Gorda provides a broader range of types of office space.**

Policy 1: Assist in maintaining an inventory of all available office space by type.

Policy 2: Encourage development of new office space only when occupancy rates are 90%+, or when a particular type of office space is needed.

OBJECTIVE I: **To encourage the development of market rate housing in both older historic and newer buildings with an emphasis on non-absentee ownership and 24-hour usage of the downtown area.**

Policy 1: Allow the addition of accessory apartments to existing single-family homes when resident ownership is proven.

Policy 2: Establish a low interest loan program for owner-occupied renovation of sub-standard houses and historic homes using local, state, or federal funds.

Policy 3: Establish a tax abatement program for voluntary demolition of condemned houses or renovation of such houses.

Policy 4: Encourage development of new second-floor residential living units in the redevelopment area, provided ground floor spaces are retail or service oriented.

Policy 5: Review local codes and programs to allow for smaller lot, smaller living unit development in certain areas of the redevelopment area.

Policy 6: Establish a density bonus program for anyone providing market rate or below market rate housing in downtown.

OBJECTIVE J: **To encourage the maximum utilization of existing and new recreational, cultural, and entertainment facilities by area residents, visitors, and downtown workers.**

Policy 1: Assist in the promotion of existing entertainment events and the development of new ones.

Policy 2: Establish Punta Gorda as a regional conference/civic convention center, including a corporate conference facility, adequate lodging facilities, etc.

Policy 3: Prepare a design plan for the development of the old railroad right-of-way into a linear park, bicycle path, and walkway.

Policy 4: Consider the acquisition of the mangrove fringe area east of Cochran Street along the river for continuation of the riverwalk, development of a park, and for boat access.

Policy 5: Support the growth and quality of the visual and performing arts in the redevelopment area.

OBJECTIVE K: **To actively encourage the preservation of locally and nationally designated historic structures for a mixture of appropriate land uses.**

Policy 1: Establish a local Historic Advisory Board to oversee historic preservation activities.

Policy 2: Adopt an Historic Preservation Ordinance controlling the appearance and use of renovated historic structures.

Policy 3: Establish a local Museum of Punta Gorda History.

Policy 4: Promote downtown as an historic waterfront area.

Policy 5: Preserve the existing historical brick streets in the Historic Residential Area.

Policy 6: Establish an historic lighting district in the Historic Residential Area.

OBJECTIVE L: **To improve and maintain downtown's internal roadway network to maximize safe and efficient traffic flow to all points within downtown.**

Policy 1: Establish a coordinated traffic signage system directing visitors to key points of interest in downtown.

Policy 2: Install roadways that have been platted but not built, or abandon the right-of-way.

Policy 3: Extend Henry Street through to Taylor Street.

Policy 4: Undertake an intersection improvement program to upgrade poorly designed intersections.

Policy 5: Explore possible solutions to the alignment problem of West Retta Esplanade between U. S. 41 northbound and U. S. 41 southbound.

Policy 6: Study the potential impacts on downtown vehicular and pedestrian traffic created by the redevelopment of the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel.

OBJECTIVE M: **To provide adequate, convenient, affordable parking to serve existing and future downtown development.**

Policy 1: Pursue surface lot acquisition and development in high activity downtown areas, and continue adding on-street parking spaces.

Policy 2: Explore the use of parking structures.

Policy 3: Create a downtown parking management program.

Policy 4: Establish a temporary surface parking program.

Policy 5: Consider land development regulation changes to accommodate handicapped and compact cars and require more off-street private parking.

OBJECTIVE N: **To achieve a high degree of public safety in order to make downtown an inviting place to come and visit, shop, live, and work.**

Policy 1: Continue police surveillance and, at certain times during the year, consider the use of "foot police" patrols.

Policy 2: Review and upgrade all pedestrian areas in downtown for proper lighting and safe walking surfaces.

Policy 3: Encourage strict enforcement of local building and fire codes when health and safety hazards exist.

OBJECTIVE O: **To establish a central clearinghouse for downtown economic, demographic, and market data for investors, developers, property owners, and business people.**

Policy 1: Conduct a semi-annual survey of all landowners for vacancy rates, rents, etc.

Policy 2: Computerize the downtown database and publish a downtown profile annually.

Policy 3: Establish a funding resources manual for prospective businesses.

OBJECTIVE P: **To develop a quality image of downtown as a convenient, vibrant, desirable environment in which to invest, work, live, and shop.**

Policy 1: Build Punta Gorda's image upon its history, water orientation, small-town atmosphere, and proximity to I-75.

Policy 2: Develop a downtown marketing strategic plan.

Policy 3: Maintain an on-going relationship with the local media.

Policy 4: Establish a series of downtown advertising campaigns with a logo and slogan.

Policy 5: Install community entranceway signs and special district markers.

OBJECTIVE Q: **To encourage annual events in the downtown area to attract people to downtown and establish downtown as a vital, active, focal point of the community.**

Policy 1: Develop a series of downtown events.

Policy 2: Coordinate with all other civic groups, and develop an events calendar to be distributed region wide.

Policy 3: Encourage joint advertising by downtown businesses.

Policy 4: Expand the Downtown Beautification Awards program to include an annual awards banquet.

Policy 5: Publish an annual brochure/report on the work being done in downtown.

OBJECTIVE R: **To solicit detailed public input concerning the future of the downtown area.**

Policy 1: Hold periodic downtown revitalization workshops.

Policy 2: Publish a monthly downtown information newsletter.

OBJECTIVE S: **To pursue the development of a unique public transportation system linking downtown within itself and with other areas of the region.**

Policy 1: Provide water taxi service from Fishermen's Village to the 30-acre waterfront parcel, with stops in between.

Policy 2: Encourage horse and buggy tours of the historic downtown areas.

Policy 3: Support an old-fashioned trolley transit service.

CHAPTER 5

The Redevelopment Plan

A. BACKGROUND

The primary purpose of this plan is to establish a comprehensive set of public projects and programs aimed at facilitating the positive revitalization of Punta Gorda's downtown and eliminating the conditions of blight existing in the redevelopment area. This chapter presents the City of Punta Gorda's 1990 Downtown Redevelopment Plan, which is based on the goals, objectives, and policies derived from the data and analytical observations contained in this document. The actions needed to effectively implement the recommendations of this plan are outlined in the implementation strategies section of this chapter.

B. THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Punta Gorda's 1990 Downtown Redevelopment Plan has been divided into four areas: urban design framework, traffic circulation and parking proposals, capital projects, and redevelopment programs. The recommended projects and programs of this plan follow directly from the policies outlined in Chapter 4 and are designed to meet the requirements contained in Section 163.362 of the Florida Statutes.

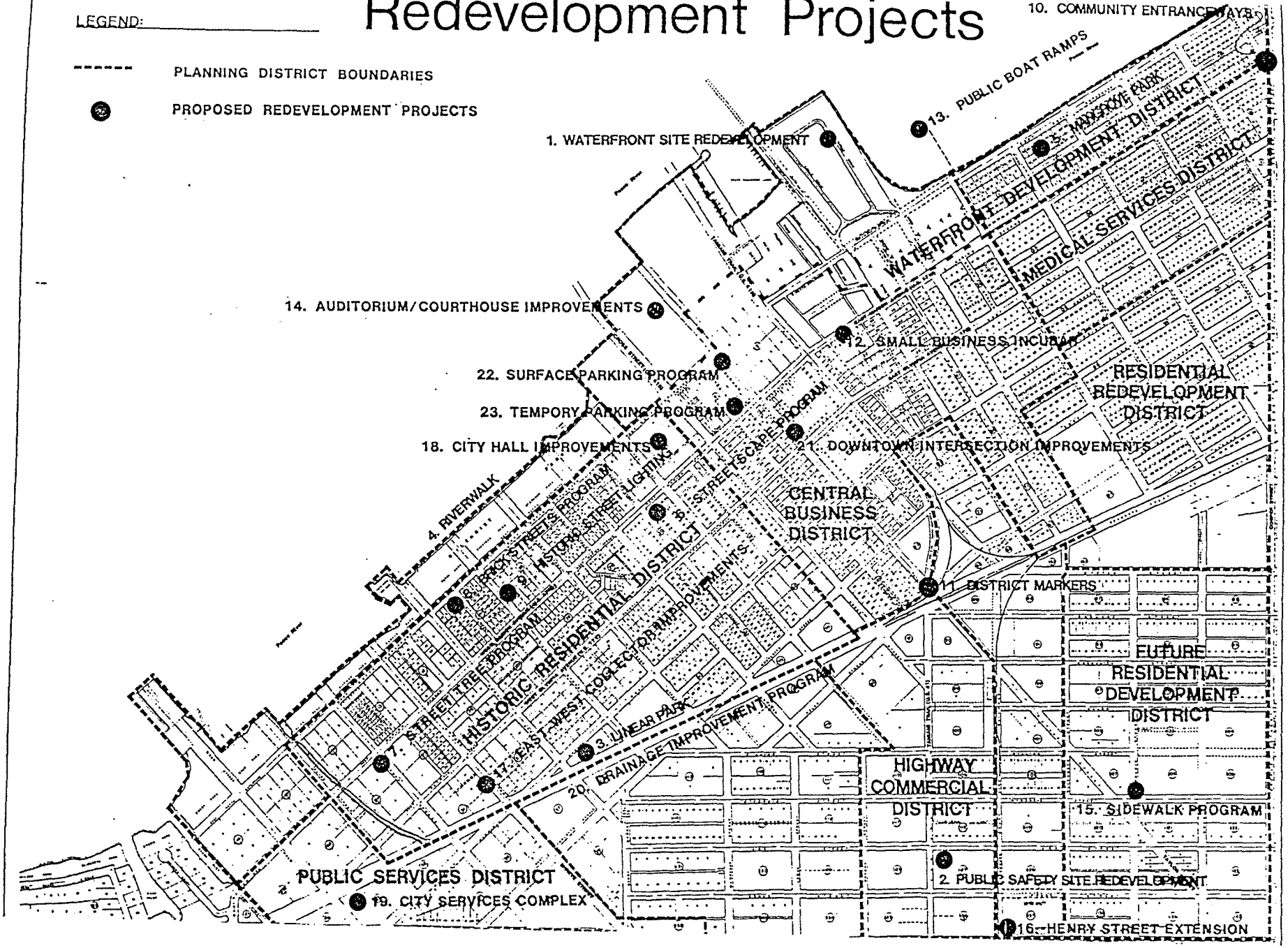
1. **Urban Design Framework.** The urban design framework shown on Map 13 contains the land use plan that will guide development within Punta Gorda's historic downtown over the next 20 years. Map 13 also presents a summary of the CRA's designated redevelopment projects.

Three design principles were used to guide the formulation of the plan. First, the redevelopment plan seeks to refocus the community's attention toward the waterfront. Second, the existing neighborhoods discussed in Chapter 1 and shown on Map 10 are reinforced by this plan. Finally, a compact business district is proposed that can serve downtown residents, employees, and visitors. The City's 1988 Comprehensive Plan future land use plan will not require change in order to allow implementation of this urban design framework. Following is a description of the general nature of the eight planning districts identified in the plan.

a. **Waterfront Development District.** This district has historically been the activity center for a mixture of public and private uses with an emphasis on public access to the waterfront. The City should strive to secure ownership and/or easement rights to the areas of this district (e.g., Holiday Inn, Howard Johnson's, and the mangrove area east of U. S. 41) that are not currently accessible to the public. This district is by far the most visually prominent area of downtown and therefore should be carefully preserved in both its physical appearance and in its mixture of activities. Water-dependent public uses (e.g., boating, fishing, sailing, picnicking, etc.) should continue to be encouraged in this district.

MAP 13

Redevelopment Projects



Scale 1:200'

13 MAP

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency Charlotte County, Florida January'90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Private redevelopment of the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel should seek to preserve a pedestrian walkway tied into the riverwalk system along the water to the greatest extent practical. Private redevelopment of the waterfront should have uses and activities that will encourage both resident and visitor trips to the district (e.g., hotel, retail, boating, etc.). **Note: This district contains the 30-acre waterfront parcel as a distinct sub-area.**

b. **Central Business District**. This district should continue to serve as the City's retail/service center, and redevelopment projects and programs should strengthen and expand this role. A portion of this district overlaps with the Waterfront Development District between Harvey Street and Cochran Street. Where this overlap occurs, projects such as streetscape and the riverwalk should be designed to link these two districts together. Ground floor uses in this district should be pedestrian-oriented retail/service activities to the extent that the market will support them. Second-floor residences should be permitted. A mixture of commercial uses within larger single-family structures is appropriate. The elimination of vacant lots and preservation of historic structures should be a priority within this district. Walking throughout this area should be safe, shaded, and enjoyable. **Note: This district contains the City's Commercial National Register District as a distinct sub-area.**

c. **Historic Residential District**. This district should serve several functions as part of the redevelopment area. First, it should be preserved as a viable residential neighborhood. Second, it should be promoted as a local and regional visitor destination. Third, it should be recognized as an area where limited home occupations (bed and breakfast, professional offices, etc.) can be approved without destroying the district's unique character. As with the Waterfront Development District and Central Business District, walking should be encouraged. New development should not be permitted to destroy the scale and appearance of this district. **Note: This district contains the City's Residential National Register District as a distinct sub-area.**

d. **Public Services District**. This district is characterized by extensive City ownership of land and a mixture of different public facilities. This area has been identified for possible location of future public facilities to include a new police/fire station, City garage, and local park. Additional community facilities in this area would be appropriate and should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

e. **Medical Services District**. This district should continue to serve as a center for medical/professional offices. East Marion Avenue and East Olympia Avenue have seen the majority of such development along their frontages. Care should be taken to maintain the appearance of these two important road corridors, and future development of this area should be subject to design review and controls.

f. **Residential Redevelopment District**. This district functions as a low-moderate income distressed neighborhood. This area should be preserved as a viable downtown neighborhood. However, vacant land should be considered for ownership-oriented housing development. Condemnable vacant structures should be removed via the City's Housing Code. City enforcement of the nuisance code should continue in this area. Sidewalks and street lighting should be installed where they are absent to encourage walking.

Existing neighborhood facilities (churches, Cooper Street Center, etc.) should be seen as strengths to build upon. The Punta Gorda Housing Authority should be recognized as the agency to spearhead the implementation of the housing development programs proposed by this plan.

g. **Future Residential Development District**. This district should continue to serve as a viable residential neighborhood. The pockets of vacant property should be developed for market-rate "affordable" housing to serve the needs of first-time home buyers and possibly fixed-income elderly households. Sidewalks and street lighting should be completed in this area, and in particular should encourage walking and bike traffic to the Central Business District and to area schools.

h. **Highway Commercial District**. This commercial strip area should continue to be developed for consumer convenience and car-oriented uses. Careful design controls should be considered for this area aimed at improving the physical appearance of this important entrance corridor into the downtown area. The highway beautification program being considered by the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce should be supported by this plan and the CRA. The design quality of many of the buildings and public spaces in this district should be significantly upgraded. Special street lighting should be installed to improve the character of this district.

2. **Traffic Circulation and Parking Plan**. Ahlstedt, Stutsman and Rice's 1989 traffic study for the redevelopment area included numerous recommendations for improving traffic circulation, parking, and pedestrian/bikeway facilities. The specific projects and programs described in the following text have been selected from the range of recommendations contained in this traffic study. Selection of these projects was based on input and review received from City staff members and local community leaders. Map 14 reflects these recommended improvements.

a. **Traffic Circulation**. Based on anticipated development, the future circulation in the CBD identified in the City's 1988 Comprehensive Plan appears adequate through the year 2010. Because of the proposed development of the waterfront park site and the City's desire for easy access to U. S. 41, improvements to the intersections of U. S. 41/Retta Esplanade and U. S. 17/Nesbit Street may be needed. In particular, turn lanes, signal upgrades, and lane widening will be studied as part of the waterfront parcel redevelopment. In addition to these intersection improvements, several options for the realignment of West Retta Esplanade from Taylor Street to the waterfront site were explored. Both options would produce severe impacts upon the operations of the Punta Gorda Mall.

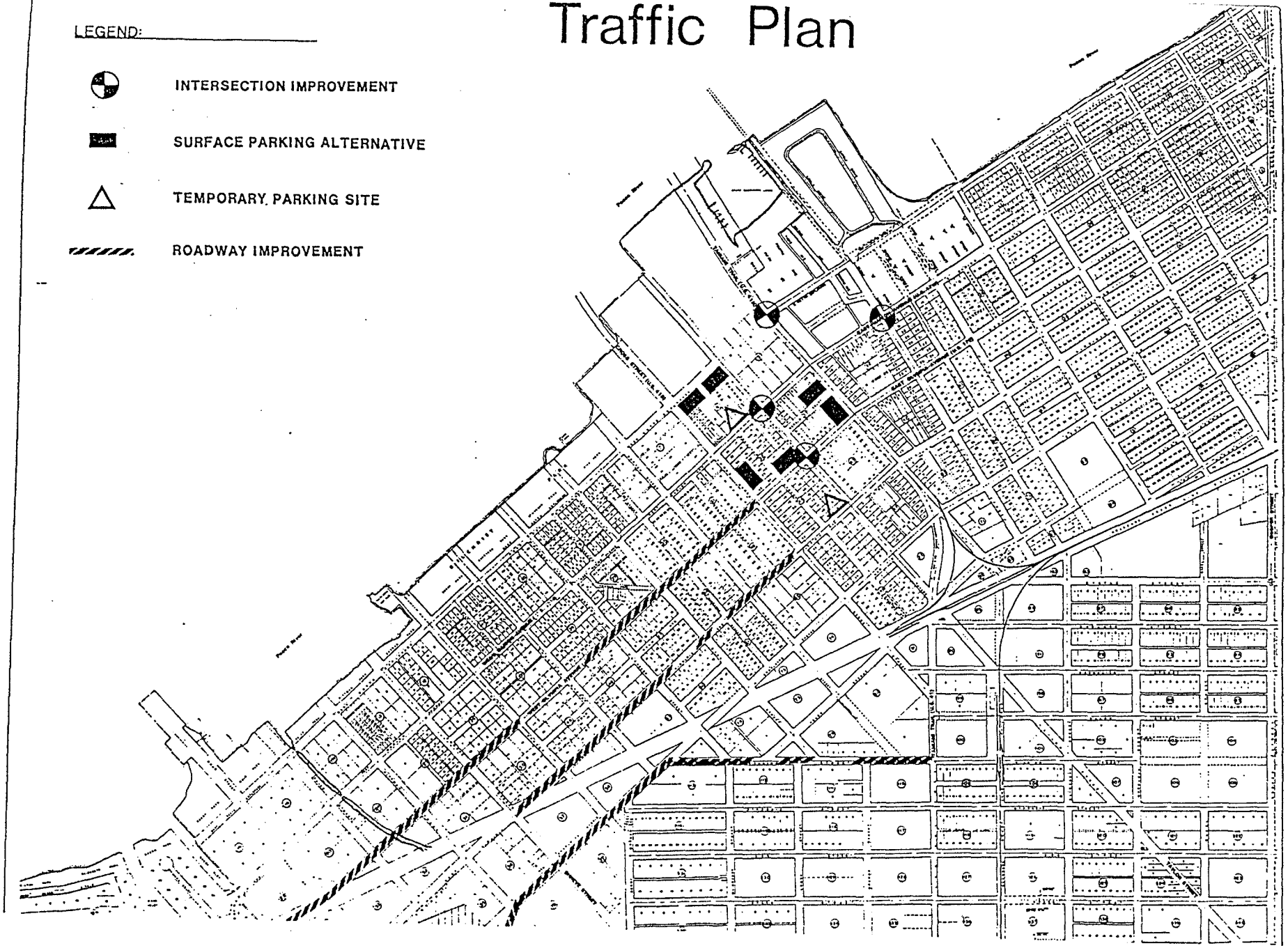
The first option would be to push West Retta Esplanade directly through the Punta Gorda Mall and return it to its original alignment. The second option would entail jogging West Retta Esplanade through the mall parking lot. It is recommended that these two options be documented, but that they only be considered as part of a privately initiated redevelopment proposal by the owner(s) of the Punta Gorda Mall.

MAP 14

Traffic Plan

LEGEND:

- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT
- SURFACE PARKING ALTERNATIVE
- TEMPORARY PARKING SITE
- ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT



Scale 1":200'

14

MAP

Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency Charlotte County, Florida January'90

North

PUNTA GORDA DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Left turn lanes should be introduced on Taylor Street at West Marion Avenue. This can be accomplished by removing the existing on-street parking on Taylor Street for a distance of 60 to 100 feet back from the intersection. A typical detail of these proposals is found in Appendix B. Both of these improvements should be included as part of the City's 1990 streetscape program.

It is recommended that Henry Street be completed and extended through to at least Taylor Street. Henry Street does not exist from U. S. 41 easterly across the Seminole Gulf Railroad to Elizabeth Street. From Elizabeth Street east to its intersection with Taylor Street, Henry Street is a narrow 14 to 16 foot, two-way, one-lane roadway. If a new railroad grade crossing is opened at Henry Street, it is likely that an existing crossing will have to be closed to ensure no net increase in the number of grade crossings. After reviewing the various intersections, the preferred grade crossing to be closed would be at Boca Grande Boulevard. The existing right-of-way for Henry Street is 60 feet. While this appears adequate for upgrading to a uniform width of 24 feet of pavement, this section of Henry Street is planned to be upgraded to Urban Collector status which, according to the adopted Comprehensive Plan, requires a minimum right-of-way width of 70 feet. Therefore, right-of-way acquisition will also have to be considered.

b. **Parking**. Based on the projected need for off-street parking spaces contained in Table 14 of Chapter 2, Punta Gorda must take steps to develop additional parking facilities. Based on the City's land development regulations, a downtown business is required to have one parking space per 1,000 square feet of floor space. At this rate, the private off-street parking supply will grow by only 335 spaces by the year 2010, with a true need for 1,672 new spaces. Because the City's existing off-street parking requirement of one space per 1,000 square feet appears to significantly understate the actual projected parking need of five spaces per 1,000 square feet, it is recommended that new commercial development provide 2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet in private parking areas. This would produce a need for 836 new public parking spaces in the redevelopment area by the year 2010, based on projected development square footages contained in Table 12 of Chapter 2.

In order to provide 836 additional parking spaces in the redevelopment area, between 6.5 and 7.7 acres of land (4.0 to 4.6 acres in traffic zone 31 alone) would be required. Traffic zone 40 will require 1.4 to 1.6 acres of land for parking, and traffic zone 41 will need 1.2 to 1.4 acres. Because of the nature and layout of the CBD, it does not appear feasible to develop a single-surface parking lot for 836 parking spaces. However, it may be possible through a parking authority to construct either a series of smaller surface parking lots and/or a centralized parking structure.

The projected parking needs in traffic zones 40 and 41 are great. However, because the projected development requiring this parking is located in, or associated with, the City's waterfront site, it appears feasible to satisfy this parking need by providing required on-site parking at the waterfront site.

Providing a single-surface parking lot of 502 parking spaces in traffic zone 31 is an entirely different matter. This parking lot would be approximately equal in size to the lot serving the Memorial Auditorium. While the daytime availability of the Auditorium's 735 parking spaces would be positive, the distance from the lot to the retail/service business centers of downtown is such that shoppers, visitors, and employees have resisted using it. However, it is recommended that a shuttle service running from the Auditorium lot to the business centers throughout downtown be explored, along with better directional signage from U. S. 41 and U. S. 17 to the site.

It was found that a combination of surface lots could meet the future parking needs in traffic zone 31. These sites are shown on Map 14 and are as follows:

Site 1: Vacant parcel on the south side of West Retta Esplanade between Taylor Street and Sullivan Street (surface lot or structure).

Site 2: Vacant parcel on the southeast corner of U. S. 41 and Sullivan Street (surface lot or structure).

Site 3: Vacant parcels in the 200 block of U. S. 41 and Sullivan Street (surface lot or structure).

Site 4: Occupied lots on the north side of Herald Court (surface lot or structure).

Site 5: Occupied area on the west side of U. S. 41 northbound between Olympia Avenue and Herald Court. This area could be combined with Site 4 (surface lot or structure).

Site 6: Vacant and unoccupied area on the north side of Olympia Avenue between Sullivan Street and Taylor Street (surface lot or structure).

Each of these sites should be examined further as part of a parking site study. These sites were selected because of their proximity to major roadways and business development areas and their general undeveloped or underdeveloped conditions. These alternatives should remain as part of the redevelopment plan until existing conditions change.

Although the current off-street parking supply in the CBD is adequate, there are several smaller, unpaved lots in traffic zone 31 that are consistently used. It is recommended that the CRA initiate actions to convert one or more of these lots into temporary surface parking areas through the use of portable grass pavers. Map 14 shows the location of these sites.

Site 1: The northeast corner of West Marion Avenue and Sullivan Street.

Site 2: The northwest corner of Taylor Street and West Virginia Street.

Site 3: The west side of Sullivan Street between West Retta Esplanade and West Marion Avenue.

Site 4: The north side of East Marion Avenue between Nesbit Street and U. S. 41 northbound.

c. **Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities.** The following actions should be taken in order to meet the objectives of the pedestrian/bicycle facilities presented in Chapter 4. First, the development of a detailed riverwalk design plan should be undertaken. Second, the abandoned railroad right-of-way should be designed for bicycle/pedestrian usage. Third, a comprehensive sidewalk improvement program should be developed. Finally, existing downtown intersections should be analyzed for any additional improvements to the pedestrian walk light system.

3. **Redevelopment Projects.** The following list describes and summarizes the capital projects to be included in the Punta Gorda Downtown Redevelopment Plan. Many of the projects listed below are in some stage of completion. Therefore, a note is provided for each project indicating its current status in terms of implementation. Projects already called for in the traffic circulation and parking plan are included herein. Map 13 reflects the location of each of these projects.

Project 1: **Waterfront Site Redevelopment.** The City/CRA will offer the abandoned 30-acre municipal mobile home park for private redevelopment. Appendix C provides a copy of the Halcyon, Ltd., conceptual site plan to be used as a guide for this offering. (Status: Underway as part of the general fund project.)

Project 2: **Linear Park.** The City/CRA will develop the old abandoned railroad right-of-way as a linear park to include a walkway/bikepath, drainage improvements, and public recreation facilities. (Status: Concept plan drawing completed in 1979. See Appendix D.)

Project 3: **Riverwalk.** The City/CRA will prepare a design/construction proposal to complete the riverwalk system from Cooper Street to Fishermen's Village. Appendix E outlines a sample easement arrangement with Holiday Inn to implement this project. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Project 4: **Mangrove Park.** The City/CRA will examine the mangrove area contained in Blocks A-E and 1 for purchase and use as a passive waterfront park, riverwalk/bicycle path, and public boating access. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Project 5: **Streetscape Program.** The City/CRA will continue the streetscape design scheme already established as shown in Appendix F. The downtown business district blocks shown on Map 11 will be programmed for streetscape over the life of the CRA. (Status: Three blocks completed, with three years of CIP funding approved for $150,000 each year through 1992.)

Project 6: **Street Tree Program.** The City/CRA will continue planting street trees in the redevelopment area. Trees for the streetscape area should provide shade and protection from the rain (e.g., oak, holly, buttonwood). Trees for Marion Avenue and Olympia Avenue should be dominant in their appearance (e.g., royal palms). (Status: Limited plantings currently being done by the City.)

Project 7: **Brick Streets Program.** The City/CRA will continue the repair and replacement of historic brick streets as shown on Map 13. (Status: Four blocks completed to date. Funding has been through the General Fund.)

Project 8: **Historic Street Lighting.** The City/CRA will pursue the placement of old-fashioned light posts in the Historic Residential District, beginning with the proposed brick street areas. (Status: Conceptual stage only. Could be funded by a lighting assessment district.)

Project 9: **Community Entranceways.** The City/CRA will place community entranceway signs at the locations shown on Map 13. (Status: Final design work being done; $9,000 special project fund available.)

Project 10: **District Markers.** The City/CRA will place special markers/signs designed to direct residents and visitors to points of historical, cultural, commercial, and community interest. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Project 11: **Small Business Incubator.** The City/CRA will pursue the development of a small business incubator, possibly in the old King Arcade located on East Marion Avenue. This project would involve CRA or State funds to aid in the renovation of the structure and help establish a revolving fund designed to provide qualified small businesses with a reduced rent for their first three years of operation. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Project 12: **Public Boat Ramps.** The City/CRA will undertake a site study for a new boat ramp somewhere in or near the redevelopment area. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Project 13: **Auditorium/Courthouse Improvements.** The City/CRA will consider assisting Charlotte County in their efforts to expand, upgrade, or improve the County Auditorium or County Courthouse. Plans for work on either of these facilities should be forwarded to the CRA for consideration of funding. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Project 14: **Sidewalk Program.** The City/CRA will continue its on-going sidewalk improvement program. (Status: Current yearly CIP funding of $20,000 through 1994-95.)

Project 15: **Henry Street Extension.** The City/CRA will pursue the extension of Henry Street from U. S. 41 to Taylor Street. (Status: CIP 1990-91 budget of $50,000 and 1991-92 budget of $250,000.)

Project 16: **East-West Collector Improvements.** The City will design and construct improvements to Olympia Avenue, Virginia Avenue, Charlotte Avenue, and Williams Avenue. (Status: CIP projects with the following budgets: Charlotte/Williams 1991-92 $155,000; Olympia Avenue 1989-91 $500,000; and Virginia Avenue 1990-92 $400,000.)

Project 17: **City Hall Improvements.** The City will continue work on constructing an addition to City Hall at its West Marion Avenue/Harvey Street location. (Status: Architectural plans being drawn with $927,000 CIP budgeted for 1989-91.)

Project 18: **Drainage Improvement Program.** The City will continue its annual City-wide maintenance and improvement of drainage facilities. The linear park project and several storm drainage problem areas shown on Map 9 should be considered for funding. (Status: Done annually on an as-needed basis from $170,000 CIP funds each year.)

Project 19: **Downtown Intersection Improvements.** The City/CRA will improve the Taylor Street/West Olympia Avenue and the Taylor Street/West Marion Avenue intersections as provided in Appendix B. (Status: Require detailed design review and approval.)

Project 20: **Surface Parking Program.** The City/CRA will conduct a detailed study of the alternate surface/structure parking sites listed herein and set aside funds to begin constructing such facilities by 1991-92. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Project 21: **Temporary Parking Program.** The City/CRA will pursue a temporary parking program for the use of unpaved lots as parking areas in the redevelopment area. The first lot to be developed will be at the northeast corner of West Marion Avenue and Sullivan Street, as shown in Appendix G. (Status: Design plan completed; awaiting funding from the Special Downtown Projects Fund.)

4. **Redevelopment Programs.** In addition to the many physical improvements recommended in this redevelopment plan, there are programs that should be continued and/or instituted to help achieve the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan. Many of the programs described in this section require the outlay of City/CRA funds, but they do not constitute a physical public improvement. As with the physical improvement projects outlined in the previous section, the following redevelopment programs are in various stages of completion. A status report is included for each of the programs listed.

Program 1: **Planning District Design Guidelines.** The City/CRA will establish specific design standards for new development and redevelopment work done in each of the eight planning districts presented on Map 13. Two examples of design guidelines already drafted and adopted are the Business Facade Improvement Guidelines for the Central Business District and the Waterfront Parcel Design Guidelines for private redevelopment of the City's 30-acre waterfront site (see Appendix H). Special consideration should be given to design guidelines for the two U. S. 41 corridors, the commercial transition area between West Retta Esplanade and West Charlotte

Avenue, and the strip commercial area from Henry Street to Taylor Street. In addition, the Historic Preservation Advisory Board, established in July, 1989, will continue to refine the broad design goals contained in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. (Status: Conceptual stage for those districts not otherwise mentioned above.)

Program 2: **Building Appearance and Maintenance.** The City will continue to enforce the recently adopted Building Appearance and Maintenance Code. This code is designed to require a minimum maintenance standard for existing commercial structures in the redevelopment area. The City/CRA will also consider drafting and adopting a Minimum Housing Conditions Code. (Status: The Building Appearance and Maintenance Code has been put into active use. The Housing Conditions Code is still in the conceptual stage only.)

Program 3: **Housing Redevelopment.** The City/CRA/Punta Gorda Housing Authority will cooperate on a program aimed at providing affordable and decent housing for current residents of the redevelopment area, and should not be construed to encourage in-migration of low and moderate income people to take advantage of such a program. Renovation of historic housing units, provision of affordable housing for first-time home owners, and the improvement of existing low and moderate income housing units will be targeted by this program. First, a housing redevelopment fund will be established to pay impact fees for affordable ownership housing; purchase abandoned/tax delinquent lots/homes to be used for home ownership projects; back mortgages to encourage favorable loan terms by local lenders; and renovate/restore historic homes and low/moderate income residences. The existing fabric of the residential districts in the redevelopment area will not be disrupted. Forced resident relocations will ***NOT*** be allowed under this program. This program is voluntary; therefore, under Florida Statute 163.363(3), no negative impacts to neighborhood facilities, school populations, environmental quality, traffic circulation, or social structures are anticipated. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Program 4: **Land Development Regulation Changes.** The City will either enforce or adopt the following changes to its land development regulations (LDR's) aimed at encouraging revitalization of the redevelopment area. The recently adopted bed and breakfast provisions of the LDR's will be enforced and an implementation policy drafted for it. The LDR's will be modified to principally permit residences on the second floor of downtown businesses. The newly adopted transfer of a development rights ordinance will be promoted within the community by a series of educational workshops. The recent adoption of non-conforming lot provisions allowing development/redevelopment on smaller lots will be promoted. The parking provisions of the LDR's should be modified to require 2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail/service development.

Program 5: **Historic Preservation.** The City/CRA will promote the preservation of the redevelopment area's historic resources via the following actions. Promote transfer of development rights as a market-driven funding source for historic preservation. Produce a procedures manual for all historic renovation projects. Consider the establishment of a local history museum. Draft and distribute a walking tour map of the redevelopment area's historic resources. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Program 6: **Street/Alley Use Program.** The City/CRA will inventory all existing mid-block alleys and undeveloped platted streets in the redevelopment area and make proposals for their abandonment, improvement, or replatting. This program is designed to make full use of these streets and alleys. Appendix I provides an example of an alleyway improvement plan completed in the Central Business District. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Program 7: **Vending Cart Program.** The City/CRA will consider expansion of its vending cart program to include specific location designations in the redevelopment area. As with the current vending cart guidelines for Gilchrist Park, the City Council should retain special exception approval of such an activity. (Status: The idea is being discussed by the Revitalization Committee.)

Program 8: **Consumer Preferences Study.** The City/CRA will prepare an area-wide study of consumer preferences aimed at targeting specific new retail and service businesses for the redevelopment area. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Program 9: **Downtown Database.** The City/CRA will establish and maintain a database for the redevelopment area to include office space availability, vacancy rates, employment profiles, average rents, etc. A report summarizing this information will be published annually and distributed by the CRA. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Program 10: **Special Transportation.** The City/CRA will support private efforts to provide unique transportation systems within the redevelopment area. Such methods of transportation include horse and buggy, old-fashioned trollies, and water taxis. While the City/CRA should ***NOT*** fund these activities, they should consider them in any planning /design work done for the redevelopment area. (Status: Trolley service has been initiated, and horse-and-buggy service is being studied.)

Program 11: **Beautification Awards.** The City/CRA will continue its beautification awards program. Current residential and business award programs may be expanded to include a new construction category. (Status: Business and residential awards currently being given.)

Program 12: **Public Lands Disposition Program.** The City/CRA will adopt a policy outlining the circumstances under which public lands can be sold or leased for private redevelopment and leased by non-profit organizations. This policy will guide redevelopment of such sites as the current City police/fire station and future leasing of City parks. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

Program 13: Punta Gorda Mall Study. The City/CRA will prepare a study of the Punta Gorda Mall area for upgrading its facade, loading areas, parking areas, etc. (Status: Conceptual stage only.)

C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Section 163.362 of the Florida Statutes requires all community redevelopment plans to establish a mechanism to carry out the projects and programs of the plan. The following text provides a description of the Punta Gorda Downtown Redevelopment Plan's implementation strategy, which includes descriptions of project phasing, cost estimates, available funding sources, plan administration, and marketing/promotion activities.

1. **Redevelopment Plan Phasing.** The capital projects of the redevelopment plan will be undertaken in three phases. Phase One will cover those projects that should be initiated sometime during 1990-1995, Phase Two during 1995-2000, and Phase Three during 2000-2010. Projects targeted for Phase One or Phase Two implementation were selected based on one of three criteria. First, those projects already underway were given Phase One priority. Second, projects ranked highest by the leaders, residents, and business people of Punta Gorda in their responses to the redevelopment plan survey completed in the spring of 1989 were given Phase One or Phase Two priority. Finally, redevelopment area projects already contained in the City's 1989-1995 capital improvements plan as shown in Appendix J were given Phase One priority.

Of the 22 redevelopment projects in Table 28, only six are scheduled for implementation after 1995. Of these six post-1995 projects, four could easily be moved into the Phase One implementation window if tax increment revenues exceed current projections. This reflects two unique characteristics about the City of Punta Gorda's revitalization efforts to date. First, 17 of the 24 projects listed have already begun. Second, nine of the 22 projects will involve annual commitments of funds through the year 2010 in order to see them fully implemented. Therefore, much of the actual work called for in this plan has already begun, with the goal of continuing it over a long period of time.

2. **Project Cost Estimates.** The cost estimates contained in Table 28 are all presented in 1989 dollars and should be considered preliminary. Many of the Phase One projects, such as the riverwalk, linear park, and mangrove park, will require more detailed examination in order to estimate their cost. Projects such as the waterfront site redevelopment and Auditorium/Courthouse improvements may cost the City/CRA very little money, or even generate revenues. Therefore, the total cost estimate figures presented in Table 28 should be considered as conservative. The City's commitment of capital improvement funds (CIP) for more than 75% of the total projected Phase One expenditures in the redevelopment area is evidence of an already strong commitment to the downtown area. However, over the 20 year life of this redevelopment plan, the responsibility for funding capital projects should shift to the CRA and the tax increment trust fund.

3. **Project-Funding Strategy.** Seven potential funding sources were identified as part of the redevelopment plan project funding strategy. The sources listed in Table 28 include:

a. Land Sale/Lease Proceeds
b. Tax Increment Funds
c. Impact Fees
d. General Fund Revenues

TABLE 28

Redevelopment Project Implementation
1990-2010

Project	Phasing 1990-1995	Phasing 1995-2000	Phasing 2000-2010	Cost	Estimated Project Potential Funding Source(s)
1. Waterfront Site Redevelopment	X	X		N/A	Land Sale/Lease, General Fund
2. Linear Park	X				Tax Increment, Impact Fees, State Grants
3. Riverwalk	X	X		N/A	Tax Increment, State Grants
4. Mangrove Park	X			N/A	Tax Increment, Impact Fees
5. Streetscape Program	X	X	X	$150,000/Yr	CIP, General Fund, Tax Increment
6. Street Tree Program		X	X	N/A	General Fund, Tax Increment
7. Brick Streets Program		X	X	N/A	Tax Increment, Program Special Assessment
8. Historic Street Lighting		X	X	$10,000/Blk	Tax Increment, Special Assessment
9. Community Entranceways	X			$10,000	General Fund, State Grant
10. District Markers		X		$5,000	Tax Increment, State Grant
11. Small Business Incubator	X			$100,000	Tax Increment, Historic Preservation Grant
12. Public Boat Ramp(s)		X		$50,000	Special Funds, Tax Incre, State WC Ind Fnds
13. Auditorium/Courthouse Plans	(Determined by County)			N/A	Tax Increment
14. Sidewalk Program	X	X	X	$20,000/Yr	CIP, General Fund
15. Henry Street Extension	X			$300,000	CIP, General Fund, Impact Fees
16. East-West Collectors	X			$1,205,000	CIP, General Fund, Impact Fees, Utility Fund
17. City Hall Expansion	X			$927,000	CIP, General Fund, Impact Fees
18. Drainage	X	X	X	$170,000/Yr	CIP, General Fund
19. Intersections	X			$10,000	Tax Increment
20. Surface Parking Program	X	X	X	$100,000/Yr	Tax Increment
21. Temporary Parking Program	X	X	X	$10,000/Yr	General Fund, Tax Increment
22. Housing Redevelopment Fund	X	X	X	$100,000/Yr	Tax Increment, State Grant

Projected Expenditures – Phase One: $6,301,000 (1990-1995)

1)	City CIP =	$2,382,000
2)	City Other =	$ 210,000
3)	CRA Tax Increment =	$1,110,000

Total Projected Expenditures – All Phases: $11,406,000

1)	City CIP =	$5,282,000
2)	City Other =	$ 315,000
3)	CRA Tax Increment =	$4,210,000

Source: Punta Gorda Capital Improvements Program, 1989-1995; Punta Gorda Planning Department, 1990

e. Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Funds
f. Special Assessment Revenues
g. State/Federal Grants

The two major sources in terms of projected revenues were the City's capital improvements fund made up of general fund revenues, and the CRA's tax increment trust fund made up of incremental ad-valorem tax revenues. The use of CIP general revenue funds for such projects as the Henry Street extension, Olympia Avenue upgrading, and City Hall expansion provides strong assurance that such projects will be built. However, as the funding burden shifts to the tax increment trust fund during Phases Two and Three of the implementation schedule, the question arises of how much revenue will the tax increment trust fund generate. The following discussion addresses this question.

Table 29 provides two tax increment revenue projections in 1989 dollars for the Punta Gorda redevelopment area. Both projections are based on a base year taxable value in the redevelopment area of $80,575,922; frozen current millages of 3.4034 for the City and 4.1056 for the County; and a study of tax valuation trends in the business and residential districts of the redevelopment area.

Projection A assumes that the historic trend of 2.5% annual increase in total taxable value will continue in the redevelopment area. Projection B assumes that the City's recent revitalization efforts will help boost the taxable value growth rate to 5%. Table 29 provides increment revenue projections every five years until 2010, along with cumulative totals.

Examination of Projection A shows that the tax increment revenues will grow from approximately $15,000 in 1990 to $411,000 in the year 2010. From 1990 to 2010, the anticipated cumulative increment revenues will be $4,147,000. By comparison, Projection B indicates that 1990 increment revenues will be approximately $30,000, and $1,081,000 by 2010, and cumulatively will total $9,989,000 over those 20 years.

The Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency has two options concerning the use of its projected tax increment. The first option is to simply use the revenues as they are accrued to fund projects on a pay-as-you-go basis. Review of the redevelopment projects in Table 28 scheduled for implementation in Phase One (1990-1995) indicates a need for a $1,100,000 in tax increment funds over this time period, and a need for $4,210,000 over the entire 20-year period of the plan. As can be seen from both of the tax increment revenue projections contained in Table 29, not enough tax increment is accumulated in the first five years of the CRA's existence to pay for the Phase One projects. (Project Need = $1,100,000; Projection A = $330,587; Projection B = $691,142.) However, between 1990 and 2010, Projections A and B predict enough tax increment revenues being generated to just about pay for all of the recommended projects. (Projected Need = $4,210,000; Projection A = $4,146,969; Projection B = $9,989,178.) Therefore, the funding problem facing the City/CRA is lack of revenues over the short term.

Tax increment revenue financing is a form of debt that can be assumed by the CRA to fund eligible public improvements to be repaid over time via the annual tax increment revenues received by the agency. Table 30 can be used to estimate the amount of bonded debt supportable by the Punta Gorda tax increment trust fund assuming that: (1) revenue Projection A occurs, (2) the CRA can make a one-time bond sale in 1992-1995, (3) the entire increment received can be pledged to cover the debt service, and (4) a 10% bond rate will prevail at the time of issuance.

TABLE 29

Tax Increment Revenue Projections
1989-2010

Projection A: Historic Trend (2.5%)
($000)

	1989	1990	Cumm	1995	Cumm	2000	Cumm	2005	Cumm	2010	Cumm
Total Valuation	80,600	82,100	–	93,500	–	105,700	–	119,600	–	135,300	–
Increment	–	2,000	2,000	12,900	–	25,100	–	39,000	–	54,700	–
Projected Revenue	–	15	15	97	331	188	1,085	293	2,336	411	4,147

Projection B: Growth Trend (5.0%)
($000)

	1989	1990	Cumm	1995	Cumm	2000	Cumm	2005	Cumm	2010	Cumm
Total Valuation	80,600	84,600	–	108,000	–	137,800	–	175,900	–	224,500	–
Increment	–	4,000	4,000	27,400	–	57,200	–	95,300	–	143,900	–
Projected Revenue	–	30	30	206	691	430	2,371	716	5,350	1,081	9,989

Notes:
1. The increment figures for a given year reflect the increase in the total taxable value at that one point in time.
2. Projected increment revenues are in 1989 dollars.
3. Assumed millage: City = 3.4034; County = 4.1056

Source: Charlotte County Property Appraiser's Records, 1989; Punta Gorda Planning Department, 1990

As can be seen from Table 30, more than enough capital could be received to complete the redevelopment projects scheduled for Phases One and Two (1990-2000) by issuing increment revenue bonds in any of the four years listed. In addition, the debt could be paid off in as little as five to ten years, thus making 100% future tax increment revenues available for additional redevelopment projects not contained in Table 28.

4. **Plan Administration.** With the completion of this plan, the CRA moves into another phase of planning – one that will be far more action-oriented and that will involve continual reassessment of the financial, physical, and political conditions of the redevelopment area. The following actions are recommended to ensure that this plan will be responsive to changes in market conditions, social structures, and the physical environment.

First, the Punta Gorda Revitalization Committee should continue to serve as the primary advisory board on the redevelopment matters in the City of Punta Gorda.

Second, the CRA should receive full-time staff support in order to assist in the implementation of the projects and programs of this plan. Under the direction of the City Manager, the City staff provides administrative support to the City's Revitalization Committee. It is recommended that this arrangement continue.

Third, the CRA and its staff should establish a more detailed scheduling plan with target completion dates that would organize redevelopment program activities and capital projects.

Fourth, an annual report of the activities of the CRA should be prepared and distributed each December. In addition, regular progress reports concerning redevelopment projects and programs should be presented to the CRA by the staff.

Fifth, the CRA and its staff should begin to build a database for the redevelopment area.

Sixth, the CRA should annually review the contents of this plan when preparation of the annual work program occurs. In 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010, the CRA should also conduct more detailed evaluations and appraisals of the redevelopment plan.

Seventh, the CRA should employ the services of a design professional as called for in this plan, and the service of a financial analyst if a bond sale is considered.

Finally, the CRA should explore the use of tax increment funds to hire a full-time staff person to assist in maintaining future physical improvements.

5. **Marketing/Promotion Activities.** Education, image, and awareness does as much for a downtown as creation of a high quality environment. Nothing will have a bigger influence on downtown redevelopment than a strong demand for the area's goods, services, and unique lifestyle. The following marketing and promotion recommendations will focus upon building a positive perception of the redevelopment area.

TABLE 30

Supportable Bonded Debt
1992-1995

Year Issued	Bond Proceeds 5-Year Term ($000)	Bond Proceeds 10-Year Term ($000)	Bond Proceeds 20-Year Term ($000)
1992	$ 914	$1,783	$3,289
1993	$1,143	$2,026	$3,542
1994	$1,386	$2,280	
1995	$1,643	$2,547	$4,072

Notes:
1. Assumes 10% interest rate on bonds.
2. Assumes historic 2.5% growth rate of increment.
3. Assumes debt-to-coverage ratio of 1:1.5.
4. Assumes only one bond sale.

Source: Punta Gorda Planning Department, 1990

First, a brochure should be developed that profiles existing downtown assets as well as planned improvements. It should be designed to educate residents, business people, and visitors, as well as spark the interest of potential entrepreneurs and developers. This brochure should highlight Punta Gorda's unique history, waterfront amenities, small town atmosphere, and proximity to I-75.

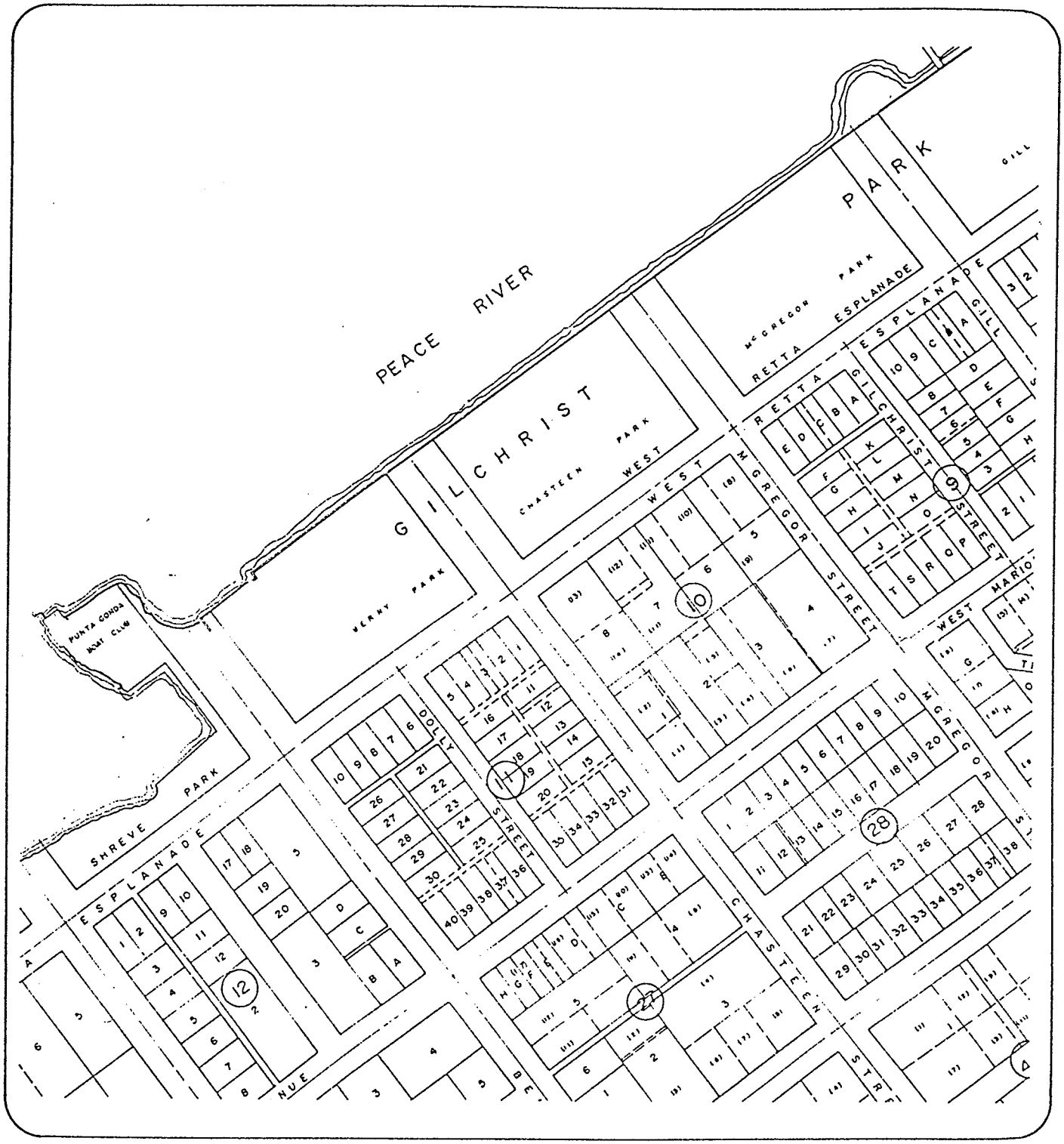
Second, artwork for local magazines, journals, and newspaper advertising should be developed and used on a regular basis.

Third, a monthly or quarterly redevelopment newsletter should be published, along with regular quarterly redevelopment workshops and seminars.

Fourth, the CRA should be actively involved in as many community events as possible in order to increase their exposure.

Fifth, the CRA should coordinate its public activities and events with those of other community organizations. In particular, the Greater Punta Gorda Business Alliance and the City/CRA and its staff must be available to residents, business people, community groups, and the media to answer questions and discuss current projects. The most effective marketing tool at the CRA's disposal is personal contact with people involved in the redevelopment of downtown Punta Gorda, whether by one-on-one visits, group talks, or newspaper interviews.

Punta Gorda has an opportunity to improve a downtown of already unique and rare qualities. Marketing the downtown area must reflect the pride, quality, and vision of the residents, business people, and leaders of a community committed to its future.



Appendicies

Appendicies

A. Redevelopment Area Bounday Description

B. Typical Intersection Improvements

C. Waterfront Parcel Conceptual Site Plan

D. Linear Park Concept Plan

E. Holiday Inn Riverwalk Agreement

F. Streetscape Design Concept

G. Typical Temporary Parking Design

H. Waterfront Parcel Design Guidelines

I. Herald Courtyard Alley Improvement

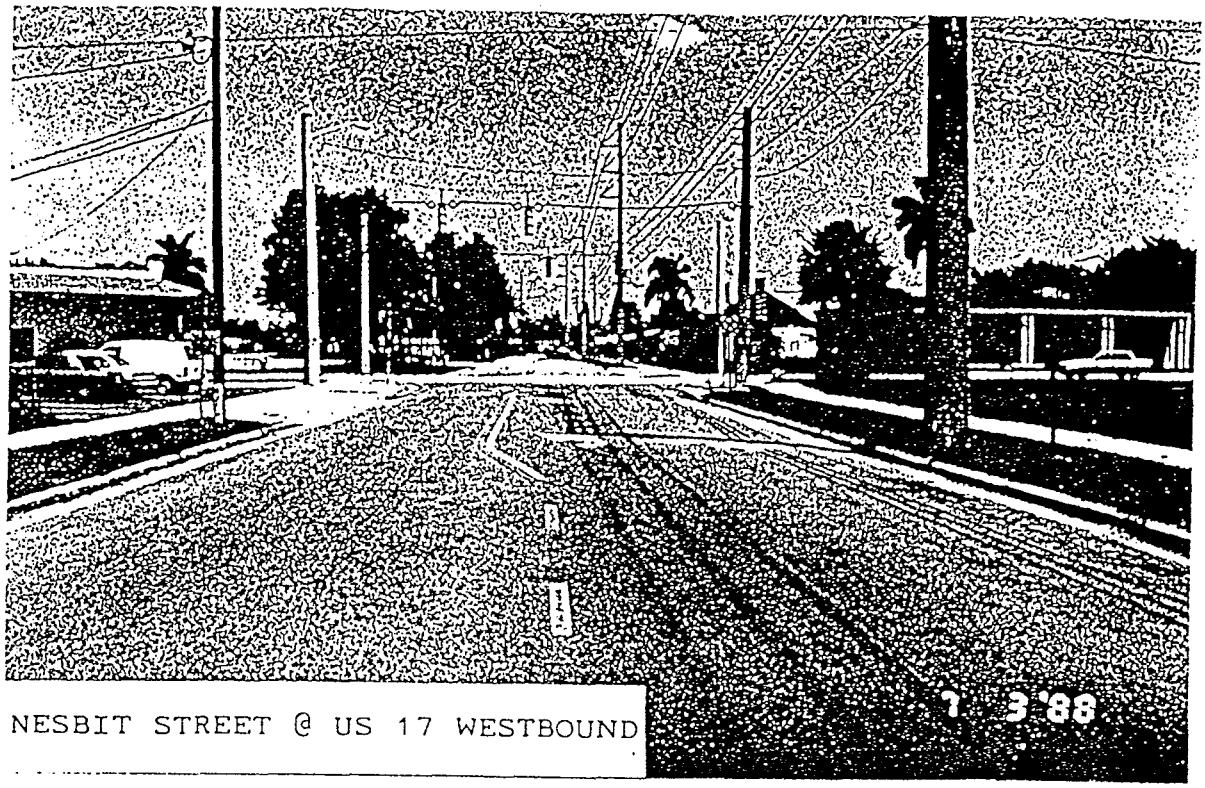
A

FINDINGS OF SLUM AND BLIGHT
PUNTA GORDA REDEVELOPMENT AREA LEGAL BOUNDARIES

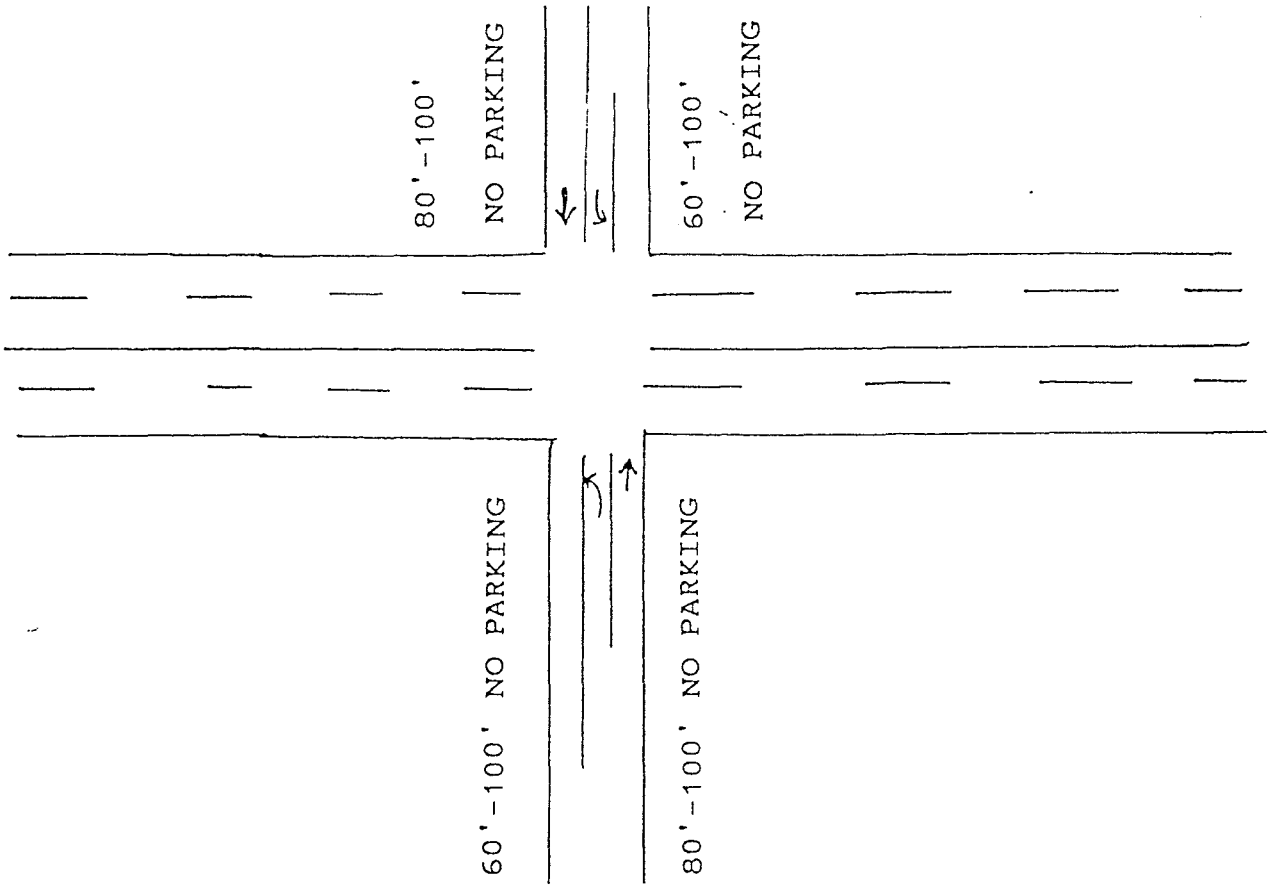
OCTOBER 1989

The land comprising the Community Redevelopment area of the City of Punta Gorda, Florida is the land in the City of Punta Gorda, Florida lying within the following described boundaries, to wit:

> Beginning at the center line of the channel of Charlotte Harbor (Peace River) at its intersection with the west line of Lot 1 and Lot 8, Block 16 extended as shown in the original plat of the Town of Trabue, Plat Book 1, page 1, now Punta Gorda, as a point of beginning; thence run southeasterly along the west line of Lot 1 and Lot 8 of the plat of the Town of Trabue to the southerly right-of-way line of West Marion Avenue; thence north easterly along said southerly right-of-way to the intersection of Maude Street; thence run southerly along the westerly right-of-way line of Maude Street to the southwest corner of the right-of-way line of Maude Street and Henry Street; thence run easterly along the southerly right-of-way of Henry Street to the east line of Cooper Street; thence north along the east line of Cooper Street to its intersection with Charlotte Harbor (Peace River); thence continue north along a line produced by the extension of the east line of Cooper Street to its intersection with the center of the channel of Charlotte Harbor (Peace River); thence southwesterly with the said center line of the channel of said river to the point of beginning.



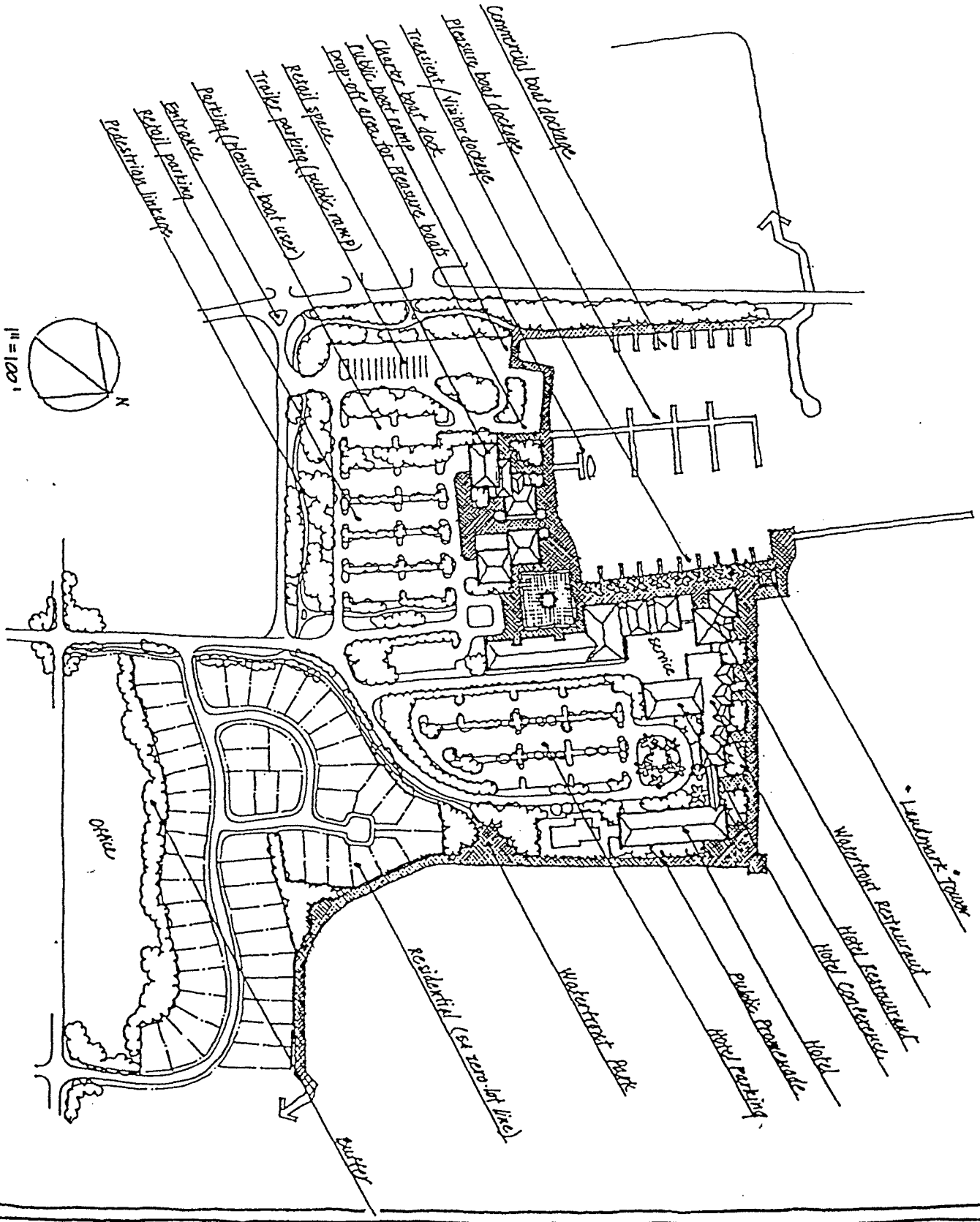
NESBIT STREET @ US 17 WESTBOUND



STANDARD APPROACH TO REDUCE DELAY FROM LEFT TURNS

CITY OF PUNTA GORDA TRAFFIC STUDY

FIGURE 16

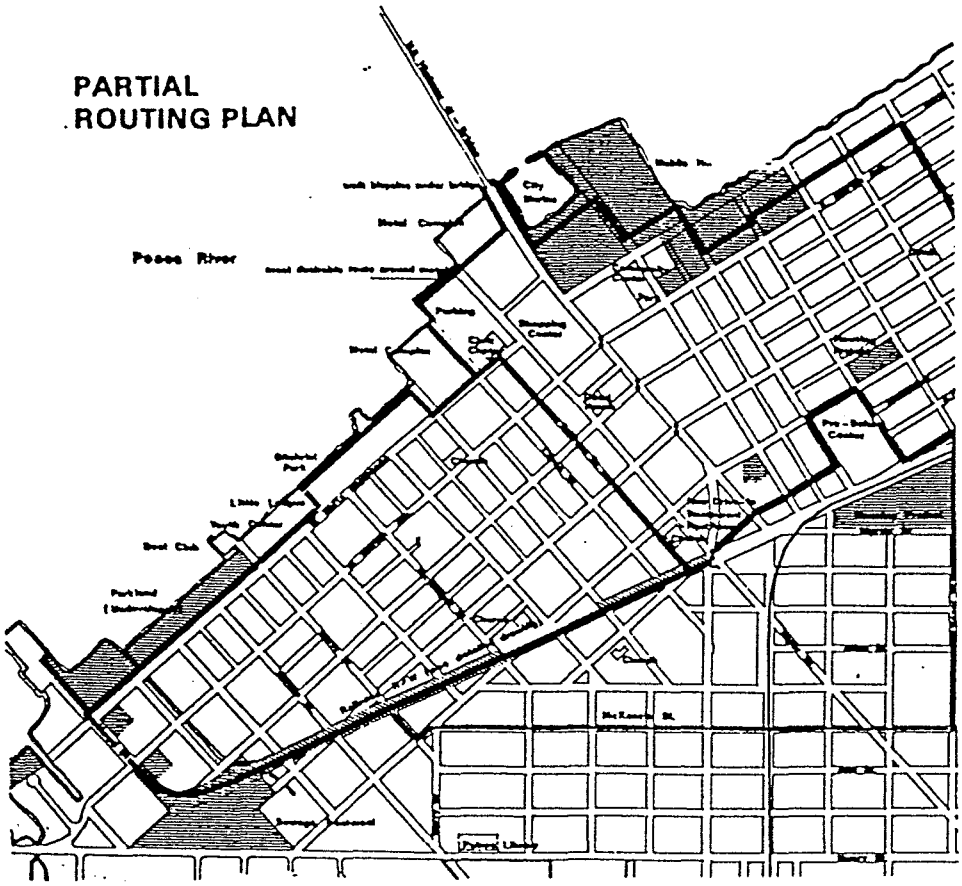


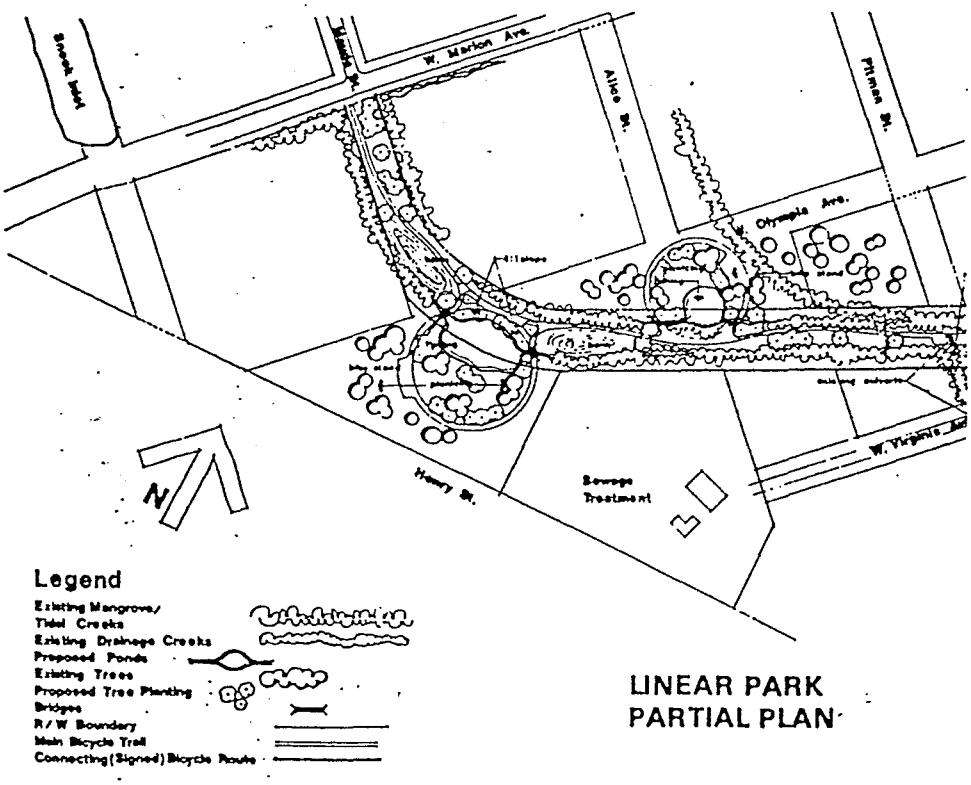
CITY OF PUNTA GORDA

PREPARED BY:
HALCYON, LTD.
EDW. D. STONE, JR.
AND ASSOCIATES

NOVEMBER 10, 1987.

CONCEPT PLAN · OPTION





LINEAR PARK
PARTIAL PLAN

Bicycle Trail System and Park

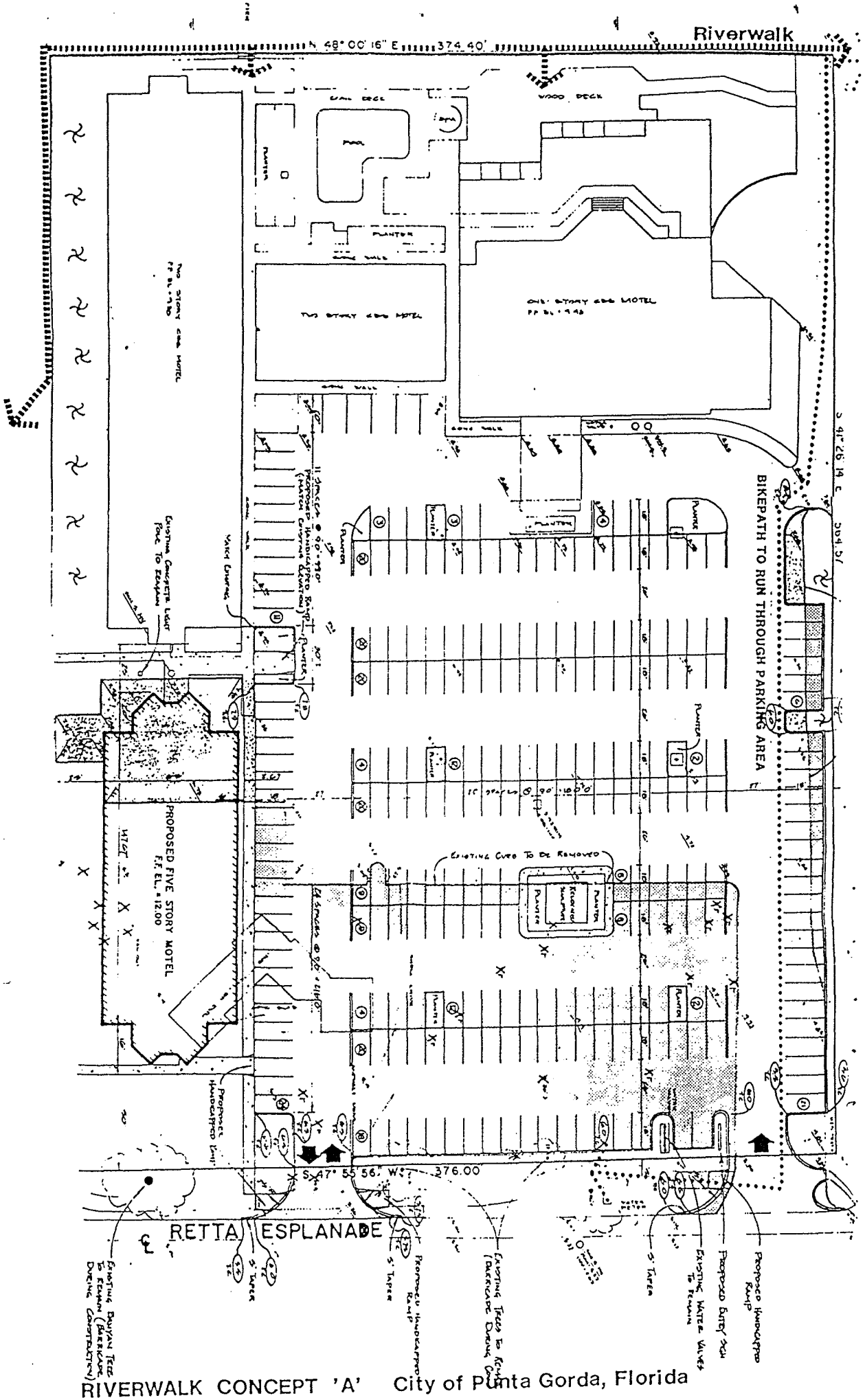
Punta, Gorda, Florida

The Bicycle Trail System and Linear Park Program developed for the City of Punta Gorda, Florida demonstrated a number of unique features. The use of more than two miles of abandoned railroad right-of-way allowed for the development of the Linear Park with exceptional edge exposure to the community. The bicycle trail meanders through the right-of-way and is related to picnic areas, rest stops and other features.

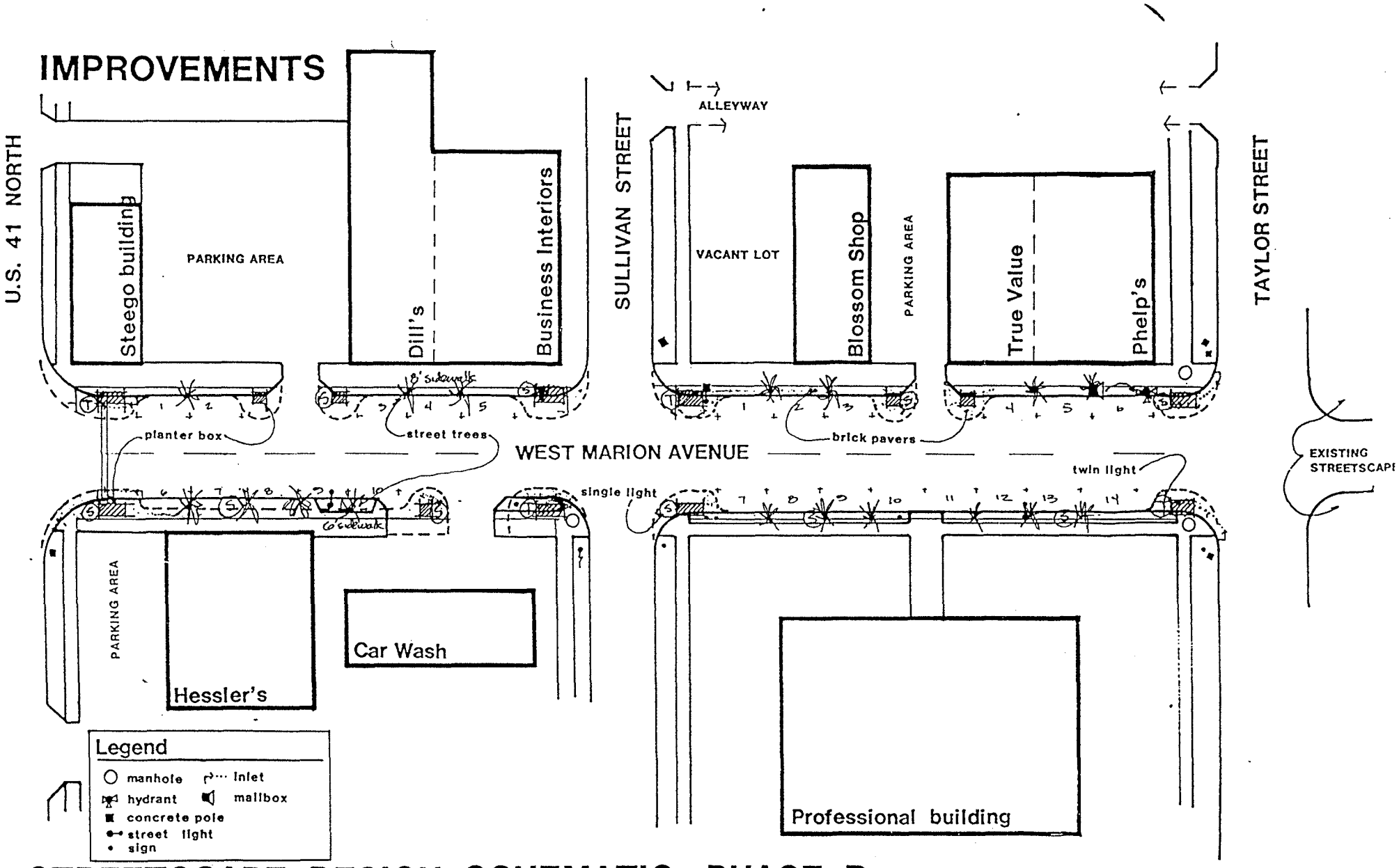
The overall Bicycle Trail System resulted from a careful analysis of the community plan and was designed to tie community facilities, other parks, school sites and a riverfront area into a comprehensive whole. The bike route has three routing options of different lengths and provides a unique feature to the community.

Services Performed: Comprehensive Analysis of Community Facilities, preparation of routing plan, Linear Park Plan and construction details.

Client: City of Punta Gorda, Florida
Mr. Bob Hollander, City Manager
City Hall
Punta Gorda, Florida



RIVERWALK CONCEPT 'A' City of Punta Gorda, Florida

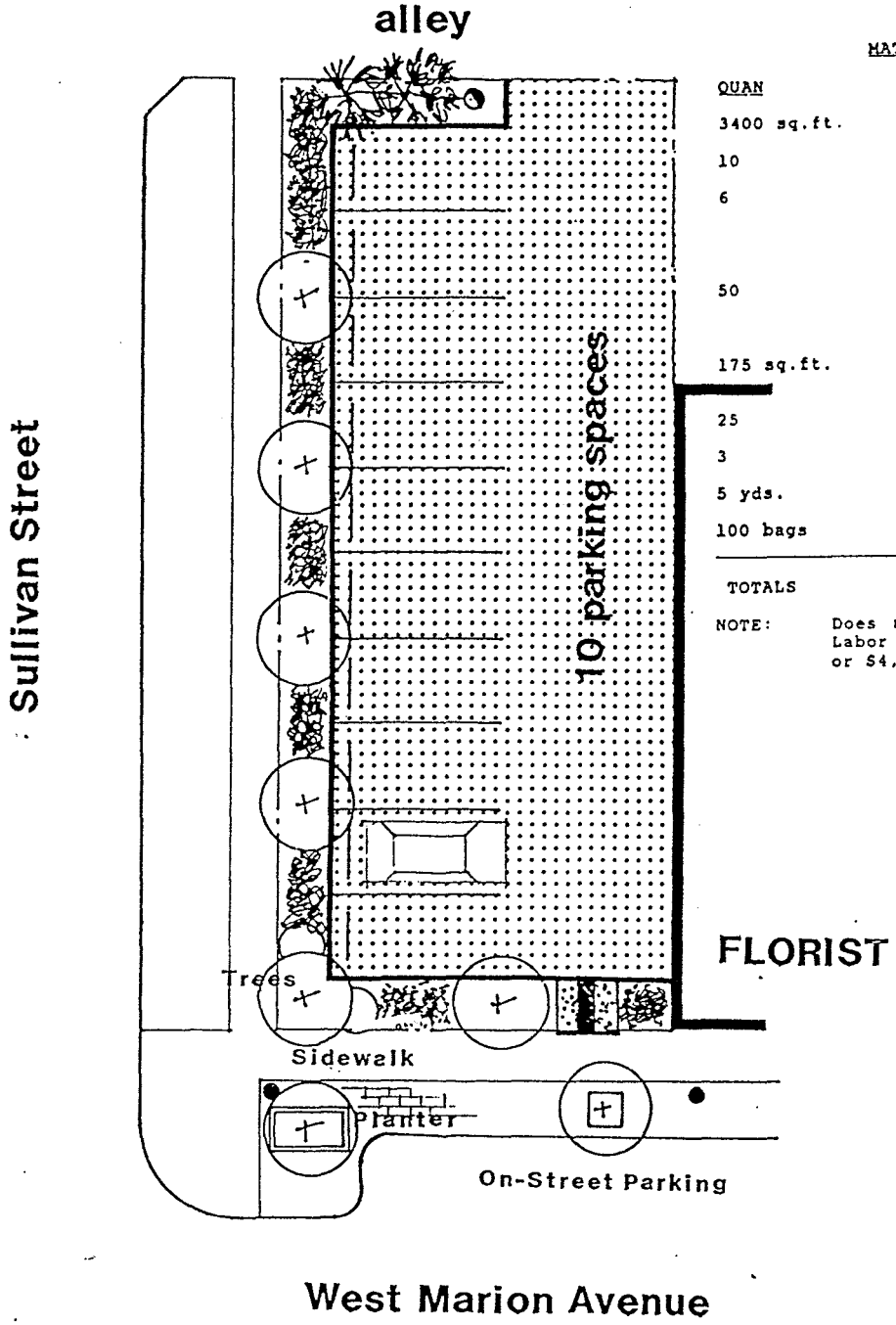


STREETSCAPE DESIGN SCHEMATIC :PHASE B

CITY of PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA SCALE: 1"=40' MAY 1988

G

PROJECT: Temporary Parking



MATERIALS SCHEDULES

QUAN	ITEM	COST
3400 sq.ft.	Concrete pavers	$3,876.00
10	Bumper Stops	97.50
6	Live Oaks or Green Buttonwoods (30 gals.)	600.00
50	Gold-tip Ligustrim (3 gals.)	200.00
175 sq.ft.	3/4" PVC Irrigation pipe	26.25
25	3/4" Bubblers	8.75
3	Directional signs	450.00
5 yds.	Top soil	200.00
100 bags	Mulch	150.00
TOTALS		$5,548.50

NOTE: Does not include site preparation or labor. Labor estimated at $1.00/sq.ft. of the site, or $4,100.00.

Site Plan

PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA SCALE: 1"=20' 1987

PUNTA GORDA ZONING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Source:

PUNTA GORDA WATER FRONT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

JULY 1988

The following design guidelines have been established for the development of the City's 30-acre waterfront parcel. These guidelines reflect the public's interest in the layout of the site as identified in several public meetings. These guidelines are meant to be general enough to permit maximum design creativity, while also giving each of the development teams an idea of what the City desires to see in terms of visual image. Finally, these guidelines will be used by the Park Use Study Committee and City Council in their evaluation of the different development proposals they hope to receive from the interested development teams.

SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE #1: The architectural style of the structures to be placed on the site should recall the kind of period detail found in Punta Gorda's Historic Districts. Regardless of the style or styles selected from Punta Gorda's historic past (i.e.- Spanish Revival, Victorian, "Old Florida", etc.) the new structures should offer an updated and distinctive appearance which draws attention to the development as a unique place to visit(Purpose: to integrate the site visually into a somewhat historic waterfront community.)

GUIDELINE #2: The site should contain some sort of visual "landmark" which is easily seen from the Peace River bridges and the roads leading to the site. This "landmark" could be some sort of singular architectural feature placed on the site (i.e.- lighthouse, clock tower, observation tower, etc.), or it could be a part of one or more of the structures to be placed on the site. (Purpose: to establish a "signature" for the project which is easily seen and associated with the site.)

GUIDELINE #3: The site's design should provide for both a physical and visual linkage to the other parts of the downtown area. Pedestrian crossings at East Marion Avenue (U.S. 17) should be considered as a means of bringing other downtown workers and visitors to the waterfront parcel. The inclusion of an existing downtown design element (i.e.- Old fashioned street lights, benches, brick planters, trees, etc.) in the design of the new pedestrian areas on the waterfront parcel should be considered. (Purpose: to connect the site to the rest of downtown at the pedestrian level.)

GUIDELINE #4: Those activities and structures proposed to be within 50 feet to 100 feet of the shoreline should reflect a "water dependency" not only in their function but also in their design. Sailing classes and charter boat docks are clearly examples of water dependent uses. Likewise, retail shops, hotels and residences should all be designed in such a way as to recognize the water as the site's primary amenity. In addition, there should be a variety of uses proposed along the waterfront in order to generate user interest. (Purpose: To preserve the water-oriented atmosphere of the shoreline portion of the site.)

GUIDELINE #5: Development should be designed to maintain major views of the river via the spacing, height and bulk of structures. Clear view corridors from East Marion Avenue and Tamiami Trail should be designed so as to draw passers-by into the project. In addition, dumpsters, parking areas, loading zones, etc. should not be placed in the view corridors to the river without significant landscaping and buffering measures being taken. (Purpose: to establish a pleasant public view to the waterfront as a means of encouraging its public use.)

GUIDELINE #6: The design of the site should include various "public" areas and open spaces where limited recreational activities could take place. Picnic tables and walking trails placed adjacent to required retention areas would be an example of such public areas. Any such areas must be easily accessable by car and to handicapped people, and should be linked to the required waterfront walkway. (Purpose: to provide usuable public space(s) on the site.)

GUIDELINE #7a: The site must be designed to encourage public pedestrian access to and along the shore. This access is most readily achieved by a waterfront walkway which sould be designed to accomodate both pedestrians and some limited bicycle traffic. (Purpose: to guarantee public access to and along the waterfront.)

GUIDELINE 7b: The required waterfront walkway should also be designed to include various public spaces with interesting views of both the waterfront and the site. The design of the walkway should also seek to address the problems of summer rains and heat as well as night-time usage. (Purpose: to encourage public use of the waterfront during various times of the day and year.)

GUIDELINE 8: The site should include a major public space or spaces as an integrated part of waterfront walkway. Gazebos, amphitheathers and plazas are examples of such public "spaces". Again, their design should reflect an orientation to the water, and should include provisions for their use during varied seasonal conditions. (Purpose: to replace the loss of Laishley Park with other public gathering areas.)

GUIDELINE #9: It is suggested that the waterfront walkway and public spaces include some variations in grade separation from the site's structures. Because of the five to six foot fill required in order to bring the site to base flood elevation, the grade separations may be a very logical design solution. (Purpose: to make the pedestrian spaces distinct and separate via variations in grade.)

GUIDELINE #10: All parking areas should be heavily landscaped for both visual reasons and to provide a maximum amount of tree canopy on the site. Large parking areas will be required to be landscaped and screened from adjacent uses. (Purpose: to maintain a high quality appearance on the site and to "cool-off" large asphault areas.)

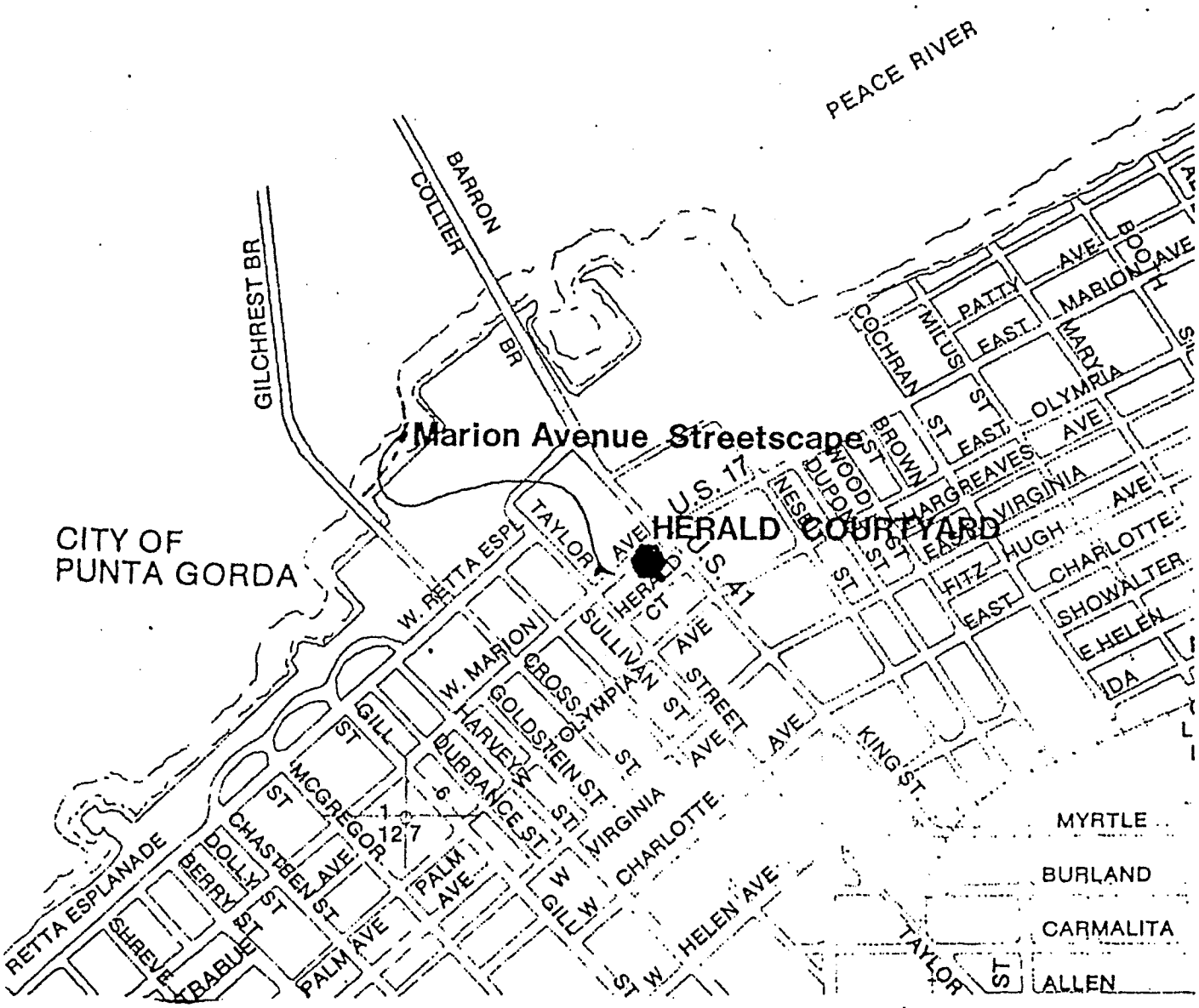
GUIDELINE #11: Site signage, both directional and advertising, should show some coordination and reflect a desire to portray a quality image. Well designed signage can actually be a visual and functional asset to a development.
(Purpose: to preserve the appearance of the site and provide clear directions for users of the site.)

GUIDELINE #12: The actual site layout of the various uses proposed for the site should clearly show how public and private activities will be separated and/or allowed to mix. Both horizontal and vertical separation of incompatible on-site activities should be clearly illustrated in any design drawings submitted. (Purpose: to insure that the mixture of activities and uses of the site do not conflict with one another.)

Sources: "Waterfront Park Site Development Feasibility Study", A report prepared by Halcyon, Ltd., December 1987.

"Integrating Public Access with Private Development: The Two Can Mix", Scenic Hudson, Inc., Carol Sondheimer, September 1983.

HERALD COURTYARD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



Location Map

PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA

SCALE: NO SCALE

1987

PUNTA GORDA ZONING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Source: City of Punta Gorda, Florida 326 W. Marion Ave., Punta Gorda 33950